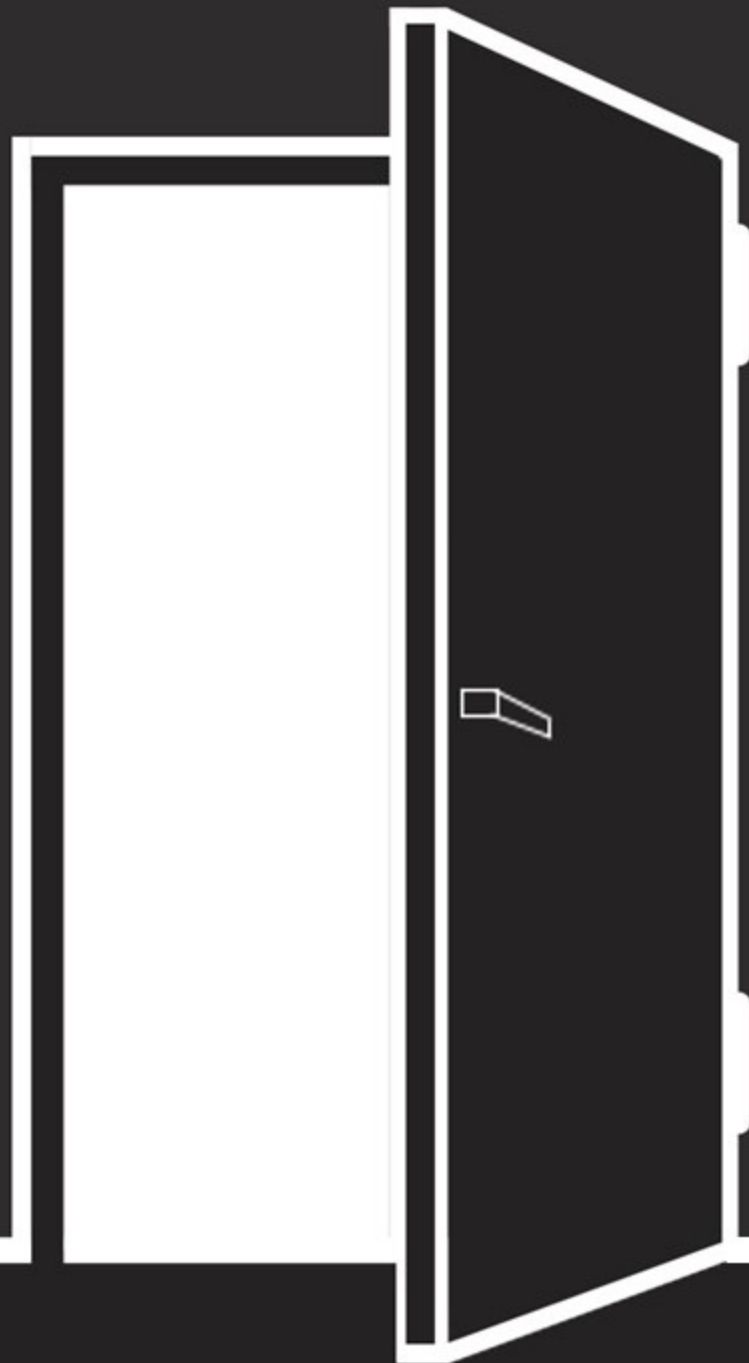


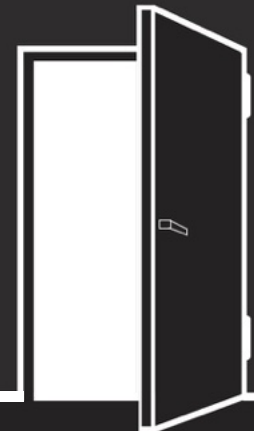
Prejudice Free Faith

James 2:1–13



First-Century Bigotry

- Race-, class-, and gender-based hatred was a problem in the first century—inside and outside of Christianity.



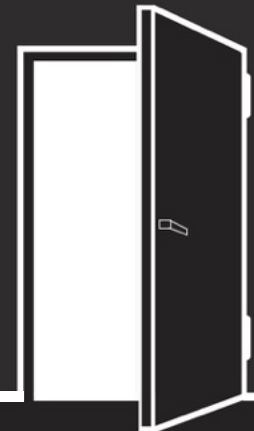
Yet the customs [e.g., Sabbath-keeping] of this most base people [the Jews] have so prevailed that they are adopted in all the world, and the conquered have given their laws to the conquerors. —Seneca (d. AD 65), *On Superstition*

The ... practices of the Jews are sinister and revolting. ...
Wretches of the most abandoned kind. ... But the rest of
the world they confront with the hatred reserved for
enemies. —Tacitus (d. AD 120), *Histories*

The best of the gentiles, kill them! [or perhaps, the best of the gentiles are killers.] —Babylonian Talmud (AD 500)

First-Century Bigotry

- Race-, class-, and gender-based hatred was a problem in the first century—inside and outside of Christianity.
- Partiality was one of the first issues that the early church had to address (Acts 6:1–7; 10:1–11:18; 15:1–35).
- Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament condones prejudicial attitudes and actions (Lev 19:33–34; Rom 10:12–13; Gal 3:28).



33 And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:33–34 NKJV

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek,
for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon
Him. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD
shall be saved.”

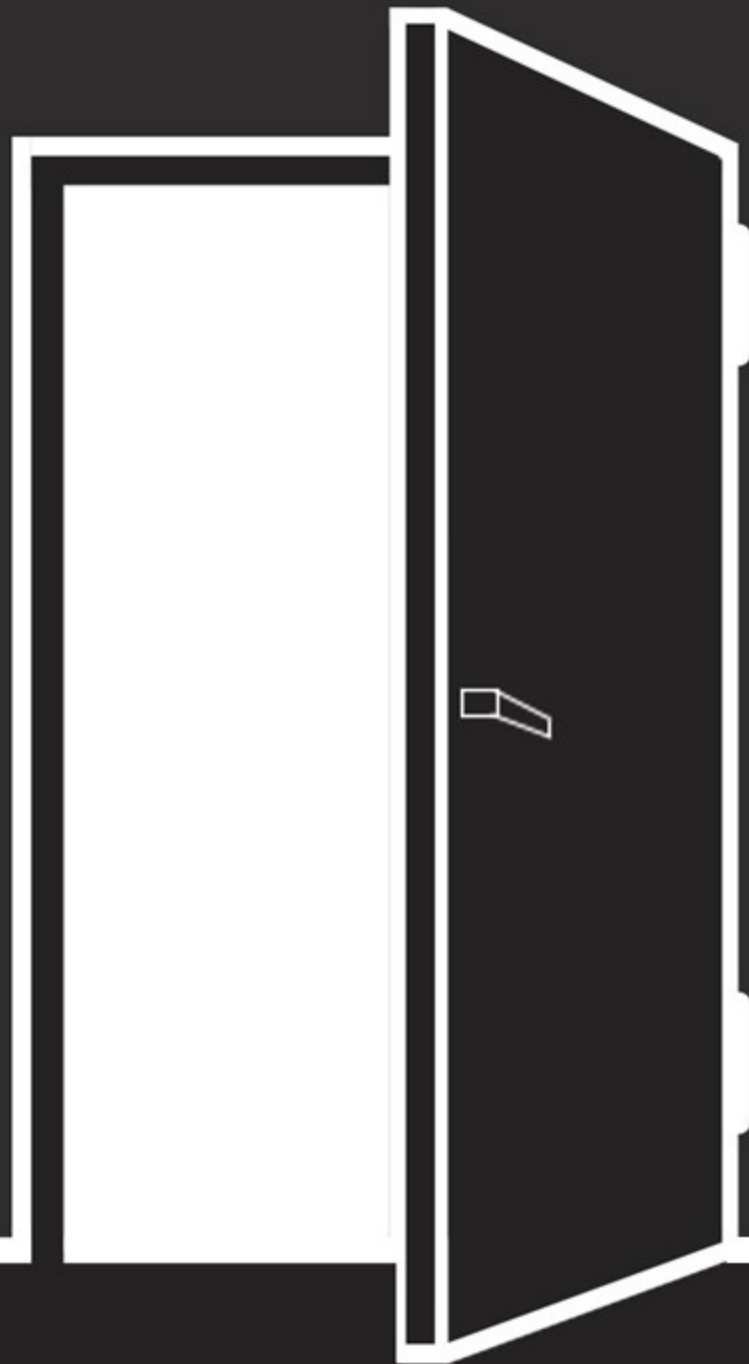
Romans 10:12–13 NKJV

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28 NKJV

Prejudice Free Faith

James 2:1–13



1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ...

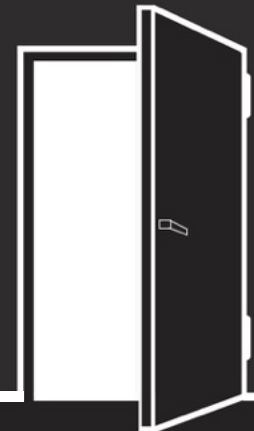
5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? 8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ...

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:1–13 NKJV

Partiality Incompatible with Faith

- James 2:1–13 applies the principles of the preceding context (1:22–27 = *doers, law of liberty, benevolence*)
- We cannot claim to be faithful to Jesus Christ while showing partiality toward other people—Christians or non-Christians (Jas 2:1–4; cf. 1:9–11; John 7:24).



9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, 10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

James 1:9–11 NKJV

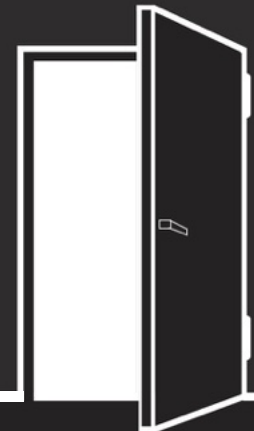
Do not judge according to appearance,
but judge with righteous judgment.

John 7:24 NKJV

How do people deal with race-, social-, and gender distinctions? Some wrongly show partiality, others foolishly deny all differences, and still others rightly recognize the variation but do not condemn it.

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- Spiritual and social realities compel us to think and act impartially toward others (Jas 2:5–7).
 - (1) divine election (1 Cor 1:26–29; Luke 6:20)



26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

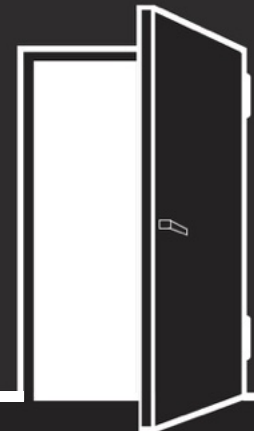
1 Corinthians 1:26–29 NKJV

Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:
“Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.”

Luke 6:20 NKJV

Partiality Incompatible with Faith

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(2) cultural exploitation (5:1–7a; cf. Rev 13:1–10)



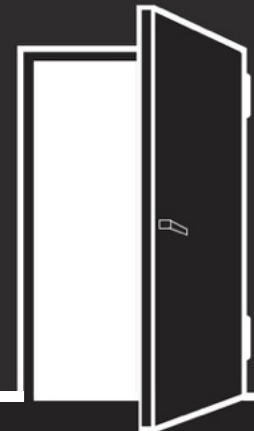
1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. 4 Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. ...

6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. 7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

James 5:1–7a NKJV

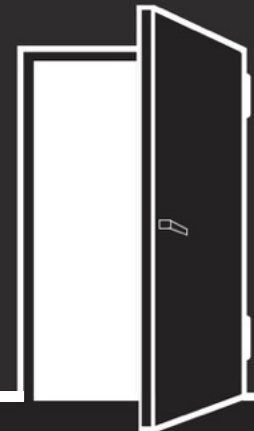
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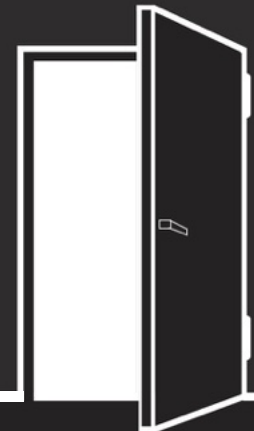
Partiality Incompatible with Faith

- An impartial faith arises from thinking, speaking, and doing the principles of the law—particularly the law to love others (Jas 2:8–13; cf. vv. 14–26; Rom 13:8–10).
- Partiality is sinful and invites the judgment of God; only those who love as God loves will escape condemnation.



Universal Applications

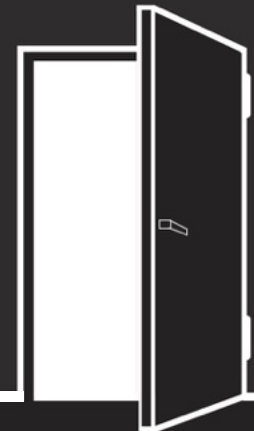
- In a culture that lauds a false sense of social justice, we must demonstrate that Christ is the only real solution to the problem of partiality (Jas 2:1, 8, 12–13; Gal 3:28).



One sign and wonder ... that ... prove[s] the power of the gospel is that of reconciliation. ... Hindus ... [and] Islamic “saints” ... cannot duplicate the miracle of black and white together, of racial injustice being swept away by the power of the gospel. —Vinay Samuel

Universal Applications

- In a culture that lauds a false sense of social justice, we must demonstrate that Christ is the only real solution to the problem of partiality (Jas 2:1, 8, 12–13; Gal 3:28).
- We must fight the impulse to prejudge prospects of the gospel because of their appearance (Matt 28:18–20).
- Since we (Christians) are part of the same family, we must love one another impartially.



Prejudice Free Faith

James 2:1–13

