

faith, hope, love

James 2:1-13
Inductive Discovery Lesson 2

Honoring Your Faith James writes for people who are learning to live their faith in real ways in everyday life. In chapter one he tackled the problem of trials and temptations. As true believers, we must embrace the fact that trials are meant for our growth. God intends for us to endure and emerge stronger than before. As sinners saved by grace, we dare not ignore the reality of temptation: always enticing but never harmless. Don't flirt with temptation, James warns, or it will trip you up!

The rest of chapter one exposes traps we easily fall into when we get spiritually careless. Quick words and short tempers start spilling out. Hearing stops short of doing. And just going through the motions outwardly begins to pollute real faith that honors our Lord Jesus. After telling his readers to keep themselves unstained by the world (James 1:27) James brings it home with uncomfortable clarity in chapter two. If you're making distinctions among yourselves, how is that different from the world? As you read this chapter, be challenged to stop, look, listen and obey.

Background "The Epistle of James is the 'how-to' book of the Christian life. It is one of the most practical books in the New Testament because it offers instruction and exhortation to Christians who are experiencing problems, as all of us do. As if trials themselves were not bad enough, James points out the dangers that come with them. Besides the obvious pitfall of failing to place our trust in the Lord and thus not enduring, James speaks of prejudice, improper speech, judging one another, leaving God out of our plans, and even bitterness. Like the author of a 'how-to' book, James explains in a few words the responsibilities of a Christian, while supplying apt illustrations from real life..."¹

Working Text for James 2:1-13

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1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. **2** For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, **3** and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” **4** have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. **11** For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

OBSERVE

Start by reading the entire chapter at least once. Now read each section and record what you see. **Use the first column to keep track of what you find in the Bible passage.** (Who? What? When? Where?) Briefly describe, *in your own words*, what it says.

Use the second column to keep track of information you get from other sources such as scripture references, a dictionary, concordance, maps, etc. You can also use this section to jot down **your thoughts, impressions or questions**. *Do your best to follow James' train of thought.* Does he use a word or phrase repeatedly, or emphasize a particular topic? Are his words urgent? Encouraging? Commanding? What issues or problems does he address? What questions does he ask?

James 2:1-7

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

[illegible]

Facts from the passage:

[illegible]

Write the definition of the following words and phrases. Use a regular dictionary or a Bible concordance with Greek Dictionary if you have one.

“law of **liberty**” (vs.12) _____

INTERPRET

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid? **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLY

We don't study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

James 2:1-7

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____?

James 2:8-13

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter to help you remember what it says. _____

Up close and personal

**So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.
For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.
Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

James 2:12-13 ESV

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize the verse in and re-write it here.

Meditate on God's Word

While you memorize this verse, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea—the longer it steeps, the richer the flavor. So give yourself permission to slowly savor God's Word! Use the questions below (like a tea bag) to keep dipping into this verse.

Challenge alert: You won't always see an obvious answer directly from the verse. Just *think and pray* about it and share what the Lord brings to your heart and mind.

Look up. What does this verse teach you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, His promises.)

Look around. What does this verse teach you about the world and people in general?

Look within. What does this verse teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter? How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

Mercy imitates God and disappoints Satan.
- John Chrysostom -

