

*newark united pentecostal church***Lesson Title:** Book of James - Chapter 2**Key Concept:** James is action-oriented “wisdom literature” filled with good advice that reflects the teachings of Proverbs and Jesus. Chapter 2 emphasizes being kind to all, showing your faith by your good deeds.**Scriptures:**

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

(James 2:1 *New Living Translation*)

<sup>17</sup> So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. <sup>18</sup> Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.” <sup>19</sup> You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. <sup>20</sup> How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

(James 2:17–20 *New Living Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** James 2; Matthew 5:46–48, 7:21–27, 25:40; Deuteronomy 1:17, 10:17, 16:19; 1 Sam. 16:7; Proverbs 24:23

**Lesson Thoughts:**

In chapter 2 James focuses on our dealings with others and gives pointed examples to illustrate his two main themes. He warns that we are not to have respect of persons and then explains what genuine faith does and does not look like.

First let's consider respect of persons, or prejudice. Since God has extended his grace to ALL, how can we favor some people over others? James gives the example of someone coming into a meeting in expensive attire and another

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person who is poor, dressed in dirty clothes. Then James says in verses 3–4, “If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, ‘You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor’ — well, doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?”

James states that it is sin to favor one person over another. “There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.” (James 2:13)

The second half of James 2 illustrates what genuine faith (belief) does and does not look like. He writes that faith without good deeds is dead and gives the example in verses 15–16, “Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’ —but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?” James says that even the demons believe (have faith), but tremble in terror. Just believing is not enough!

So, how is genuine faith shown? James gives the examples of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice and Rahab showing herself right with God by hiding the messengers and sending them on to safety. He concludes the chapter with verse 26, “Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.”

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) How can we, as disciples of Christ, demonstrate an attitude of non-discrimination?
- 2) James 2:8 says, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” How can we do this?
- 3) What are some biblical examples of faith shown by good works?
- 4) Think of a time when you witnessed a “good work” in action that demonstrated faith. Describe the situation.

**Next Lesson:** James Chapter 3 (Do a slow read before the next lesson)

### **Notes and Reflections**

- 1) The redemptive plan of salvation is the purest form of impartiality. Meditate upon this statement in light of the following scriptures: John 3:16; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38–39.
- 2) Read James Chapter 2. Take note of James' use of concepts from the Beatitudes and Proverbs.
- 3) Spend time prayerfully considering how you can show your faith by your good works.
- 4) Before the next lesson in this series, do a slow read of James chapter three.