



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE – FEBRUARY 17

ICEBREAKER: We are all familiar with this phrase: “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Can you think of a time in your life where you too quickly judged something or someone and were later pleasantly surprised?



HIGHLIGHT: *Primary Passage from Sunday*

James 2:1-13: My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.



EXPLAIN: *To Be Reviewed before the group gathering*

This week James will discuss the heart behind favoritism and how it goes against God’s heart of mercy in which we have been recipients of.



APPLY: For Group Discussion

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION: *In this passage, James speaks about favoritism. As we discuss, please be mindful that the perspectives, opinions, and experiences of others in the group may differ from yours. Let us encourage one another not to single out any specific social constructs, any political party's stances, or anyone other than ourselves. A good rule of thumb is to focus on how you personally struggle with this topic of favoritism and how you need Christ to help replace judgment with mercy.*

1.) Read vv. 1-7. James introduces the topic of favoritism. What does this text tell you about the heart behind favoritism and God's heart for those that may be neglected?

2.) James gives the example of showing favoritism to the rich over the poor. What are some other places that we may struggle with favoritism and judgment? (Remember our Discussion Guidelines) What are some areas that we see within the church specifically?

3.) Read vv.8-11. What verse or verses stood out to you most and why? What questions do you have surrounding these verses?

4.) Read vv.12-13. How has mercy triumphed judgment in our relationship with God? How does that impact our relationship with others?



RESPOND: Bringing the discussion to a point of action

As we mentioned last week (Hebrews 3:12-13), we have blind spots in our life and we need the Word of God and one another to help us see them and address them. Together, discuss these three questions.

- **Awareness:** Where are potential favoritism blind spots in my life?
- **Habits:** What habits in your life are reinforcing that blind spot?
- **Action:** What can you do this week to begin to break this pattern?