



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
James 2:1-13 | September 28, 2025
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week, James turns from inner struggles of desire to how we treat people around us. In 2:1-13 he confronts **favoritism**—showing partiality to the rich over the poor. God’s kingdom does not run on status or appearance; it runs on mercy. James reminds us that faith in our “glorious Lord Jesus Christ” is incompatible with favoritism. His call is clear: see every person as God sees them, and let mercy triumph over judgment.

II. Connecting with One Another

Think of a time you felt left out or overlooked—how did it hit you, and what stuck with you?

Now flip it: when have you caught yourself giving someone the “VIP treatment”? What was behind that?

III. Study the Text

Read James 2:1-4

- Why does James begin with “believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism,”? What is the connection between these two ideas?
- What picture does he use to illustrate favoritism in a worship gathering?
- How might similar patterns show up today—beyond wealth—such as politics, appearance, race, or personality?

Read James 2:5-7

- Why does James call the poor “rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom,” and what does this reveal about how God sees and values those who have little by the world’s standards?
- How do these verses challenge common ideas about success and influence? For more context, read James 1:9-11.
- In what ways can a community dishonor the poor even without meaning to?



Read James 2:8-11

- James calls loving your neighbor the “royal law.” In what ways does favoritism clash with that royal command?
- Why does James say that even a single act of favoritism makes someone “guilty of breaking the whole law”? What’s he getting at?
- How does this passage broaden our view of sin—showing it’s bigger than just a list of individual slip-ups?

Read James 2:12-13

- James ends by saying “mercy triumphs over judgment.” How does this reshape the way we think about sin, law, and how we treat people who might normally face our judgment?

Reflect and Respond

- Where might favoritism hide in your own heart—toward those who look like you, agree with you politically, share your interests, or can benefit you?
- How can remembering God’s mercy reshape the way you welcome people on Sundays or throughout the week?
- What is one practical change you can make—individually or as a group—to live out mercy instead of partiality?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Thank God for showing mercy to us through Jesus.
- Confess attitudes or actions of favoritism.
- Ask the Spirit to give eyes to see every person as loved by God.
- Pray that your church family would reflect the inclusive love of Christ.

V. Digging Deeper

For additional reflection:

- **Leviticus 19:15** – Do not show partiality to the rich or poor.
- **Matthew 5:7** – Blessed are the merciful.
- **Luke 14:12–14** – Invite those who cannot repay you.
- **Galatians 3:26–28** – All are one in Christ Jesus.
- **1 Peter 2:9–10** – God calls people from every background into his chosen people.

