

James 2:8-13  
July 28, 2024



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

### MAIN POINT

By breaking one of God's laws, we break them all. We cannot be good enough to earn God's favor.

### INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**Have you heard the saying, "Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades"? What does that mean?**

**You probably haven't related that saying to spiritual life, but let's do it now. Why is "Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades" also true about our spiritual lives?**

The quote is from Frank Robinson, who had a long and successful career as a player, coach, and manager in Major League Baseball. The full quote Robinson gave, which



was printed in Time magazine (July 31, 1973) was, “Close don’t count in baseball. Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades.”<sup>1</sup>

While we understand that’s true in baseball, we struggle with that same truth in terms of our spiritual lives. There are many people who believe, where God is concerned, “good enough” is good enough. This is what the religious leaders in Jesus’s day were after—getting as close to perfect as they could so God would be pleased by them. In today’s session we’ll see why they were wrong, and why we’re wrong too when we operate under that mindset.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JAMES 2:8-13.

**Put verses 8-10 in your own words. What was James’s point?**

**How is it that if we break only one law, we have broken them all?**

James pointed out that if we break any law of God, then we are convicted by God as being lawbreakers. All of us, everyone in the world, are lawbreakers. We are all sinners. It doesn’t matter if we are poor or rich, white or black, have sinned a little or a lot, we are all in the same boat. We need a Savior, and that fact should impact our thoughts and behaviors. In our great need, God the Father gave us all His riches through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be as charitable toward others as God has been toward us.

**Why is the message of James 2:8-13 hard for many people to hear and receive?**

**Is it hard for you to embrace that truth? Why or why not?**

Anticipating that some might feel defensive about their previous attitudes and actions, James pointed his readers back to royal law and Jesus’s own words about “[loving] your neighbor as yourself.” Those who tend toward partiality might claim they are simply loving their neighbors. It is good to obey the commandments and loving the wealthy is important if we are also loving the poor in the same manner. James stressed that a demonstration of partiality to one group would indicate guilt of breaking the law.

**How are you tempted to excuse your behavior when it is called out as sin?**

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<sup>1</sup>“Frank Robinson Quotes,” Baseball Almanac, accessed July 11, 2024  
<https://www.baseball-almanac.com/quotes/quorobif.shtml>.



There was, and still is today, a tendency to choose what Scriptures and instructions we want to obey. That is why James moved into the importance of obeying the whole law. Selective obedience or partial obedience is disobedience and unacceptable for a Christ-follower seeking to live in true faith and relationship with Jesus.

### **Why is partial obedience dangerous for believers who want to have a true faith?**

James knew reminding the people how their lives would be judged and evaluated could be a powerful motivator. All believers need to speak and act with the understanding that in God's final judgment, the gospel will be the standard by which we all will be measured. Obedience to Christ sets people free from sin and future judgment. That's why James brought mercy into the conversation. As James connected mercy with loving others and treating them fairly, he connected a lack of mercy with showing favoritism. Those who appreciate and want mercy must also be people who grant mercy—to everyone without regard to status, position, or wealth.

### **Are there ways you—either knowingly or unknowingly—show partiality for or against certain people?**

### **What might be the motivation behind this?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

### **What barriers do you need to overcome to be impartial toward others?**

### **To what person or group will you seek to display more love?**

### **How are we doing as a group? What can we do to love every person better here at FBC Summit?**

## **PRAYER**

*Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.*

Ask the Father to help you truly understand that “almost” isn't good enough. Thank Him that in Jesus, you're not just close enough, you are fully embraced and forgiven of all sin.



## LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study, ***Faith and Works: A Study of James***.

**August 4, 2024 --- James 2:14-19**

## COMMENTARY

### **James 2:8-13**

**2:8–11** Attitudes among Christians should be based on the royal law, which says Love your neighbor as yourself (Lv 19:18; Mt 19:19; 22:39; Mk 12:31; Rm 13:9; Gl 5:14). Favoritism violates this command, thus convicting those guilty of its practice as transgressors of the law.

**2:12–13** James exhorted his readers to have proper attitudes. The phrase, “speak and act”, refers to hearing and doing and tempered speech, as in 1:19–27. The law of freedom, or the gospel, will serve as the basis for eschatological judgment (1:2–12).

