

The Evil of Favoritism in the Church, Part 1

John MacArthur

I. Introduction.

A. Text: James 2:1-13.

B. We do not often talk about God's impartiality. He is unlike us in this characteristic. (II Chronicles 19:7, Deuteronomy 10:17, Malachi 2:9, Acts 10:35)

C. Anyone is accepted by God since He is impartial.

D. All men are judged and disciplined with impartiality. (Romans 2, Ephesians 6, Colossians 3:25, 4:1, I Timothy 5, I Peter 1:16-17)

II. James is concerned that men are not treated with impartiality based on economic and social differences. (Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1, 15, 16:19, Proverbs 24:23, 28:21)

III. Tests for a real faith.

A. How one responds to trials.

B. How one responds to temptations.

C. How one reacts to the Word of God.

D. Whether one is partial towards certain people over others. (I John 3:16, 4:10-12)

IV. Five thoughts.

A. Principle: do not hold the faith of Christ while at the same time holding a respect of persons.

1. The majority of the church has always been poor. (I Corinthians 1:26, James 2:5)

2. A minority was rich. (John 19:38-39, Acts 6:7, 8:27, 10, 13:7, 16:14, 17:4, 18, 11:28-30, II Corinthians 8)

3. James points out that it is unlike God to give preference to any given stratification.

4. Partiality is inconsistent with being a Christian. The value is in the soul.

5. Respect to persons is sin. (James 2:9)

6. One cannot have faith in Christ who revealed what it was to be impartial and be partial. (Matthew 23:16, I John 3, Matthew 20)

B. Example. (Acts 19:37, Luke 15:22, Acts 10:30, Romans 15:5)

C. Inconsistency.

D. Violation.

E. Appeal.

Application questions:

1. Toward what kinds of partiality are your own social circles prone?

2. How would you counsel someone struggling with being impartial towards all?

3. Who is a model for you of partiality? What makes them excellent at being impartial?
