



Defining True Equity

June 3 & 4, 2023

James 2:1-13 (NIV)

My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 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," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: 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? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Equity – The character quality of being fair and impartial.

How to Achieve True Equity in the Body of Christ:

1 Identify favoritism and prejudice.

Verse 1 (NIV) | *My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.*

Five areas we show favoritism and prejudice:

- **Appearance**
- **Achievement**
- **Age**
- **Ancestry**
- **Affluence**

Verse 1 (TEV) | *My friends, as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, you must never treat people in different ways according to their outward appearance.*

- **Favoritism and prejudice are unchristian.**

Romans 2:11 (TPT)

...for God sees us all without partiality.

Galatians 3:28-29 (MSG)

In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal.

That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.

Also, since you are Christ's family, then you are Abraham's famous "descendant," heirs according to the covenant promises.

- **Favoritism and prejudice are unreasonable.**

James 2:5-7 (TLB)

Listen to me, dear brothers: God has chosen poor people to be rich in faith, and the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs, for that is the gift God has promised to all those who love him. And yet, of the two strangers, you have despised the poor man. Don't you realize that it is usually the rich men who pick on you and drag you into court? And all too often they are the ones who laugh at Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear.

- **Favoritism and prejudice are unloving.**

James 2:8-9 (NIV)

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

1 John 4:20 (NLT)

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

James 2:10-13 (TPT)

For the one who attempts to keep all of the law of Moses but fails in just one point has become guilty of breaking the law in every respect! For the same One who tells us, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you don't commit adultery but do commit murder, you are still guilty as a law-breaker. So we must both speak and act in every respect like those who are destined to be tried by the perfect law of liberty, and remember that judgment is merciless for the one who judges others without mercy. So by showing mercy, you take dominion over judgment!

Three steps to improve how we treat everyone:

1. Accept everyone regardless of their beliefs.

Romans 15:7 (NIV)

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 14:1-4 (MSG)

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently. For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume all Christians should be vegetarians and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

2. Appreciate the diversity of the body of Christ.

Philippians 2:3-5 (NCV)

When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others. In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

3. Affirm everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (TPT)

Because of this, encourage the hearts of your fellow believers and support one another, just as you have already been doing.

1 John 3:18 (TPT)

Beloved children, our love can't be an abstract theory we only talk about, but a way of life demonstrated through our loving deeds.

- **We will always be an all-nation congregation.**

Revelation 7:9 (TPT)

After this I looked, and behold, right in front of me I saw a vast multitude of people—an enormous multitude so huge that no one could count—made up of victorious ones from every nation, tribe, people group, and language. They were all in glistening white robes, standing before the throne and before the Lamb with palm branches in their hands.

- **We will always be guided by love, no matter what.**

1 John 4:7-10 (TPT)

Those who are loved by God, let his love continually pour from you to one another, because God is love. Everyone who loves is fathered by God and experiences an intimate knowledge of him. The one who doesn't love has yet to know God, for God is love. The light of God's love shined within us when he sent his matchless Son into the world so that we might live through him. This is love: He loved us long before we loved him. It was his love, not ours. He proved it by sending his Son to be the pleasing sacrificial offering to take away our sins.

- **We will always be a church that receives everyone.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 (GW)

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence.

John 3:16 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Memory Verse

James 2:1 (NIV)

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Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

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