

How Do I Climb The Ladder?

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. ²Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³If 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," ⁴have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ...

⁸If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing right. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers...

¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!" James 1-4, 8-9, 12-13 (NIV)

As we mature in our faith...

- I. We must see the plight of the un-churched.
- II. We must avoid the trap of favoritism / partiality. (James 2:1-2, 9)
- III. We must discover the joy of mercy triumphing over judgment. (James 2:13) Philippians 2:5-11

*"It is my judgment, therefore,
that we should not make it difficult
for the Gentiles who are turning to God."
- Acts 15:19 (NIV)*

James, the brother of Jesus!

Application:

Are you spending your time with those at the top of the ladder or are you reaching down and showing mercy to those at the bottom?!

Small Group & Personal Reflection Questions:

1. In the text for this week, James defines favoritism in terms of wealth and separation between the poor and rich. However, there's also favoritism that comes with "preferring" to be with people like ourselves. Is this a problem that you have thought about?
2. What do you think keeps people from coming to church these days? What can you do to help them connect with God and eventually the church?
3. Can you think of one specific person that would potentially respond to your reaching down with mercy toward them?
4. What would happen if every one of us who is currently at the "top of the ladder" would come down and befriend a person near the bottom of the ladder?
5. Are you committed to serving, investing, inviting, and giving the help so this church is seen as a place that the un-churched are always welcome?