

**DON'T SHOW FAVORITISM**

New Testament Lesson #213

The letter of James is filled with very sound and practical advice for a believer. He puts forward very solid principles by which we can live our lives and be sure to treat all people well.

One such key is to not show favoritism among different people. It is very easy to treat a rich person special and be mean and rude to a poor man. This is not something we should ever do! When someone comes into the church, regardless if they are rich or poor, we need to treat them all with respect and kindness.

James indicates why we should not show favoritism. He says, "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" (James 2:5)? God is the one that calls individuals to a life of faith, so we shouldn't be picking what person we should treat better than another. In fact, the scripture stresses that we should "love your neighbor as yourself" (James 2:8). If we do that then we are doing right.

James then says very clearly, "if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers" (James 2:9). This shows just how important God saw this principle. The Law he gave to the Jews during the time of Moses included special rules to not allow favoritism to be shown to people. This law against favoritism was just as important as any other law that God gave, including those about murder and adultery.

Why is this important to God? It is because of God's great love and mercy towards us. Man has struggled with sin from the time of Adam and Eve. Yet despite man's disobedience, God is willing to provide for us and to provide forgiveness and mercy. If God is so loving and caring for all people, then we need to learn to be the same way. When we start showing favoritism, then we start making some people to have more value or to be more special than others. In a way, we are judging those we don't treat well as not being worthy of special treatment.

From God's perspective this is a bad thing. In fact, James says, "judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13)! Because of this, we should not be judgmental towards others and show

favoritism to a person or group of people, but rather be loving and merciful as God is to us.

**POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

- The Old Testament law that James is referring to is found in Leviticus 19:15. Here it is written: "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."
- Proverbs 24:23 says: "These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good."
- The Apostle Paul reminded the believers in Philippi that they should not show favoritism or consider themselves more important than others. He writes to them, "make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:2-5).
- Jesus taught a parable that is related to this topic. It is found in Luke 14:7-14. Jesus spoke of how we need to not look to get the best seats and the best treatment, but we should look to "take the lowest place" and then wait on an invitation to get a better place. The emphasis of the parable is "for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

**ANSWER KEY:**

Maze reads:

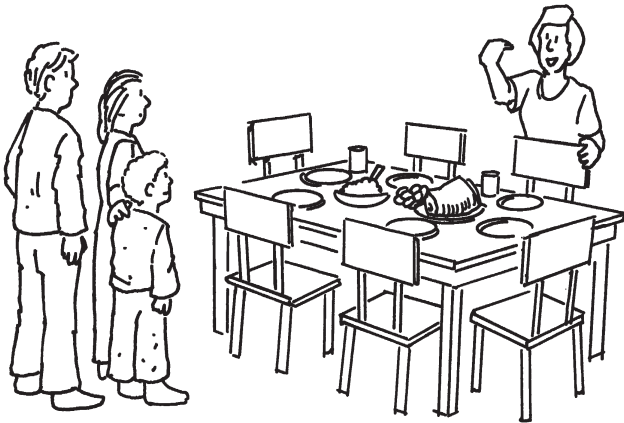
If we show special attention to a person wearing fine clothes and insult the poor person wearing shabby clothes, we discriminate and break God's law, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Whoever keeps the whole law and stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it

m e r c y    t r i u m p h s   o v e r    j u d g m e n t

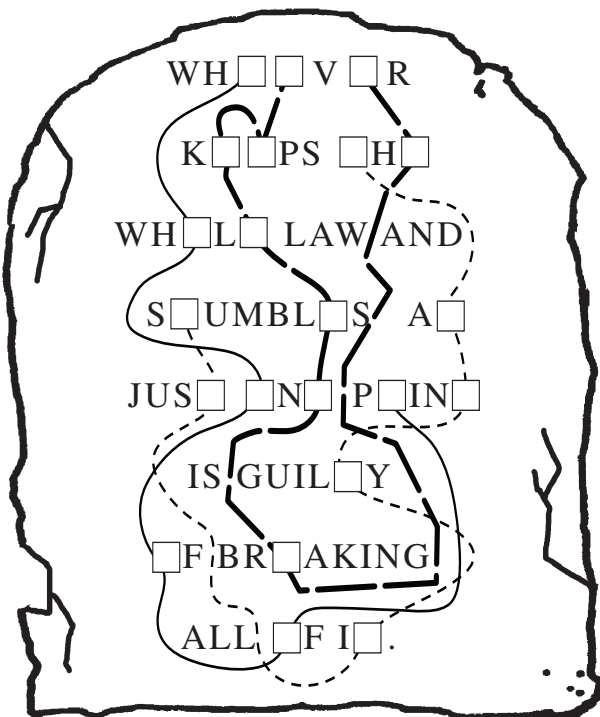
**R**ich or poor, "Love your neighbor as yourself."  
God wants us all to be rich in faith.

Travel through the maze from the ▶ to the ▼.  
Ignore all the X's. Read the message.



▶ I F X N T I O N A N D E X P  
S X W E X A X X X I X H O O  
P W E T P E O T S N X T R X  
E O X T S R L O E S T R E P  
C H S A O X C T H U L S O N  
I A L X N E T O L R A E W X  
R A E W X N H E C I N G X S  
I N G X F I , S X Y B B A H  
S I D X E W X " L E I G H B  
C A K O D L A X O N A X R O  
R E X G 'S X W , V X S X Y O  
I R B X D N A X E R E S R U  
M I N A T E X Y O U L F . "

On the broken stone tablet, put a T in every box joined by a --- line, an O in every box joined by a — line, and an E in every box joined by a - - - - line. Read the final message.



Write a word that is the opposite of the given word. Use the initial letters to spell the two missing words.

few ..... — any  
begin ..... — nd  
sink ..... — ise  
hot ..... — old  
old ..... — oung

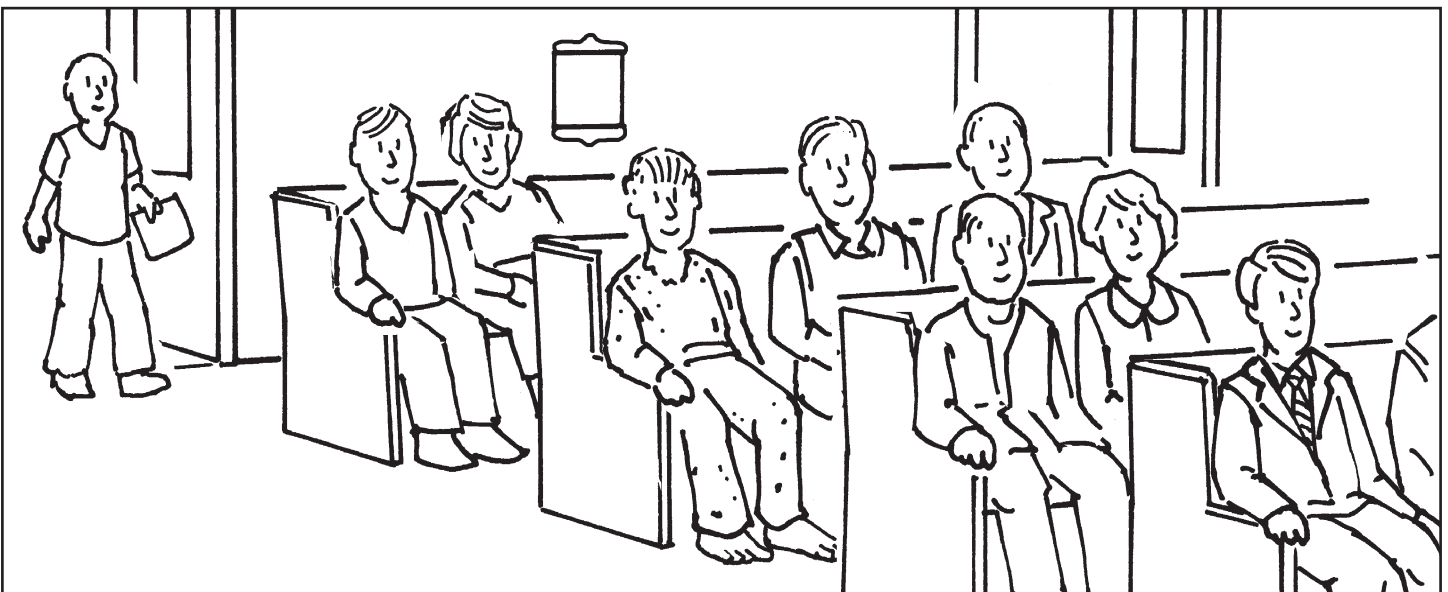
grief ..... — oy  
over ..... — nder  
up ..... — own  
come ..... — o  
less ..... — ore  
west ..... — ast  
yes ..... — o  
wild ..... — ame

\_\_\_\_\_ triumphs over \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**R**ich or poor, "Love your neighbor as yourself."  
God wants us all to be rich in faith.

Circle 8 differences in the 2nd picture. Trace the letters below.



rich in faith

Name \_\_\_\_\_