

# BLUEPRINT

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## FOR A FAITH THAT WORKS

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church  
James 2.1-13 | June 7, 2019  
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### I. Introduction to this Study

- a. This week we continue engaging the book of James, in our series *Blueprint for a Faith that Works*. We've talked through trials from the outside, temptations from within, and God's truth, planted within our souls...and now, James is about to really get personal.

### II. Connecting with One Another

- a. Describe a time when you were on the receiving end of favoritism or showed favoritism towards someone else. Get below the superficial, think about it in terms of socio-economics, race, reputation or maybe political affiliation.

### III. Study the Text

- a. Read James 2.1-13

- i. In verse 1 James clearly states that followers of Jesus should not show favoritism. What example does he give of showing favoritism?

- b. Though the example was a significant issue in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, when the economic divide between the poor and rich was vast, the example is not exhaustive in who is often disenfranchised.

- i. Who are the disenfranchised in the United States? Southern California? The community you live in? Here at Good Shepherd?

- ii. Are you included in any of those? Why did you include yourself?

- iii. Using the lens of the James passage, who are the oppressors of the above groups? Are you included in any of the groups that might be oppressing/ disenfranchising others?

- c. According to verses 4-6, what are the results of this kind of favoritism?

- d. You might have heard the term "God's upside-down kingdom," which means that God's ways are often opposite of the ways of the world. What's the upside-down kingdom value you see in verse 5?

- i. Now read verses 5-7, but replace "poor" with one of the disenfranchised groups you chose above and "rich" with the group that participates in the oppression.

1. Re-read verses 5-7 again choosing a different disenfranchised group.

2. What thoughts, feeling or emotions came up as you did the above exercise?



- e. When have you (or our church) failed to obey God in practicing equality of treatment?
- f. According to verses 5-7, why is it ridiculous to dishonor the poor (or the disempowered)?
- g. Why is it equally ridiculous to honor the rich (or those with power)?
- h. In verse 8 James reminds us of the royal law of Jesus, what is it?
- i. Read verses 8-11, what contrast do you find between keeping the royal law with not keeping it?
- j. How does breaking one law make a person guilty of breaking the whole royal law?
- k. Read verse 12. What would it mean for your life to live like one who is going to be judged by the law of freedom?
- l. Explain what James means in verse 13 when he writes that judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy?
- m. When have you seen or experienced mercy triumph over judgment?

#### IV. Pray

- a. Ask God to reveal to you the ways in which you have or do break His royal law. Confess your need for his mercy. Pray about how you need to follow His mandate to "love your neighbor as yourself."
- b. Pray for the poor, the needy, orphans and widows, for the oppressed and for those who find themselves aliens in a foreign land. Ask God to make you sensitive to the tendency that you might have to honor some people or groups above others.

