

## Culture Codes: Presence > Preference

James 2:1-13

### Introduction:

Over the course of five weeks, Pastor Kevin is taking the church through a series called “Culture Codes.” The purpose of this series is to look at the attitudes and practices that we should be demonstrating to one another and in our spheres of influence. Each week we will look at a passage of Scripture, discuss the content, and then seek ways that it applies to our lives. This is merely a discussion guide that is meant to help you move the conversation forward. Life Group members are welcomed to utilize resources for taking the discussion deeper. When utilizing The Moody Bible Commentary for this passage, you can find the content on pages 1950-1951. - JF

### Questions:

Take a moment and consider a time when you showed favoritism. This can be something silly like favoring a type of cereal or it can be something serious about favoring a person. Why did you choose the particular memory you did to highlight favoritism? Now consider the current areas of your life where you are tempted to show favoritism. What are those areas of favoritism? Why do you believe you show favoritism? Is favoritism always bad? Why or why not? Does our culture show favoritism? If yes, to whom do they show favoritism? Why is hurt by showing favoritism?

Read James 1:1-13. Who wrote the book of James? Why was this book written? What is the main point of James? How would you paraphrase the section of Scripture that the group read? What was the overarching theme/point of the verses that were read? Why did James need to share these verses with the Church? What does it mean to show no partiality? How was the early Church showing partiality? Why was James warning against such a practice? Recall stories from the Gospels; how did Jesus demonstrate equality and not favoritism?

Why does appearance play a large role in the way people show favoritism? Describe a time when you were looked favorably (or less than favorably) upon because of your outward appearance? How did that make you feel? What did you do to remedy that feeling? What did others do to remedy that situation (if anything)? How has this memory caused a lasting impact in the way that you show or don't show favoritism?

Now, consider other ways in which we exhibit favoritism within the church. Discuss ways in which we show favoritism towards people (*staff and non-staff alike*), activities (*Life Groups, Bible studies, events*), and services (*worship music, worship leaders, gatherings like Ash Wednesday or Good Friday*). In what way(s) have you personally shown favoritism in the aforementioned or brainstormed areas? Pastor Kevin has called us to provide our *presence* over our *preference*. What might you practically do to provide your presence over your preference? Why is it important to be present rather than giving over to your preference each time? How does our presence reflect Christ's character more than our preference?

In what way(s) is our presence connected to our humility and our ability to pastor others? Is there anything else from Pastor Kevin's sermon that you would like to discuss? Is there anything from your own study or observation of this passage that you would like to discuss?

### Conclusion:

As a group, consider praying for an increased desire to be present with people and at activities. In addition to praying for an increased desire, consider finding ways to encourage yourself and others (in your Life Group and in the church) to be present so that ministry can take place and God's glory would be revealed.