

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – May 1, 2022

Theme: James: Faith in Action Topic: Treating People Equally

Main Texts: James 2:1-13

Key verse: James 2:1 – *‘My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?’ (NLT)*

INTRODUCTION: The book of James has opened our eyes to practical living as people who have faith in God. Last week, we heard God saying to us, *“Do what God’s word says. Don’t merely listen to it, or you will fool yourselves.”* (James 1:22 GW). We also looked at a few areas of life and living where God’s word needs to be lived out. Today’s topic singles out one more specific area – treating people equally. Do you treat everyone you meet equally? Is it even possible to treat people equally? The Lord does not give us impossible tasks and commands. As we saw last week, God’s words are not mere rhetoric, they are meant to be fully obeyed! (Psalm 119:4) James anchors this command on *‘the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory’*. (James 2:1) That is, if indeed we have faith in Jesus Christ, then we have no reason to show partiality or favoritism in the way we treat others, *‘For God shows no partiality (undue favor or unfairness; with Him one man is not different from another)’* (Romans 2:11 AMP). In addition, we are to be *“imitators of God (copy Him and follow His example) as well-beloved children (imitate their father)”* (Ephesians 5:1 AMP).

1. **(a) What factors influence how we generally categorize people in the society today? And how do these categorizations contribute to how people are treated? (b) Bearing these categorizations in mind, what do you think about the command to treat people equally? Is it impossible, difficult or a challenging task? Explain your answer (c) Which category of people do you find most difficult to treat equally? How does the command to imitate God challenge or help you to treat people equally?**

Treating all humans equally is a tough, if not impossible aspiration for man. Yet, God says we should do it, especially those who claim to have faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, if other people find it impossible, God’s people should not. God can take this stance because *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves His children, too... Loving God means keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.”* (1 John 5:1-4 NLT). Simply put, faith in Jesus Christ confers the power to do that which other people find impossible. During Jesus’ time on earth, He related to both poor and rich, sinners and religious, sick, and healthy, alike. He rebuked people of all social classes in the same way. He healed people of all classes. He went about doing good to all. No favoritism. No partiality, not even to the poor (Leviticus 19:5). James warns that if we show partiality then we are guilty of breaking the law.

2. **(a) Read Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 100:3, 145:9, 18; Matthew 5:45. What underlying principle(s) for treating people equally do we find in these verses? (b) According to James 2: 4 and 9, how does God view those who discriminate against others? (c) What are some ways one would apply the principles in (a) & (b) above in treating others equally? See also Psalm 145:18 and John 14:21.**

The slogan, ‘dress the way you want to be addressed’ has permeated our society, homes, and even the body of Christ in this generation. Without much thought, we tend to give better treatment and attention to some people because of their dressing and status or their influence in the society. Some members of the family also tend to get better treatment than others. The truth is it ought not to be so. James clearly tells us that this is sin (James 2:9). And if one still finds it difficult to relate how faith in Christ and or being created equally by God applies to treating others equally, James puts forth one more basis - the royal law: *‘If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” you do well’* (James 2:8 NKJV). Christ’s ‘new command’ *‘Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.’* (John 13:34 NIV), is yet another basis.

3. **(a) Let participants identify some of the people we tend to treat unequally. (b) Discuss practical ways the royal law and Jesus’ new command can serve as antidote to these tendencies, especially at home, church, and the marketplace? (c) Who in the category mentioned in (3a) above do you need to start loving as Christ loves you? What would you do differently this week?**

Prayer: *Our dear heavenly Father, we thank You for today’s lesson. We pray that we will always remember to treat people equally because that is how You have treated us, Amen.*