



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3

DISCUSSION GUIDE



WEEK ONE

POISONOUS PARTIALITY, PART 1

James 2:1-7

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about partiality that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. What practical example does James give to illustrate partiality or favoritism? What other forms might this type of favoritism take?
2. What is the connection in this story between the clothing details (v. 2) and what James calls "evil thoughts (v. 4)"?
3. James does not say that the poor inherit the kingdom simply because they are poor. What is the determining factor in verse 5 as to whether or not a person will be an heir of the kingdom?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Why might people be tempted to give special treatment to the wealthy?
2. Can this prohibition against favoritism be applied to worldly attributes other than wealth? If so, which attributes?
3. How do we contradict our identity in Christ if we give special treatment to the wealthy? See Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 18:22; Ephesians 1:18; 3:16; and Hebrews 11:26.
4. Why is showing favoritism on the basis of wealth or other worldly attributes contrary to the character of God? See Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Leviticus 19:15; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; and Ephesians 6:9

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- How do we know if we are being "partial"? Are you more likely to treat someone better if they look nicer?
- Why are we tempted to treat those who seem important better than those who don't

- What kind of special blessing does God show those who have less?
- Why can riches create more temptation to take advantage of others? How can you fight this temptation?

APPLICATION

Think about the people you interact with during a typical day. Do you show favoritism? How so? Consider how Jesus would treat these people and ask him to change your heart towards them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*The Beautiful Community: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best*](#)

Book: [*Good News to the Poor: Social Involvement and the Gospel*](#)

Article: “[Don’t Be a Rich Fool](#)”

Article: “[What Did Jesus Teach about the Poor?](#)”

Podcast: “[Rich in Mercy](#)”



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3

WEEK TWO

POISONOUS PARTIALITY, PART 2

James 2:1-7

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about partiality that you can apply to your life this week?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. List some ways that favoritism might be shown. Which way are you most prone to? What action can you take to fight against it?
2. The doctrine of [imago Dei](#), "the image of God," says every human life is worthy of honor and dignity. How does this affect your perspective on justice issues? Are you partial to wanting justice more for one group of people than for another?
3. How have you seen someone show honor to an individual without dishonoring another person?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

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- How do we know if we are being "partial"? Are you more likely to treat someone better if they look nicer?
- Why are we tempted to treat those who seem important better than those who don't?
- What kind of special blessing does God show those who have less?
- Why can riches create more temptation to take advantage of others? How can you fight this temptation?

APPLICATION

Reflect on how you personally show respect and disrespect to people. Ask Jesus to change your heart towards the people you tend to disrespect.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*The Beautiful Community: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best*](#)

Book: [*Weep with Me: How Lament Opens a Door for Racial Reconciliation*](#)

Book: [*Practicing Affirmation*](#)

Article: [“The Image of God: An Approach from Biblical and Systematic Theology”](#)

Article/Video: [“We Need a Theological Framework for Racial Reconciliation”](#)

Article: [“Racism, Prejudice, and Christ”](#)

Podcast: [“A First Step toward Racial Reconciliation”](#)



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3



WEEK THREE

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

James 2:8-13

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about loving your neighbor that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. What is meant by the "royal law"?
2. While partiality is not mentioned in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-19), how does partiality relate to God's law? What does James say is the verdict for those who show partiality?
3. Why does James call the law the "law of liberty"?
4. How does mercy triumph over judgement?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What would you say to someone who believes that God will accept them into heaven because they keep all the "important" commandments (vv. 10-11)?
2. What will be the basis of God's judgment on the last day? (vv. 12-13; also see Luke 6:49, 9:26 and John 12:47-48)

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- Can you show partiality while obeying the command to "love your neighbor as yourself"? Why or why not?
- Why are murder, adultery, and partiality all sinful?
- If we do not show mercy to others, should we expect mercy from God? Why or why not?
- What motivates Christians to show mercy?
- What are specific ways you can ask God to help you grow in showing mercy to others?

APPLICATION

The best way to be ready to respond in a godly and loving manner when you encounter favoritism or partiality is to pray for boldness and to prepare words of love. Take time right now to pray for your neighbor and brainstorm a few ways to tangibly demonstrate love to them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*The Gospel Comes with a House Key*](#)

Book: [*The Art of Neighboring*](#)

Article: “[3 Practical Ways to Love Your Neighbor](#)”

Article: “[How to Love God and Your Neighbor through Your Work](#)”



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3



WEEK FOUR

THE DANGER OF A DEAD FAITH

James 2:14-17

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about faith that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. In verses 14-16, James asks three rhetorical questions. After putting the questions in your own words, take some time to answer them.
2. What is James teaching about the relationship between faith and works?
3. How does James describe a faith that has no accompanying works? What does such a faith imply about one's relationship with Jesus?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. When should we be skeptical of someone's claim to have faith? Why?
2. In verse 16, James gives an example of empty words that benefit no one. What would you think of someone who speaks "empty words" such as these? What might the person's true attitude be?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- If we have faith in Jesus, why should others see good works in our lives?
- If someone who claims to be a Christian regularly passes up opportunities to help others, what might that indicate about their faith in Jesus?
- Is "dead" faith true faith? How can we tell if our faith is dead?
- What is the danger of dead faith? How do we guard against it?

APPLICATION

Make a list of the types of works in which you typically express your faith. Do you think James would consider your faith useful or useless? Ask God to open your eyes to the new works you can do to love others and display your faith.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*The Beautiful Community: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best*](#)

Book: [*Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear*](#)

Article: “[The Heart of True Activism](#)”

Article: “[4 Ways to Read the Bible for Personal Application](#)”



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3

WEEK FIVE

SHOWING FAITH BY WORKS

James 2:18-26

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about the relationship between faith and works that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. In verses 18-20, how does James distinguish between intellectual assent and true faith?
2. Read Genesis 22:1-18. How do Abraham's faith and actions work together in this passage? Considering James 2:22, how was Abraham's faith completed by his actions?
3. Read Joshua 2:1-24 and 6:20-25. How did Rahab demonstrate her faith? What was the result of her actions (see James 2:25 and Heb. 11:31)?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How does this passage, especially verse 24, relate to the Reformation era doctrine that one is saved "by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone"?
2. If you had to work to earn or retain your salvation, what problems would you encounter?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- What does it mean that we are justified by "faith alone"? Can works earn our salvation?
- How does verse 22 help us understand what James means in verse 24? ?
- What works did Abraham and Rahab do that proved their faith (see Gen. 15 and Josh. 2 for a refresher)?
- What are examples of works that your family can do together?

APPLICATION

Have you attempted to do good works in order to earn or retain God's favor? Make a list of things you do with this motivation (Ex. Go to church, read the Bible, etc.). Then, pray through your list and ask the Holy Spirit to help you do these actions out of a love for God and others.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*Justified By Faith Alone*](#)

Book: [*Everyday Faithfulness*](#)

Book: [*The Whole Christ*](#)

Article: "[How Does Justification Work?](#)"

Article: "[What Does It Mean that We're 'Justified By Works'?](#)"

Article: "[Why Ordinary Faithfulness Is Enough](#)"

Article: "[Why Every Generation Must Contend for Justification Sola Fide](#)"



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3

WEEK SIX

A SMALL TONGUE, A BIG PROBLEM

James 3:1-5a

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about the relationship between faith and works that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. In verse 2, the word translated as "perfect," *teleios*, also means "mature" or "fully developed." Read verse 2 with this understanding and consider: what is James saying about the power that the tongue can have on the rest of the body?
2. James gives two illustrations in verses 3-4. What are other examples of something small controlling something big?
3. Does James describe the tongue as a positive or negative force in verses 2-5a? Which words indicate that?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Why should we be cautious about taking on the responsibility of teaching? What role does humility play in the teaching and mentoring of others?
2. What are some of the most memorable words others have spoken into your life? What does this reveal about the significance of words?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- What do teachers do more than other people? Why could this be a problem?
- James gives us several examples of small things with big impact. Can you think of other examples?
- Why does the tongue have such a large impact on others?
- Can you think of a time when your tongue caused a problem? What is one way you can better control your tongue?

APPLICATION

Reflecting on this passage, what aspect of your own speech is most in need of correction? Ask God to help you discern between speech that is helpful and speech that is harmful. Memorize James 3 so that you have God's Word in your heart to encourage you to use your tongue constructively rather than destructively.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*With All Your Heart*](#)

Book: [*Parenting with Words of Grace*](#)

Book: [*A Way with Words*](#)

Article: "[Meditate On and Mutter God's Word](#)"

Article: "[Help! I Can't Get Control over My Tongue](#)"

Article: "[Women Have a Way with Words](#)"



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3



WEEK SEVEN

BLESSING AND CURSING

James 3:6-12

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about the tongue that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. Why can we tame every type of animal but not tame our own tongue? Explain verse 8 in your own words.
2. What contradiction does James highlight with his illustrations in verses 9-12? How does this contradiction relate to Matthew 7:16-18?
3. What does Jesus teach about the significance of our words in the following passages: Matthew 12:34-35; 12:36-37; 15:11; and 15:16-20?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Reflecting on your own experiences, explain why people's words can be so hurtful.
2. What would you say to someone who professes faith in Christ but is either unwilling or seemingly unable to control their tongue?
- 3.. How does an uncontrolled tongue damage families, marriages, friendships, children, and the church?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- Why can't we ever perfectly tame our tongue? Who is the one person who has?
- What kind of speech should we expect from a Christian?
- How can speech be used for evil? Why is it wrong to speak evil of someone?
- If a Christian uses evil speech, what steps should he or she take to make things right?

APPLICATION

Make a list of anyone you have hurt with your words recently. Go to each person and ask for forgiveness. Then ask the Holy Spirit to help you increasingly develop control over your tongue.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*With All Your Heart*](#)

Book: [*Parenting with Words of Grace*](#)

Book: [*A Way with Words*](#)

Article: "[God, Help Me Guard My Tongue](#)"

Article: "[The Ministry of Holding One's Tongue](#)"

Article: "[Help! I Can't Get Control over My Tongue](#)"

Article: "[Women Have a Way with Words](#)"



FAITHWORKS

JAMES 2-3



WEEK EIGHT

WISE WORDS VS. WICKED WORDS

James 3:13-18

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about wise words that you can apply to your life this week?

BIBLE STUDY

1. According to this passage, how do we judge whether or not someone possesses genuine wisdom (See also Matt. 11:19; Prov. 2:20)?
2. Jesus encourages people to come and learn from him because he is "gentle and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29). Paul declares his authority as an apostle and teacher after pleading "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1). Based on these statements and our passage in James, why is humility, or meekness, an essential sign of wisdom?
3. List the characteristics of earthly wisdom (vv. 14-16) and then the characteristics of wisdom from above (vv. 17-18). Summarize each list in your own words.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Who are some leaders, past or present, you look up to (personal, local, national, etc.)? How do their leadership characteristics align with this passage in James?
2. What are some practical ways you can bring peace during conflict?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- How would you describe someone who is wise?
- What does this passage teach us to look for in a wise person?
- What does this passage teach us to look for that proves we are not acting wisely?
- Can you be smart but not wise? What would that look like?
- How can we seek to grow in wisdom?

APPLICATION

Examine your own heart and life in light of this passage and consider whether you possess true wisdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas in your speech, heart, and life where you need to make changes and ask him for the power to implement those changes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*With All Your Heart*](#)

Book: [*Parenting with Words of Grace*](#)

Article: "[Are You Addicted to Outrage?](#)"

Article: "[Words Can Hurt: 8 Ways We Wound Others](#)"

Article: "[The Ministry of Holding One's Tongue](#)"