

## Small Group Leader's Guide – Oct. 6

Read James 2:1-13

1. What is James' basis for his command for us not to show favouritism? (Hint: James makes three appeals from verse 1)

James appeals to 1) our being family. We are brothers and sisters. 2) He appeals to our common and held faith in Jesus Christ. 3) He appeals to Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory - that is, Jesus is our standard and measure of the human life lived gloriously on earth.

2. Read verses 2-4. Playing favourites divides and makes distinctions in the church. How can you see this play out in our Little T community?

As a church mostly composed of young families and married people with many children, we can unconsciously exclude unmarried people, singles, disabled people, people who lost loved ones, who are divorced, who cannot have and have lost children. We can create these distinctions and make our church inhabitable for these groups of people.

3. Read verses 5-7. Playing favourites derides and dishonours God and the people we are supposed to welcome and receive. How does playing favourites dishonour God and unfavourable people?

God favours the unfavourable of the world. If we do not show favour to them, we mock the Name of God. While we are all called to respond to God's free offer of grace and forgiveness, God especially sides with those who do not have the world's favour. If that's the case, God does indeed have His favourites. But He doesn't play favourites but extends mercy to everyone.

4. Read verses 8-10. How does playing favourites break the whole royal law of God and go against the second Great Commandment?

Breaking the second Great Command breaks the first. Playing favourites does not love one's neighbour. And so, we do not love God. Breaking these two Great Commands breaks the whole law of God. A neighbour is anyone who is in proximity to you. When we distinguish one neighbour from the other, we do not love as we ought. We don't love when we only love those who are loveable.

5. Read verses 11-13. James ends this section with "Mercy triumphs over judgement." Reflect on how Christ's mercy overcame the judgement we deserved. How does Jesus's mercy towards us shape us to become a church that lives out the Gospel?

First, we need to realise we don't deserve God's favour and love. We must consider the reality of our personal weakness, our spiritual and moral poverty, our constant need for forgiveness, rescue, and redemption. Second, in light of that, we need to realise that God still turned to us in His love and infinite grace. He did not treat us as we deserved. Because of that, how can we but live our lives as people of mercy and grace, showing and receiving mercy? As people who received undeserved generosity from God, we must likewise show generosity and favour to all.