

Open with prayer

Review Bible memorization verses:

Discuss struggles from this past week, and/or areas of expected upcoming struggle.

My brothers and sisters, practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by not favoring one person over another. James 2:1

If you favor one person over another, you're sinning, and this law convicts you of being disobedient. James 2:9
being devoted to one another in brotherly love, giving preference to one another in honor, Romans 12:10

Favoritism is partiality or bias. To show favoritism is to give preference to one person over others with equal claims. It is similar to discrimination and may be based on conditions such as social class, wealth, clothing, actions, etc.

The Bible is clear that Favoritism is not God's will for our lives.

- **Favoritism is incongruent with God's character:** *"God does not show favoritism"* (Romans 2:11). All are equal before Him. Ephesians 6:9 says, *"There is no favoritism with Him."* Colossians 3:25 teaches God's fairness in judgment: *"Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism."*
- **The Bible teaches Christians are not to show favoritism:** *"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism"* (James 2:1). The context concerns the treatment of rich and poor in the church. James points out that treating someone differently based on his financial status or how he is dressed is wrong. The Old Testament provides similar instruction regarding favoritism. Leviticus 19:15 teaches, *"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."* Exodus 23:3 likewise commands, *"Do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit."* Both rich and poor should be treated equally before the law.
- **Favoritism is sin:** *"If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers"* (James 2:8-9). Favoritism is a serious offense against God's call to love one's neighbor as oneself.
- **Leaders are especially charged not to show favoritism:** Paul commanded Timothy, a young church leader, *"I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism"* (1 Timothy 5:21).

What does this have to do with Best Friends, and Girl Friends?

It is difficult to avoid showing favoritism. Even Christ's closest followers struggled with bias against people different from them. When the apostle Peter was first called to minister to non-Jewish people, he was reluctant. He later admitted, *"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right"* (Acts 10:34-35). The fact that James specifically addresses the sin of favoritism implies that this was a common problem within the early church.

New Bible memory verse for the week:

Philippians 2:1-4 (LSB)

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, fulfill my joy, that you think the same way, by maintaining the same love, being united in spirit, thinking on one purpose, doing nothing from selfish ambition or vain glory, but with humility of mind regarding one another as more important than yourselves, not merely looking out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

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