



LIFE GROUP STUDIES AUTUMN 2024

3 FAITH IN THE CHURCH

JAMES 2. 1 - 13

Retrospective

Have you been 'quicker to listen, slower to speak and slower to become angry' this last week? (James 1.19) What difference has it made to you? To others?

READ JAMES 2. 1-13

No favouritism or discrimination

Have you ever felt left out because others were favoured above you? What was it like? Have you ever been discriminated against? Have you been able to call it out?

- Are we ever guilty of discrimination in church? Look at verses 2-7 in the light of our study a few weeks ago, of Jesus' words about the rich as well as the poor. (Luke 6. 17-26) See also Psalm 82. 2-4. God's heart has always been for the poor and needy.
- Are there other issues, besides material prosperity, which can cause discrimination in church? Eg noisy babies, disabilities and special needs, single adults, gay people. What steps have we taken, to make sure everyone feels welcome?
- Look at 1 John 3. 1-3. God's love doesn't reduce everyone to the lowest common denominator! There's a place in 'The Shack' (by Wm Paul Young) where Mack notices that whoever God is talking about, he says 'He's my favourite' or 'She's my favourite'. The explanation is that God thinks each person is uniquely wonderful. Remember our summer series, on knowing who we are in Christ? He says each one of us is beautiful and special. Can we carry this mind-set into all our interactions?
- Why is humility so fundamental to living this out? Consider Philippians 2. 3-8

The perfect law that gives freedom

- Consider these 3 verses: 'Whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it - not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it - they will be blessed in what they do.' (1.25) ; 'If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right.' (2.8); 'Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.' (2.12)
- What is the royal law? (v 8, cf John 15.12) Why do you think it's called that? In the Old Testament it comes at the end of a passage about not discriminating, in Leviticus 19:9-18. But who famously quoted it, and lived it? See Luke 10. 25-37 and consider this well-known story through the lens of discrimination.
- Why does the royal law give freedom? So where does being judged by it come in? (v 9)
- What do you understand by verses 12-13? Jesus' story of the unmerciful servant might help: Matthew 18. 23-35

Praying it through Share the ways this teaching has touched you and pray for one another.