

Spiritual Wholeness
“Obedience to the Word (Part Two)”

Introduction: Today we continue to explore the passage that began in 1:19 and continues through the end of chapter two. Underscoring a second essential component to Spiritual Wholeness—OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD (Endurance in trials was first)

Obedience to the Word Entails

- 1) Bringing our emotions in with the Word of God.

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 NKJV

- 2) Allowing the Word that saves us to transform every aspect of our being.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21 NKJV

- 3) Insisting on an appropriate response to the Word of God.

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:26-27 NKJV

Today: Further develop the truth regarding obedience to the Word of God.

Theme of Text: Obedience to the Word requires a constancy in our relationships and attitude toward others—VERY SPECIFICALLY SHOWING NO PARTIALITY!

NOTE: Not a text that has been preached or taught in the super-spiritual world of Pentecostalism/Charismatic

Partiality (3 times in text) 2:1, 4, 9—two times it is this Greek word

- Prosopolempsia (pra-sō -pō -lemp-sia)
- Respect of persons
- 2 Greek words—prosopon—face, countenance
- Lambano—to take or receive
- So—“to receive the face”

Picture: To receive or accept someone based on appearance (skin color, clothes, wealth, external)-sharing partiality.

Example James Gives

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? James 2:1-4 NKJV

- Meeting in the Synagogue (assembly) v. 2-synagogue
- Two people enter-distinguished by their dress
- One with gold ring/fine clothes—other poor with filthy clothes (same root at James 1:21)

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21 NKJV

- Both need ushers to seat them (may be visitors)
- One a seat of prominence the other a back seat or on the floor

QUESTION:

Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? James 2:4 NKJV

- Greek word here for showing partiality is diakrino
- Same word as 1:6

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6 NKJV

- Separate, make distinctions, double-minded or waver
- Not only are we not to waver in regard to our thoughts about God, neither are we to inconsistently view others and treat them with distinctions no matter who they are

Reveals Evil Hearts v. 4 “became judges with evil thoughts.”

- Hearts and minds have inconsistent view of people harbored in them
- Consistent and godly conduct comes only from a consistent Christian heart and mind

Showing Partiality or Disobedience

Four Crucial Statements

I. Showing partiality is incompatible with authentic faith.

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. James 2:1 NKJV

Four Reasons

A. Scripture is clear that all humanity is endowed with the image of God and yet has fallen and in need of grace.

1. Equal in creation

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:27 NKJV

The rich and the poor have this in common, The Lord is the maker of them all. Proverbs 22:2 NKJV

2. Equal in the fall

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one. Romans 3:10 NKJV

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20 NKJV

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 NKJV

3. Equal in our regeneration

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28 NKJV

B. Only God is truly worthy of special honor

v. 1—Lord of Glory—Glorious One

1. Completely unique
2. None like Him
3. No one else honored above another

C. Our redemption is dependent on the Glorious One becoming impoverished

I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 NKJV

D. The Bible reveals God as being always impartial and we are called to be like Him.

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. Deuteronomy 10:17 NKJV

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV

Authentic Faith is incompatible with showing favoritism

II. Showing partiality is contrary to the noble name by which we are called.

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? James 2:5-7 NKJV

A. Contradicts God's attitude in the gracious act of election.

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? James 2:5 NKJV

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NKJV

B. It makes no sense (to honor rich/dishonor poor)

1. It's the rich who had exploited them
2. Rich who dragged them into court
 - Similar to what happened to Peter and John in Acts
 - Similar to what Paul did
 - Blasphemed the name of Christ

C. They blasphemed the name of Christ

1. For some unknown reason (probably to gain position or prominence) they treated these people better than poor believers.
2. Sadly, believers today are more enamored with the ungodly stars, sports figures, actors/singers, than with less wealthy, but godly believers.

IMPORTANT: James is not counseling believers to treat the wealthy unkindly but is telling them to NOT show deference to them and seek their favor and in so doing, mistreat the poor. Some were seeking the friendship, favor, and flattery of the ungodly poor and thus dishonoring the poor. Partiality is disobedience.

IMPORTANT: Cannot allow in ministry

III. Showing partiality is a transgression of the law believers are called to obey.

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. James 2:8-11 NKJV

- A. Showing partiality is sin (receiving the face)
- B. It is sin because it is a violation of the Royal Law (supreme or governing law)
- C. Jesus re-interpreted the Old Testament law and provided us with the Royal Law

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:34-40 NKJV

NOTE: In Luke—who is my neighbor?

Expanded it—everyone is my neighbor!

D. It is a sin because it disobeys not just a law—but the LAWGIVER!

v. 11—“For HE WHO SAID, do not commit adultery or murder...”

NOTE: It’s about a speaking God—I violate His word when I disobey.

E. We cannot cherry-pick the parts of the law we decide to obey

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. James 2:10-11 NKJV

1. If you murder—you are a law breaker even if you did not commit adultery
2. But law is re-interpreted by Jesus
 - a. Love Lord God
 - b. Love Neighbor
 - c. Can't do one without the other

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4:7-8 KJV

F. Aren't we all doomed?

1. Even in Old Testament—provision for sinner
2. Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement
3. Jesus is our provision

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 NKJV

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 John 2:1 NKJV

4. But must not habitually mistreat others or fail to love without partiality.

IV. Showing partiality will be judged harshly.

So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:12-13 NKJV

A. We will be judged (a theme we often neglect)

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Romans 14:10 NKJV

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV

B. Basis of this judgment is what we DO and SAY

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:36-37 NKJV

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Matthew 16:27 NKJV

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:34-46 NKJV

C. Measuring stick of that judgment is the Law of Liberty

1. Not the Mosaic Law
2. Jesus re-interpreted—Love God with all your heart...
3. How we loved God? Neighbor? All neighbors?

D. Possibilities at the judgment

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:13 NKJV

1. If we fail to show mercy we cannot expect mercy.

Matthew 18—Unfaithful Servant (21-35)

— Owed 10,000 talent—talent= 6,000 days wages (\$7,667.400)

This material is copyrighted. Its use in the local church or in any other setting as a teaching tool or ministry presentation requires written permission from the author.

- Owed 100 denari—denari=100 silver coins 100 days wages (\$13,000)
- 10,000 talents/191,000 years of pay

Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." Matthew 18:32-35 NKJV

2. If we show mercy we can expect it at the judgment

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7 NKJV

E. Mercy triumphs over judgment

1. God's
2. Ours

Conclusion: So harsh? Hard? Must be taken seriously.

Augustine: "I do not understand why the Lord said, if you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments and then mentioned the commandments related to good behavior if one is able to enter into eternal life without them."

ALSO: "Paul said that a man is justified through faith without the works of the law, but not without those works of which James speaks."