

We can learn a lot from crayons. Even though they may have differences, they all fit very nicely in the same box. That's a good picture of the way the church should be. The people that make up the church come in all sizes and colors, and some may even have names that sound different from yours. Some are old and some are young. Some are dressed in very nice clothes, while others may wear clothing that is dirty and worn.

Have you ever noticed people being treated differently because they did not look or act like others?

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote in the Bible that the followers of Jesus should not show favoritism, or treat one person better than someone else. He said, "My friends, if you have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people better than others." James explained that if a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings and a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes, you must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, which the Bible says is wrong.

We must be careful not to show favoritism in our church or anywhere else. We're all God's children, whether we're rich or poor, or of any kind of race. As James said, "You will do all right if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It's the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves."

Dear God, please help us to love one another as You have loved us--showing us how every person is adored by You. We don't want to play favorites with Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

James 2:1-1, 11-13,14-17 (NIV)

Favoritism Forbidden

2 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in.

3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," **4** have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

7 Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

11 For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, **13** because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Deeds

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?

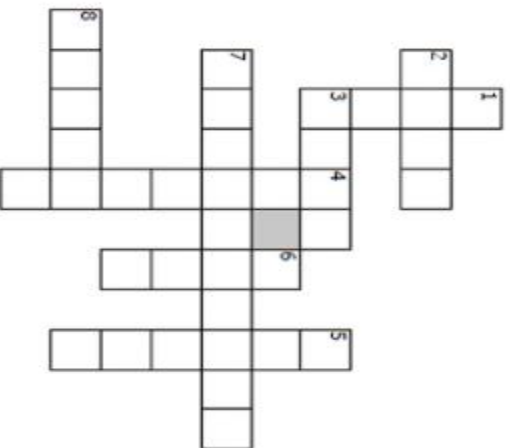
15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

What we think, we become. ~ **Buddha**

Playing Favorites

My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. James 2:1 (NIV)



ACROSS

2. A yellow metal often used in making jewelry
3. Having great material wealth
7. Showing partiality toward a person or group
8. To form an opinion about something or someone

DOWN

1. Having little or no wealth and few or no possessions
4. Articles of dress; wearing apparel; garments
5. Deserving of blame
6. A small band of precious metal worn on the finger

B R O T H E R S N B A S W R R
 Y L P X N E E E G F O I Z F I
 O Q U H G C S G O S G S B I N
 U Y M D Y O U F L B L T W L G
 I T U H H V M M D V F E O T W
 I J D C W C F C P O O R H H D
 P R O D C L O T H E S S C Y T
 G D I S C R I M I N A T E I E
 E Y Y C L U W E N E Z H O T J
 P D U E H E P F S O T L I T J
 N E I G H B O R F B P R K B K
 C P T X H N T P I X O H Y Q I
 X L S Z R F K Y E V W M D P T
 S B Z K N K Z M A G U I L T Y
 F X X O A T X F E K I I X P R

RICH	FAVORITE	FILTHY	DISCRIMINATE	GOLD
CLOTHES	BROTHERS	NEIGHBOR	JUDGE	POOR
EXPLOIT	CHOSEN	SISTERS	GUILTY	RING