

**The Letter of James 2:1 – 13**

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving  
 2 yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer,  
 3 he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.  
 4 <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what  
 5 he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of  
 6 liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who  
 7 acts, he will be blessed in his doing.  
 8 <sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but  
 9 deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion  
 10 that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit  
 11 orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself  
 12 unstained from the world.

13 **2** My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord  
 14 Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup> For if a man wearing a gold ring  
 15 and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in  
 16 shabby clothing also comes in, <sup>3</sup> and if you pay attention to the one  
 17 who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place,"  
 18 while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit  
 19 down at my feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not then made distinctions among  
 20 yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Listen, my  
 21 beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the  
 22 world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has  
 23 promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the  
 24 poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones  
 25 who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who blaspheme the  
 26 honorable name by which you were called?

27 <sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You  
 28 shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> But if  
 29 you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by  
 30 the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law but  
 31 fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said,  
 32 "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do  
 33 not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor  
 34 of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged  
 35 under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one  
 36 who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

**Observation (What does it say?):**

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- What contrasts do you see in this passage? Connect contrasting words or phrases or ideas with lines, or make a list of the contrasts.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

**Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

After observing the passage:

- What connections do you see with the previous passage?
- What was James' thought process between the end of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2? Or did he start on a completely new topic? [Remember that the chapter and verse divisions were added about a thousand years after James wrote his letter.]
- What "distinctions" (v. 4) or kinds of "partiality" (v. 1) might happen in our congregation today? Have you seen any yourself?
- What does the law (v. 8) have to do with partiality?
- What questions come to mind as you read?
- How would you title this passage?

**Application (What does it mean for me?):**

- How the instructions James gives apply to our congregation?
- What can you do related to this morning's worship service to apply this passage?

**For additional thought and discussion:**

Consider “The Ministry of the Pew”

<http://pwac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Training-Topic-The-Ministry-of-the-Pew.pdf>

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

## Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

### **Observation** (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

### **Interpretation** (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

### **Application** (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,  
but draw everything from them,  
and suffer nothing to remain  
hidden that is really in them.  
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see

Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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