

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 4: Obedience to God's Word

Lesson 3
DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well.” James 2:8

A godly principle that will help us through trials and temptations is to be aware of our own shortcomings rather than looking at others' mistakes and failures. When we judge others, we tend to overlook our own accountability before God.

Read James 2:1-13: A Warning about Unfair Bias

1. What tends to make us show partiality and what happens when we do? See vv. 2-4.

We are often partial to the rich because we mistakenly assume that riches are a sign of God's blessing and approval. But God does not promise us earthly rewards or riches; in fact, Christ calls us to be ready to suffer for Him and give up everything in order to hold on to eternal life. If we say that Christ is our Lord, then we must not show favoritism and love all people regardless of whether they are rich, poor or different than we are.

2. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and write what you learn.

3. According to Jeremiah 17:9, describe your heart and what you know about it.

4. As stated in Jeremiah 17:10, the Lord is the only one who knows someone's heart. What does God do to every person's heart, and why?

If we allow worldly thinking to influence us, we lose the love of Christ. Like the world, we will become partial, prejudiced and judgmental. When we are like this, it leaves us vulnerable to temptations and trials. We look at others instead of examining our own hearts.

5. Read James 2:8. What is the fulfillment of the “royal law?”

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6. What happens when we show partiality? (vv. 9-10)

Note: The law here is referring to the Ten Commandments. The law shows our guilt and judges us. Have you ever lied? Then you're guilty too. In Christ Jesus we have been set free. We're at liberty from the law of Moses. James is seeking to show that we are all saved by grace; therefore, we should not be judgmental of others.

7. Read James 2:11-13. How can we show others the grace as God?

8. See James 2:13. How can we show mercy toward others?

If we have no mercy, then we will be shown no mercy when we are judged. People are often guilty of judging on misinformation. We all can make judgments without having all the facts, so we've got to be careful about that. Mercy rejoices against judgment.

9. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What does Jesus command?

When Jesus said, "Judge not, lest you be judged," He was condemning a hypercritical spirit. There is constructive criticism, but there is also destructive criticism that is harmful and hurtful. And what is usually behind a hypercritical spirit? Self-righteousness.

First Corinthians 13:7 says, "Love believes all things, hopes all things." There are some people who are always imagining the worst of motivations, and their spirit loves to find fault and blemishes. When Jesus said, "Judge not, lest you be judged," He was referring to the quick expression of our opinions before we have all the facts. And if we had all the facts, rather than being condemning, we might instead be very compassionate toward that individual.

10. Read James 4:11-12 and explain this passage in your own words.

To steer clear of the pitfalls of temptation and trials, examine your own life and don't judge others. You set the measuring stick for yourself and how you will be judged. If you are merciful, God will be merciful to you. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

The greatest work of doing God's Word is to love others just as Christ loves us. Loving others unconditionally is fulfilling the royal law of God.