

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church

Connect Learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study- Theme: Pathways to Spirituality

Review of the Book of James- Chapter 2- Lesson # 3- April 21, 2021

Prepared by: Pastor Artee Williams and Minister Andrew Balenton

I. Subject: Reality of Faith (Living by God's Law)- James 2: 8-13

II. Big Idea

God demands obedience to his entire teachings, not acceptance of only a part of them.

III. Key Quotes

“ Every Bible should be bound in shoe leather.” - D.L. Moody.

“ We only believe as much of the Bible as we practice.”- Warren Wiersbe.

“ Our beliefs should control our behavior.”- Warren Wiersbe.

IV. Key definitions, commands, spiritual principles and spiritual disciplines

1. What is the “ Royal law” ? The term “ Royal “ calls attention to the quality of the law, that is the character of the law. Some Bible scholars believe “Royal Law” is best described as the “ Supreme Sovereign Law.” There is no law above or greater than the “ Royal law.” Verse 8 is the only place in the New Testament where the term is found. Jesus summarized the essence of the “ Royal Law” in Matthew 22: 34-40 as man's responsibility to God and man's responsibility to his fellowman.

2. The term “ If ye fulfill the “ Royal Law” according to Scripture” points to the idea that some believers were “ Trying” to fulfill the “ Royal law”, however, their practice of partiality (favoritism) called their profession of faith into question.

3. Verse 8 contains the “ Command” to love thy neighbor as thyself. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) , Jesus defined a neighbor as anyone in need. Jesus urges his followers to demonstrate love to neighbors by responding to their needs. Reference Scriptures- I John 3:18 , I John 4: 11,16.

4. The “ Command” to love our neighbors as we love ourselves is an impossible standard without the power of the living Christ- John 13:34-35.

5. Verses 9-11 describes the violation of the “ Royal Law”

6. When the believers referenced in verses 9-11 practiced partiality/favoritism, they committed sin and stood convicted as lawbreakers. Leviticus 19: 15 called for fair treatment of neighbors .

7. In verse 9 James is teaching that to show partiality/ favoritism is not a mere slip up or fault but a deliberate stepping over the line, that is stepping over the “ Commands” of the “ Royal Law” and practicing that which is forbidden- I John 3:4.

8. James boldly called the practice of partiality a “ Sin” and called those guilty of that sin “ Transgressors.”

9. In verse 10 James teaches that failure in one part of the law makes that person guilty of the whole law. In so many words James is saying that it is not the amount of sins that condemns: it is the fact and presence of sin . It only takes a single sin to make a person a sinner. James is not teaching that such a believer has not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior since he practices partiality but that a believer is still guilty of sin under the law of God if he disobeys the word of God .

10. The sin of partiality places self upon the throne of the heart and dethrones the righteous King (Jesus Christ).

11. No act of obedience can compensate for acts of disobedience. Confession of sin and repentance are required to correct disobedience.

12. In verse 12 James teaches that the “ Unity of the Law” lies in its origin. The commandment prohibiting both adultery and murder originated with God. To resist one requirement of the law is to resist God, who is the authority behind its requirements. See the statement in verse 9 above.

13. In verse 12-13 James appeals for obedience to the “ Royal law” in both speech and action. James also declares that the reality of God’s coming judgment is an incentive for believers to speak and act obediently.

14. The “ law of Liberty” in verse 12 is the same as the “ Royal law “ in verse 8, both terms refer to the “ Word of God “ which is the standard for the present life and will be the standard for the future life at the final judgment.

15. Regarding “ Mercy” James is teaching in verse 13 that man dose not receive the mercy of God because he has shown mercy to his fellow man. It means that man shows mercy to his fellow man because he has experienced the mercy of God.

16. The ability to extend mercy to others is rooted in the fact that believers have received mercy from God. Mercy from God is not earned, but the believer can demonstrate mercy when he is willing to extend it to others.

17. Mercy does not mean that God overlooks sin. God’s nature will not allow him to do so. It does , however, mean that when a person is willing to demonstrate repentance and faith, God is free to forgive.

18. In a final word James states that “ mercy rejoices against judgment.”, here James is teaching that for believers, God’s mercy triumphs over our guilt and judgment. If we have received God’s grace for salvation, we will stand (without condemnation) in the coming final judgment.

V. Application

1. Identify commands, spiritual principles and spiritual disciplines in James 2: 8-13.
2. What does this statement mean- God demands obedience to his entire teachings, not acceptance of only a part of them?
3. Why do people show partiality and how can believers overcome this sin ?
4. How will you apply the teaching of this lesson to your heart and life ?