

Series – Part 9: How to Live as a Christian:

# Love Your Neighbor as Yourself!

James 2:8-13 ESV

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost / 4<sup>th</sup> After Trinity – 2013

Sunday, June 23 at 8:00 &amp; 10:45; Monday, June 24 at 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends, in our current series, God is speaking through James to show us – *the forgiven children of God in Christ* – how to function as Christians. So far God has called us to: †benefit from our trials; †ask in faith; †properly boast; †avoid temptation; †be a living sacrifice; †shine the implanted Word; †be a doer of the Word; and †not play favorites, *these are some potential responses:*

- a) I don't care what the Bible says, I'm not changing!
- b) I think I'm doing fine; no one is perfect!
- c) Rejoicing in God's forgiveness, I desire to live His Word!

*Let me repeat those options.* As I do so, take a minute to →examine your heart and →identify your response.

Now, *as we continue through James chapter 2*, Luke Timothy Johnson notes: *“The subject...is not law but consistency in practice. In the previous section [vv. 1-7], James condemned those living within a kingdom promised to the poor who...shamed the poor. Now, [James] insists that those who claim to live within a kingdom defined by the ‘royal law’ of love cannot, at the same time, practice partiality.”*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (Yale University as assignee from Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995), 235.

## 1. A Sharp Contrast:

- a. Who is doing well? <sup>8</sup> **If you really fulfill** [*carryout, accomplish, keep*] **the royal law according to the Scripture** [*the law taught and lived by King Jesus, which says*], **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well.** // In last week's sermon we learned that it is *improper* for believers to play favorites with the rich; now our attention is turned toward *favoring the needy by loving them as we love ourselves!*
- b. Who is sinning? <sup>9</sup> **But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.** // It's not up to me or you to identify *what is sin* and *what is not sin*; instead, God, *in His Word*, †tells us the truth, †shows us our sin, and †calls us to be sorry and believe in Jesus as our only Savior!

2. **God's Requirement Has No Wiggle Room:** These are *the world's sinful reasons* in comparison to *God's holy reasons*. The world says, “Do what is good, then everything will turn out fine.” But God's reasons are both *different* and *right*:

- a. How good is good enough? <sup>10</sup> **For whoever keeps the whole law** [*the royal law, the law of love, thus loving our neighbor as we love ourselves*] **but fails** [*lit. stumbles, trips*] **in one point has become accountable for all of it.** // In answer to my question, the Lutheran Study Bible notes: *“Because all Commandments come from God, all must be obeyed perfectly.... Even one violation*

falls short of the righteousness God requires.” (2137) The LORD said: “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” (Lev 19:2 NIV)

- b. Which laws are okay to break? <sup>11</sup> **For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.** // No law of God is okay to break, so we have all sinned against God! Without His mercy, we are worse than toast (Mt. 5:48; Gal. 3:10)!

3. **God to Us HIGHLY INFLUENCES Us to Others:**

- a. New in Christ results in new speech and new action: <sup>12</sup> **So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty** [that judgment points ahead to Jesus’ return; Rom. 14:12]. // The LSB notes: “James exhorts his readers to remember that they were counted righteous for Christ’s sake. How can they then judge others by a different standard?” (2137)
- b. Let’s connect the dots: (1) When we were dead in sin and bound for hell, God showed us mercy by punishing Jesus in our place – *that is amazing!* (2) Now that we have received such great mercy, we will certainly desire to extend such mercy to others! Can you see the connection – *God to us; then us to others?* With that in mind, God spoke through James: <sup>13</sup> **For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs [wins out] over judgment.** // When we have the benefits of God’s mercy in Christ, we

*will desire to show mercy to others!* However, when we have no such desire, *we are showing that we have not yet received God’s great blessing of mercy through Jesus!*

**Conclusion:** Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

- 1) Is God’s requirement of righteousness (*being without sin*) unreasonable? Y N Why or why not?  


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*(Watch for more on “righteousness” next week!)*
- 2) How do we love our neighbors as ourselves? \_\_\_\_\_  


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See the **Portals of Prayer: 2-12-13**, by Rev. Jason D. Lane

**We pray together:** Dear LORD, may my sin ever-drive me to Jesus; then, may Your forgiveness ever-compel me to live for Jesus – *by loving my neighbor as I love myself.* Amen!

JOIN US IN GROWING UP IN CHRIST		
<i>Read, Understand, and Apply God’s Holy Word!</i>		
Verse and <u>Key Word</u>	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
<sup>ESV</sup> <b>James 2:10</b> For whoever keeps the whole <b>law</b> but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.	νόμον nomon	<b>law:</b> In general: rule, principle, norm; in James 2:10: the royal law of God’s kingdom, to love our neighbors as ourselves.