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PRACTICAL VIRTUES OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

In this message we will consider chapter 2 of the Epistle of James.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS

Verse 1 says, "My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with respect of persons." This verse indicates that this Epistle, especially this chapter, was written to the New Testament believers in the Lord Jesus Christ of glory. Here James tells us not to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with respect of persons. This certainly is a virtue of Christian perfection. If we hold the faith of the glorious Lord, we should not have respect of persons.

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

In verse 5 James goes on to say, "Listen, my beloved brothers: Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He promised to those who love Him?" The kingdom of God here is also the kingdom of Christ, which will be inherited by the overcoming believers in the coming age (Eph. 5:5 ; Gal. 5:21 ; 1 Cor. 6:10 ; Rev. 20:4 , 6). The reality of this kingdom should be practiced not in the Jewish synagogue but in the Christian church, which is the Body of Christ (Rom. 14:17).

In 2:5 James speaks the second time about loving God (see 1:12). We believe in the Lord for our salvation (Acts 16:31); we love God (1 John 2:5 , 15) for our overcoming, that we may receive the promised kingdom as a reward. We cannot receive the kingdom simply by believing. According to the Gospel of Matthew, the kingdom will be a reward. Receiving this reward requires that we love God. In order to receive salvation, it is adequate that we believe in the Lord. But if we would receive the reward of the kingdom, we need to love God.

THE ROYAL LAW

Verse 8 says, "If indeed you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well." The royal law is the commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is the king of all laws, and it covers and fulfills all laws (Gal. 5:14 ; Rom. 13:8-10). Loving God and loving one's neighbor are the greatest requirements of the law. All the law hangs on these (Matt. 22:36-40). In 2:9 James says, "But if you respect persons, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors." This indicates that to respect persons is contrary to the law, and anything contrary to the law is sin. Having respect of persons is against the royal law, the commandment to love our neighbor as ourself. To say to a poor man, "You stand there, or sit under my footstool," is not to love. We would not like to be treated in this way. The point in verse 9 is that those who respect persons commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

In verse 10 James goes on to say, "For whoever keeps the whole law yet stumbles in one point has become guilty of all." The word in verses 8 through 11 indicates that the Jewish believers at James's time were still practicing the keeping of the Old Testament law. This corresponds with the word in Acts 21:20 spoken to Paul by James and the elders in Jerusalem. James, the elders in Jerusalem, and many thousands of Jewish believers were still in a mixture of the Christian faith and the Mosaic law. They even advised Paul to practice such a semi-Judaic mixture (vv. 17-26). They were unaware that the dispensation of law was altogether over and that the dispensation of grace should be fully honored, and that any disregard of the distinction between these two dispensations would be against God's dispensational administration and would be a great damage to God's economical plan for the building up of the church as the expression of Christ. Thus, James's Epistle was written under the cloud of a semi-Judaic mixture, under a background that made matters obscure. Many who practice religion according to their natural concept neglect the background seen in this book.

JUDGED BY THE LAW OF FREEDOM

Verse 12 continues, "So speak and so do as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom." So both times does not refer to what has gone before but to what follows. The law of freedom here and in 1:25 refers to the same law, the law of life. James 2:8-11 , as also 4:11 , speaks of keeping the law of letters. James 2:12 speaks of the believers' being judged by the law of life. The believers should speak and do things according to the law of life, which transcends the law of letters. They should live according to the law of life. This kind of living surpasses the keeping of the law of letters. The unbelievers will be judged at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15) by the law of letters, which is the law of Moses; the believers will be judged at Christ's judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10) by the law of life, the law of freedom, which is the law of Christ.

JUDGMENT WITHOUT MERCY

In 2:13 James says, "For the judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment." To despise a poor brother is to have no mercy. Anyone who despises a poor brother in this way will not receive mercy when he appears before the judgment seat of Christ. Here James is telling us not to despise our brother. If we despise a brother, this means that we do not have mercy on him. Then when we come before the Lord to be judged, He will not show mercy to us, because we have not shown mercy to our brother. Therefore, we need to show mercy, for, as James says, mercy triumphs over, boasts over, judgment. If we have mercy on our brother today, we will receive mercy from the Lord at His judgment seat.

BEING JUSTIFIED BY WORKS IN RELATIONS WITH THE BELIEVERS

Let us come now to 2:14-16 , a section that speaks of being justified by works in relations with the believers. Many talk about this portion without realizing that it concerns our relationship with other believers. If we say that we have faith, we should love the brothers and sisters. This means that we are justified by deeds of love in relations with the believers. Verse 14 says, "What is the profit, my brothers, if anyone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" Here James is not talking about being saved from perdition but is speaking about being saved from judgment at the judgment seat of Christ. The context indicates this.

However, when many Christians read the Bible, they think that saved means to go to heaven. They may not realize that the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ is not a matter of heaven or hell. As we have seen, that judgment concerns reward or the suffering of dispensational punishment. If someone says he has faith but does not have any works of love, this means that he does not love the brothers and sisters. Therefore, when such a one stands before the judgment seat of Christ, he will be judged without mercy. We need works of mercy and love in order to be saved from merciless judgment. Hence, to be saved in verse 14 is to be saved from merciless judgment at the judgment seat of Christ. But if we do not show mercy toward fellow believers, we will not receive mercy from the Lord at His judgment seat.

Verses 15 and 16 prove that this understanding of save in verse 14 is correct: "If a brother or sister is without clothing and lacks daily food, and any one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, yet you do not give them the necessities of the body, what is the profit?" In verse 14 James is concerned for us; in verses 15 and 16 his concern is for those who are not properly cared for by us. The Greek word rendered "is" indicates that the brother or sister has been in this condition for some time. If we do not care for the necessities of the saints, we are caring neither for them nor for ourselves.

One day we will be judged by Christ. If we care for the needs of the saints, exercising mercy on them, at the same time we are taking care of ourselves in relation to the Lord's judgment of us. Because of our merciful and loving work toward the saints, we will be saved from merciless judgment at the Lord's judgment seat. In 2:17-19 James goes on to say, "So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself. But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe and shudder." Faith is of life; it is living and operates through love (Gal. 5:6). Otherwise, it is a dead faith and is not genuine (James 2:20 , 26).

In verse 21 James asks, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" Immediately, James continues in verse 22 , "You see that faith worked together with his works, and by these works faith was perfected." It was in Genesis 15 that Abraham believed in God, and in Genesis 22 that he offered Isaac his son. This indicates that there was a period of time wherein Abraham's faith was perfected. It was necessary to have his faith testified. Abraham first believed in God, and later, his believing was testified by offering up Isaac to God. Likewise, our believing in the Lord Jesus also needs to be testified, or vindicated. For example, I hope that a young person who believes in the Lord will have his faith testified, or vindicated, to his parents by a change of attitude and behavior. This means that an outward work of love testifies, vindicates, the faith that is within us.

In 2:25-26 James concludes, "And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works in that she received the messengers and sent them out by a different way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." The spirit gives life to the body (Gen. 2:7); the works indicate and express the life that is in the faith.

(Excerpts from Life Study of James Message Six)

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Burdens for Church Prayer

- 2026 Targets, # of baptized:22; # of prayer meeting attendance:35; average Lord's Day and small group attendance:10% increase
- Spread the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel on the WVC campus and by Bible distribution in the community.
- Multiply the number of small groups for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ
- Perfect young working saints with shepherding families as containers for the next generation.
- Practice PSRP, BNPB, and vital small groups.
- Blending in the Body, by participating in conferences and trainings
- Establish and strengthen the church services, including children, YP, ushering, etc.
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately
- Pursuing the truth and growth in life to live in the reality of the kingdom.

Announcements

- Life-study of James messages 5, 6
- HWMR 2026 Summer Training Week 3
- 11/17 (Tue) 7:45pm, Campbell meeting hall.
- 11/21 and 12/12 (Sat.) 10-12pm, South Bay Chinese Speaking saints corporate pursuit - Pillars in God's Building), $50/person (lunch included), Mountain View
- 11/25 (Wed) Campbell Thanksgiving Love Feast and Gospel
- 11/26-29 International Thanksgiving Conference at Denver CO
- **2026 NorCal Thanksgiving Conference Schedule**

	10:00AM	7:30PM
11/27(Fri)	Message 1	Message 2
11/28(Sat)	Message 3	Message 4
11/29(LD)	Message 5	Message 6

https://www.norcalchurches.org/2026-thanksgiving-conference/

- 12/19 (Sat) 10-12 pm NorCal Churches with br Minoru on small groups
- 2/20-21/2027 ICSC. Taipei. Registration deadline 12/31/2026
- 12/21-26 Semiannual Training, register by 11/1
- Financial Giving:
  PayPal/Zelle: churchincampbell@gmail.com
  Venmo @Churchin-Campbell
- Church in Campbell bookroom account (PayPal/Zelle)
  churchincampbellbooks@gmail.com