

## James 2:5 – 17

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 <sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those  
2 who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of  
3 the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love  
4 him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the  
5 rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you  
6 into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who blaspheme the  
7 honorable name by which you were called?

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

20 <sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has  
21 faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

22 <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in  
23 daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace,  
24 be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things  
25 needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by  
26 itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

**We will spend more time on vv. 14-17 later.  
For now, focus on vv. 5-13.  
How do those verses lead into James's  
teaching about faith and works?**

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

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

- Circle all the references to “law.”
- In James 1:25 he calls the law “perfect.” What other descriptions does he add here?
- What else do you observe in this passage?

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

After observing the passage:

- How does partiality (v. 9) relate to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 8)? Does it?
- Why is one failure (v. 10) so disastrous? How does the example (v. 11) explain it? Does it?
- What does it mean to be “judged under the law of liberty”? How does that lead to v. 13?
- What does “mercy triumphs over judgment” mean?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

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

- How does mercy relate to judgment in your relationships? What would mercy triumphing over judgment look like for you?

**Observation** – *What does it say?*      **Interpretation** – *What does it mean?*      **Application** – *What does it mean for me?*

**For additional thought and discussion:**

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy (Matthew 5:7)*

*and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.... For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:12, 14-15)*

*Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:32-35)*

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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