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# Words of Truth

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## Do They Not Blaspheme That Worthy Name?

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As Christians we are challenged with many things that require a delicate balance. For example, we have to abhor that which is evil (Proverbs 29:27 and Romans 12:9), but love our neighbors as ourselves too (Romans 13:8-10). That requires us to live with the acceptance that we will be surrounded with the inescapable reality of living amongst sinful people that disgust us (I Corinthians 5:9-13). That is a tough reality to find the proper balance with on a daily basis. Yet, we grow and learn that we can walk in the light (I John 1:7) while being surrounded by darkness. We learn to be friendly (Proverbs 18:24), but not become friends with this world (James 4:4). We learn to compromise in areas of liberty (I Corinthians 8:1-13 and I Corinthians 9:19-23) without compromising in areas of God's law (Galatians 2:1-5 and Ephesians 5:6-11).

The study we are about to engage in comes from a context that requires us to balance multiple Scriptural truths. First, we will have to consider the context of the things we are going to discuss. Secondly, we are going to have to notice that you could easily take one stand from the context we will look at that would cause you to err in the ultimate principle. With those two thoughts in mind, let's take a look at a context that requires us to examine and apply the lessons therein with a delicate balance.

### They Erred In Having A Respect Of Persons

The text of our study: *"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no*

*adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:1-13).*

The error in the context you read was that these early Jewish Christians (James 1:1) were guilty of exalting the rich over the poor in the assembly. Even under the Law of Moses, there were not to be divisions in judgment of the poor or rich (Leviticus 19:15). The Jews had such problems of carnal exaltations of men (Matthew 23:1-33). Even the disciples struggled with that early on (Luke 22:24-30). Thus, the context being written to Jewish Christians who had not yet left carnality behind, is not all too shocking.

Someone could also easily misapply what James wrote by creating a greater respect for the poor to prevent exalting the rich. We cannot run from one extreme to another. If materially wealthy brethren can live faithfully (I Timothy 6:17-19) no other brethren should create a prejudice against them. You cannot prevent respecting persons by creating classes of people. That in itself creates a disrespect of persons.

Aside from the problem of respecting persons, James made the point that the very people that were being exalted were guilty of something. They were guilty of speaking evil of the worthy name wherein the saints were/are called (James 2:7; cf. Acts 4:10-12). Therefore, it made NO sense as to why they were being exalted (aside from the respect of persons point). While the context was mainly about not respecting persons, this other point has to stick out to us. How do we relate to those whom speak evil of the name of our Lord?

### **Living In A World That Regularly Speaks Evil Of Our Lord**

Everywhere in this world you turn there are people sinfully using the Lord’s name in vain (Exodus 20:7), twisting His word (II Peter 3:15-17), etc. James established we are to love our neighbors (cf. Luke 10:25-37). Yet, they attack all we live for, stand for, and love most. When we read about the respect of persons in James 2:1-13, there were a lot of lessons. None of them are easy to follow. Most of all, this application of co-existing with those that blaspheme the holy name with which we are called. Rightfully, we should have hatred [spiritual disgust] towards such people (Psalms 139:21-22 and Revelation 2:2). So, again, how can we “get along” with such disgusting people? I will conclude with the answer.

### **Conclusion**

Don’t have a respect of persons! How is that the answer? All of us who have been baptized to have our sins remitted needed such for a reason (Acts 2:38). So, remember, those people that speak evil of our Lord are no different than you or I once were! Give them the same opportunity of salvation you had. Don’t justify the wicked (Proverbs 17:15). At the same time, show them the goodness of God that they might repent (Romans 2:4).

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