

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 18)

Introduction:

1. According to James 1:27, "pure and undefiled religion before God" includes "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."
2. In His Word God has revealed His will concerning many specific issues that relate to keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.
3. In this lesson we are studying a subject addressed in James 2:1-13 -- "respect of persons."

Discussion:

- I. HAVING RESPECT OF PERSONS IS ILLUSTRATED IN VS.2-4
 - A. This situation involves 2 men entering a Christian worship assembly.
 1. One is a rich man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing.
 2. The other is a poor man wearing dirty clothes.
 - B. Respecters of persons will treat these 2 men differently.
 1. Respecters of persons will give the rich man a good place to sit.
 - a. He will not be treated this way because he is a good man.
 - b. He is shown favoritism just because he is rich.
 2. Respecters of persons will tell the poor man to stand somewhere or sit in a lowly place.
 - a. He will not be treated this way because he is a bad man.
 - b. He is looked down upon just because he is poor.
 - C. Now that we know what having respect of persons is, let us consider . . .
- II. WHY HAVING RESPECT OF PERSONS MUST BE OVERCOME (FOUR REASONS)
 - A. First, having respect of persons is forbidden in Christianity (vs.1).
 - B. Second, having respect of persons makes no sense (vs.5-7).
 1. (vs.5) Consider how God feels toward the poor -- He has blessed them in a special way.
 - a. This does not mean that all poor people are good.
 - b. However, poor people are generally more receptive to the Gospel.
 - c. Poor people should not be looked down upon just because they are poor.
 - d. This kind of behavior does not make any sense.
 2. (vs.6-7) Consider how rich men have treated Christians.
 - a. Some rich men have oppressed Christians, they have drawn Christians before the judgment seats, and they have blasphemed the Lord's name.
 - b. This does not mean that all rich people are bad.
 - c. Rich people should not receive preferential treatment just because they are rich.
 - d. This kind of behavior does not make any sense.
 - C. Third, having respect of persons violates "the royal law" (vs.8-13).
 1. This "royal law" is identified in vs.8 -- "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."
 2. Jesus called this law the second great commandment (Matthew 22:39).
 3. Having respect of persons violates this important commandment.
 - D. Fourth, God is no respecter of persons.
 1. (Romans 2:11) "For there is no respect of persons with God."
 2. To be God's children we must not be respecters of persons.
- III. HOW HAVING RESPECT OF PERSONS IS OVERCOME
 - A. (vs.12) We are to speak and act according to "the law of liberty."
 1. The law of liberty emphasizes "mercy" over "judgment."
 2. According to vs.13, if we show no mercy, we will receive no mercy (Matthew 5:7).
 - B. Additional instructions:
 1. (Matthew 7:12) Practice the Golden Rule.
 2. (Matthew 7:1-2) Avoid unfair judgments.
 3. (John 7:24) Make fair and impartial judgments.
 4. Remember the lesson that Peter learned in Acts 10:28.