



19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you... Matthew 28:19-20

- We don't become spiritually mature by just hearing the Word of God; we become spiritually mature by **surrendering** to the One we're hearing about.
- Favoritism is a **counterfeit** gospel.

Difference between Grace and Mercy:

Grace is receiving what we don't deserve.

Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve.

- Because we've **experienced** the greatness of God's grace and mercy, as kingdom citizens we **extend** that same grace and mercy to others.

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? 2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, 4 doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives? James 2:1-4

No room for a VIP section in God's Kingdom:

- The gospel changes how we **see people**.

Action Steps:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to **expose** hidden favoritism.
- Learn the **names** of people you might overlook.

5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? 6 But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? 7 Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? James 2:5-7

- God's Kingdom **values** people differently.

Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of "the brightest and the best" among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these "nobodies" to expose the hollow pretensions of the "somebodies"? That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. Everything that we have—right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start—comes from God by way of Jesus Christ. That's why we have the saying, "If you're going to blow a horn, blow a trumpet for God." 1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Action Steps:

- Encourage someone who feels **forgotten**.
- Stop valuing people the way the **world** values people.

8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. 10 For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws. 11 For the same God who said, "You must not commit adultery," also said, "You must not murder." So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law. James 2:8-11

- The royal law of God's kingdom is **love**.

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:35

Action Steps:

- Choose one **person** to **selflessly** serve this week.
- Replace criticism with **encouragement**.

12 So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free.

13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. James 2:12-13

- Mercy from us is the evidence of a heart changed by **grace** to us.

4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) Ephesians 2:4-5

Action Steps

- **Forgive** someone you've been holding in judgment.
- Pray daily for someone who **frustrates/hurt** you.

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Ephesians 2:14-15

VISION:

TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain.
- Why do you think favoritism can be so subtle, even among sincere followers of Jesus?
- Have you ever felt overlooked or treated differently? How did that experience shape you?
- How does remembering God's grace and mercy toward you change the way you treat difficult or different people?
- What are some ways our culture measures a person's value, and how should followers of Jesus measure it differently?
- Who is someone in your everyday life that you may have overlooked or unintentionally ignored? What is one practical way you can show them Christ's love this week?
- Why do you think love is the defining mark of a disciple, and what does that look like in everyday relationships?
- Is there someone you need to forgive, encourage, or extend mercy to this week? What step can you take to obey God in that relationship?

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The Gospel Has No VIP Section

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