



James / Faith that Works - Wk. 7
"The Sin of Partiality"
By Pastor Jody May 10/11/2026

[CALL TO HEAR]

James 2:1-13 ESV

The Sin of Partiality

2 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. **2** For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, **3** and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," **4** have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

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

**Pastor – "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People – "Thanks be to God."**

Pray

Illustration

Flying First Class!

Flying first class taught me I like how the other side lives.

Flying first class made me think I was more deserving than I was.



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Flying first class taught me to covet more than I was given.

Being targeted for favoritism ruined a little bit for me the flying experience, I crave it, I try to bargain with the airlines to get it, and I reject my role in the economy class where I may have more purchase for gospel conversations.

Introduction

You see the church has this temptation to sin as well, and that is as it lives in the economy class of the world, she too desires the first-class placement that was not intended for her. And when she tries to grab hold of the better things in life, trying to gain advantages hanging out with powerful and well to do people, she gives up her place among the common and lowly, people God is trying to save. To practice a pure religion as Pastor Onan described for us last week, to serve the meek, we have to reject that coveting for the things not intended nor needed. Especially in view that our eternal life will be so much better than the first-class treatment now, remember there is a crown that is still ours to be gained.

Steps in practicing Pure Religion - Rejecting the Sin of Partiality, Revering the poor among us, and then lastly receiving the Royal Law.

MP

**The Lord of Glory calls us to reject partiality
and embrace the law of love.**

1. Rejecting the Sin of Partiality (Favoritism).

I want to break down for us 2 different reasons why we want to reject the Sin of Partiality/Favoritism.

1a. Rejecting the Sin of Partiality helps us to hold onto the faith.

2 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the **faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Lord of glory**.



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James is making the basic assumption that Christianity and Worldly Favoritism cannot coexist. It is not a part of the **Pure Religion**, that he taught us last week.

James 1:27 ESV

Religion that is **pure** and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

A Pure Religion begins with the truth that you cannot play favorites in the Kingdom of God; you cannot look more favorably on another based on worldly status, you cannot defer to a person based on appearances and yet at the same time say you are practicing a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Right here up front in this sermon let me also remind you that practicing a **Pure Religion** is yielding in meekness to the word (from last week), having it cultivate in your hearts the fruit of repentance. James's expectation going forward for all of us is not just be hearers but doers of what he is saying ([James 1:22](#)). If we practice the Christian Faith, then we will **stop playing favorites**. Yes, you are saved by faith yes in Christ ([Gal 2:16](#)) but you were saved for works ([Eph 2:10](#)) and James preaches what Paul proclaims, a Faith that Works!

So, to get a working model for us if you will, where does James go to, so that He doesn't bury Jew and Gentile converts in Mosaic Covenant again. The law is still useful for teaching us how to live and restrict sin, and James being a good Jew, who grew up with the best Torah teacher ever, JESUS, where does He go to start to teach us how to live out this faith in Christ?

Leviticus 19:15 ESV

"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor."

We will get to more Leviticus 19 later for it does have a larger part to play in the Royal Law (v.8), the Law of Christ, but the presentation of this law begins with this first verse. We judge our neighbors, whoever that is, not based on what they have but based in righteousness, and since God is the only one that is truly righteous, we will look at the way He looks at things. Untainted and



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untouched by worldly desire, (remember God cannot be tempted as He is the source of all good from 2 weeks ago; [James 1:17](#)). So, we the church today, are to judge with His views and His eyes when we look at others. We judge others by how Jesus views them for He is the personified righteousness of God. Well then, how does Jesus view and judge others - that's the story of the NT Family!

That story tells of the **Lord of Glory** (2:1) who is Jesus what He has achieved for the name of God. The second person of the God head came into this physical world, to live a physical life, under the administration of the revealed will of God in the law ([Leviticus 19](#)). He obeyed all of it, never tainting His righteousness, and surrendered His life of His own will in accordance with the requirement of substitutionary atonement for law breakers. He, being without sin, rises from the grave for an unjust trial and death, and now reigns at the right hand of the Father to return with the full weight of that Glory one day. **That weight/Glory** that is compounded by centuries of believers who put their faith in Him, and who He saved, by not playing favorites or showing partiality, for all have sinned, for all were lost, and no one could come to God but through Him. This is the Glory of Jesus, **The Lord Glory**, and to live with this faith James says, means there is no room for us to act like the world and show favoritism towards any individual when only Jesus is worthy of any glory! He is the only one that deserves favorite treatment, He is the only one due our special considerations, for only Jesus can save. That is His glory!

We reject the sin of partiality because that is the practicing of **holding onto faith - to not steal glory from Jesus and give it to someone else.**

Look right now if you are giving your loyalties to anyone and anything else it is a sign that you may not be living in faith of the Pure Religion. If you would rather be with other people based on worldly presentation/placement than those in here, that's favoritism. If you would rather be doing other things than being in here, that's favoritism of self. I commend you brothers and sisters, work out your faith with fear and trembling ([Phil 2:12](#)) because Jesus is due all the glory.

Now here's the 2nd reason why we want to reject the Sin of Partiality.



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1b. Rejecting the Sin of Partiality helps us to live out our Christian beliefs.

²For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," ⁴have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Just a couple of quick observations here on the text. First, James seems to be presenting a hypothetical situation but later gets into specifics of an actual event in vs. 5-7. Also, the intent of this picture is that these people are coming into *assembly/synagogue*, so he is describing an event that Jewish believers probably have seen before of those among people of their past they were friendly with. Thirdly, the people walking into the synagogue are not necessarily of the community for they are told where to sit, they don't walk in like they belong there.

Alright so knowing that what does this teach us for the purpose of living out Christian beliefs again working on that Pure Religion.

1st James is emphasizing the teaching of the Universal Church; there are no distinctions made by God.

Acts 15:9 ESV

"and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith."

This truth is taught by Peter (after seeing the HS work in Gentiles before purification; Cornelius the Centurion [Acts 10](#)), after his encounter with Paul (AD 47), after Paul wrote as you read this week Galatians ([Gal 2:11-14](#)). Jews and Gentiles, the clean and the unclean, the rich and the poor, there is **now no distinction in believers**. Or from your reading this past week on Thursday:

Galatians 3:28-29 ESV



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²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

It seems James was teaching this truth long before Paul or Peter by about 4 years, because it is what Jesus taught ([Luke 20:21](#); [John 7:24](#)). Rejecting partiality is living out what God sees and does and then portrays that good news to the world by showing no partiality in public settings.

God looks at all people making no distinctions on their past, heritage, culture, nationality, nor behavior. God's choosing for Salvation comes from His free unbiased will, which is shown by who receives the gift of faith. That leads us to -

The 2nd natural conclusion then if there is no partiality portrayed by God then people are saved by God's will through Faith alone.

And if we show that we have favorites among the body, if we pick people who are off better by worldly standards to associate with or to favor then we give a bad testimony for the Gospel. That as in this story (vs.2-5), outsiders are always visiting God's people, and as His image bearers we want to show them God loves all people equally because all people are equal sinners and in equal need of Grace!

To sum up, **rejecting the Sin of Partiality** is one of the ways we hold onto our faith, living out core beliefs, giving Jesus the Glory, as the one who saves through a gift of faith alone.

2. Revering the Poor Among Us.

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



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Not Revering the Poor is contrary to God's Plan...

James asks two hypothetical questions here in this text and like any good parent that asks their children through a process of correction, what do you think the answers should be when you ask such a question? ("Yes")

So, James is like my 'beloved brothers', code for those in the church that call themselves Christians, that have confessed and been baptized in Jesus's name, you know what we teach. God chose the poor in the world to be rich in faith - "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" **Mat 5:3 ESV**. That doesn't mean all the poor and it doesn't mean never the rich, it just means God has blessed the poor person with a better gift than worldly wealth, Spiritual and Eternal Salvation that lifts all out of depravity, and they are better prepared to receive it because wealth is not a hinderance in that as it is for the rich.

Challenge: You might be one of those people that complain or worry too much about the money you don't have, BUT have you ever thought that it might be because God is being Gracious to you because of your heart? Because of the way you see things, a worldly way, that money is a functional savior, and perhaps He is saving you from losing your soul?

Revering the Rich elevates the Oppressor...

Keep in mind, most of the people that James is talking to, and I mean like 98% of them, are the poor that have been saved.

James then has this astonishing admission; they are honoring the people that actually **drag them to court**. In that day the rich, were often rich due to harsh business practices, collecting on debts without much mercy. By doing so they were able to indenture more people to service or slavery. James is like some of you, **the poor**, are favoring these people when they come in, and that points back to the evil you are doing in v. 4 - *made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts*. Favoring the better off shows the birthing of an evil thought, *perhaps I can use religion as a way to influence the rich for favors*; while ignoring the injustice they may be doing to



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others. But he says these church goers, by those very practices, are *blaspheming the honorable name by which you were called* (7). We can't favor those that mistreat the body, we can't elevate those that elevate greed, and we can't place first those that have the power and means to serve the less fortunate but do not! To do so again dishonors Jesus by placing glory on those who don't deserve it.

Now this has been a battle in the church for 2,000 years family, and don't be thinking that this doesn't exist anymore. We are celebrating the reformation this month as the protestants exited a church that was corrupt because the Catholic/Orthodox church played favorites with the rich and mighty, any of those who could pay indulgences. Dominican friar, Johann Tetzel, set the final fuse off for Martin Luther, when he would ride into towns crying, "*As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs,*". That's what set the writing of the 95 Thesis that Luther hung on "All Saints Church" in Whittenburg, Germany Oct 31, 2017. The quest for money in the church had totally corrupted it, and she was willing to sell herself off to those that could pay. The Sin or Partiality had birthed to the damnable sin of greed! Thank God for the Reformation!

Revering as the world does dishonor's the Lord's name...

Look I have even had people try to influence this church with the promise of money, it happens all the time among modern protestant congregations. Using the church and placement in it, as a bargaining chip, is not wise business practices, it is self-deception because those that can buy favors with money and power will in turn expect something in return and when not given will work their systems to get what they want.

[Unfortunately, even many protestant churches are controlled by a board of directors or deacons that control a pastor's livelihood and keep him in check. That is control of the American wealthy church on ordained men to keep them doing what they want. Many times, and I know these stories in traditional Baptist church locally, if a man pushes too hard for reform, change, or just biblical adherence he is set a packing. And usually, the result of a bigger church is the lure of those bad practices in church polity. The hard fight for



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the church is to have balance where elders lead but are held in check by God's Word, according to their shared confession, by other elders, and held accountable for sin by their church family while the whole church practices submission to God's Word as James here has prescribed.]

How do we fight this liberal drift into a money first mindset, we revere the poor in spirit as Jesus revered them, seeing no distinctions, and keeping in mind the Gospel is equality of Salvation for all under the **Lord of Glory's** reign! Now let's go to our last protection from this particular sin.

3. Receiving the Royal Law.

There are two different things we receive when we receive the Royal Law as James calls it, because that is part of this Pure Religion.

Receiving the Responsibility of the Whole Law.

⁸If you really fulfill the **royal law** according to the Scripture, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself,**" you are doing well.

The Royal Law is that which was given by God as a statue for all time because it portrays God's character so it can't change.

Leviticus 19:16-18 ESV

¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: **I am the LORD.**

¹⁷"You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: **I am the LORD.**

The sin of Partiality showing favoritism goes against the Royal Law, the Law that reveals the **Character of God**. You don't hate, slander, withhold good counsel, bear grudges, take vengeance, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself! The Law was given to Israel to portray the values of God to each other, that is why it is important to understand that how we treat each other



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says much about what we think about God. BUT if you are fulfilling it James says **you are doing well!**

Of course, this Royal Law was given by the preincarnate Jesus in the OT, He also lived it out in the NT, becoming our neighbor and loving us observing all of Lev 19, and now He has given that command to His followers.

Matthew 7:12 ESV

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

We treat others as we want to be treated, but if we show partiality, we show ourselves to be guilty of transgressing against God.

⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

Now this is the part we don't like. Because this is so hard to do and easy to fall into, the Sin of Partiality, but James points out if we break one part of the law, and even if it happens once, we are guilty of all of it, now that doesn't sound right nor good! But here's the truth:

Tenth commandment: Favoritism prefers the rich man because it **covets** the riches that the rich can bestow.

Ninth Commandment: It **bears false witness** because it implies that a poor man has less worth.

Eighth commandment: It **robs** the poor of the dignity they deserve.

Seventh commandment: To favor the rich is a **kind of unfaithfulness** to the bond of Christian fellowship.

Sixth commandment: It **kills** the spirit of the poor by demeaning them, even in the church.



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Fifth commandment: Favoritism **dishonors** the poor, but we must honor all who deserve honor, including one another.*

The point is we as Christians love to point out that one sin aint that bad. We think sinning a little willfully is ok because well, it just not weighty. But you see God sees any kind of willful sinning as a rejection of God's character and who He is, thus tainting His glory in the world. If we, church family, are going to hold on to this faith, in the **Lord of Glory**, then we have to receive the full law, every bit of it, and we can't give excuse as to why we think it is ok to disobey any of it.

If we say it's no big deal to sin, then what Jesus did in perfect righteousness wasn't necessary, and it really wasn't needed. It robs glory from Jesus if we don't receive the full weight of living out God's eternal character. James knows the impossibility of this and gives us the good news of those who *Hold onto Faith in Christ*.

¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

¹³For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

The Law of Liberty Pastor Onan introduced that to us last week

James 1:25 ESV

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the **law of liberty**, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

The Law of Liberty is the GOSPEL! Liberty is freedom, the Law of Freedom is the law that we are living out. Jesus has freed us from the penalty of the law, death, and frees us to live out the law through love! *That is being a doer not just a hearer of the word*. We are free to love without thinking what do I get out of this because God gives all our needs. We don't show favorites but instead I give God all the glory explaining to the rich man, God has all that I

* Doriani, Daniel M, [James / Reformed Expository Commentary](#) (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007), 72.



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need not you! AND He is more than what you have, come join us in this new freedom! The Law of Liberty is how we defeat the Sin of Partiality!

We show Mercy, not giving what one deserves, and in return we are shown mercy when we need it every day of our lives! God will continuously show Mercy to His people for those that have committed to receiving the full law, the Royal Law to display the only good King, Jesus the Christ, and the Law of Liberty which covers my failures, offers forgiveness and payment for sins, and gives us all another shot to get it right, all for His name's sake! In return I am constantly rewarded with a free conscience which makes me want to try to love others again, not to gain merit in front of God, but because God deserves that glory! I love others because He first loves me, I show not partiality for God favored me when there was nothing to favor.

MP

**The Lord of Glory calls us to reject partiality
and embrace the law of love.**

[CALL TO OBEY]

1. Cultivate Equal Hospitality in Home and Assembly

Just as the Early Church broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile, we must ensure that our hospitality—both in our church buildings and in our private home worship—is extended without regard to status, wealth, or worldly influence. We are to welcome the poor and the stranger with the same dignity and honor we afford the wealthy and winsome, remembering that the ground is level at the foot of the Cross, Mercy for all!

2. Practice Gospel-Centered Discernment Over Worldly Advancement

We must reject the temptation to use the church as a means of social climbing or economic leverage. Instead, we need to treat every relationship in this body as an opportunity to introduce people to the Lord of Glory, or to reinforce His goodness to the people in this room. Refusing to court the



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favor of the rich at the expense of our conscience is a vital defense against the corrupting influence of greed.

3. Embody the Law of Liberty Through Active Mercy

Because we have been freed from the crushing weight of the law's condemnation (Leviticus 19 the Royal Law) by the mercy of Christ, we are now tasked with living out that freedom through deeds of love. This application requires us to intentionally seek out those who are overlooked or oppressed in our communities and demonstrate the love of Christ to them. By showing mercy to others, we reflect the very character of the Lord of Glory, proving that our faith is not merely a verbal confession but a living, working reality that triumphs over judgment.

Prayer

Almighty and Everlasting God, we approach Your throne of grace with humble hearts, acknowledging that You alone are the Judge of all the earth and that before You, all distinctions of this world vanish. We confess, O Lord, that we have too often been swayed by the appearances of men, honoring the wealthy while neglecting those whom You have chosen to be rich in faith. Forgive us for our partiality, for our inward pride, and for every instance where we have sought the favor of the world rather than the glory of the Lord of Glory.

Grant us the wisdom to see our neighbors through the eyes of Christ, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. We pray that You would fill our homes and our church with a true and godly love that knows no partiality. By Your Holy Spirit, empower us to be doers of Your Word, walking in the law of liberty, that we might show mercy even as we have received mercy. Let our lives be a testament to the Gospel, that others may see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.

Through the finished work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.



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[COMMUNION]

Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

When we partake of the bread today remember the life of Jesus lived perfect for us, He who stood under the moral and civic weight of Leviticus 19. Not only did He do the law, but His heart kept the focus of loving His neighbor while doing it. And now because of His finished and perfect work we live under His Law of Liberty always receiving the Mercy we need when we fail. All praise the perfect effort of the Lord of Glory.

When we partake of the juice, we remember the blood of the New Covenant—It was the Lord of Glory, Jesus, who when we betray our neighbors smearing the name of God, it was He who paid the price for our transgressions. Our evil intentions earned not life but death, but His righteous intentions brought life eternal to a people destined for destruction. When we cared not for our neighbor Jesus spilled blood for His. All praise to our Savior who has made a way for us through His steadfast love and who has made us clean through the supremely valuable sacrifice of His life.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

*** The Congregation will stand and recites:**

Elder – "Christians, what do you believe?"

Reciting Q and A 47 of the Baptist Catechism.

Pastor Jody says - Church, the royal law is not a new rule beside the Ten Commandments. It is their sum. To show partiality is to fail in love of



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neighbor, and to fail there is to break the whole law. Let us confess together what God requires. So church, Question 47: What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

Congregation replies: The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-33)

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, who sent His Son to portray His character perfectly, showing us the power of His law to condemn and to set free.

Go in the name of the Son, who through covenant obedience earned our righteousness so that we would know what it feels like to live as a favored child of God.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, who help us to live out that law of liberty, extending mercy to others, and putting to death the sin of partiality in us.



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1. Looking at your own life and circle of influence, in what specific ways are you tempted to show partiality or 'pay extra attention' to those with more social or financial status?
2. James 2:5 reminds us that God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith. How does this reality shift the way we should approach hospitality within our own homes and our weekly church gatherings?
3. The sermon highlighted that favoritism is a violation of the 'Royal Law.' How does the specific command to 'love your neighbor as yourself' convict you when you consider how you treat those who are difficult to love or those who have nothing to offer you in return?
4. We discussed that the 'Law of Liberty' is the Gospel itself. How does remembering that you were saved by grace alone—without any merit of your own—empower you to treat others with the same mercy you have received?
5. Practically speaking, what is one step your family or this group can take this week to 'revere the poor' or serve someone in the congregation whom we might otherwise overlook?



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