



LESSON 13

November 29, 2020

## A Community of Equals

James's call in today's lesson is to fulfil the royal law by loving one's neighbor as you would love yourself. Let's read about a long-standing church member and her response to being told that the church is a community of equals.

Let's meet Sis. S. Nooty, whose family has been members of the church since inception. During the 175th church anniversary, Sis. Nooty insisted during a phone call with the new pastor that he show a video that Sis. Nooty's family showed at their family reunion last November. The video was nearly two hours long! The pastor told her they had to make room in the thirty-minute presentation for other members, including the new members who are also making contributions to the history of the church. Sis. Nooty asked who in the church gave as much as her family does. Sis. Nooty was talking about the influx of new members that had begun to join the church before the pandemic as a result of their church's community service projects. Sis. Nooty did not think those new members deserved to be recognized as much as her family.

The pastor was shocked by Sis. Nooty's comments. He asked to meet with Sis. Nooty virtually. The pastor explained that God saves all of us so that we might grow to be more and more like Jesus. God does not show favoritism, and neither should we. The pastor read James 2:2-4.

Sis. Nooty asked the pastor if he was saying that God does not like people who have money. The pastor interpreted James as saying we must treat all persons equally, and not overrate those "with money" and underrate those who are considered "poor." The pastor read James 2:4 again, which cautions against making distinctions between the rich and the poor. "When we do," the pastor explained, "James says we become *'judges with evil thoughts.'*"

When the pastor said that their church is a community of equals, Sis. Nooty's screen suddenly went black. She had left the meeting! Sis. Nooty texted the pastor a few minutes later, saying that she was having trouble with her Internet service but that she thanked the pastor for the call.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss favoritism in the church and why it is a serious problem.
2. Discuss Sis. S. Nooty's unspoken belief that social status should matter in the church.
3. Do you think the pastor ever heard or saw Sis. S. Nooty again? Explain your answer.