



[James 2:1](#)

(1) My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

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[God](#) provides us with dozens of examples of men and women who were partial to various people or things, and along with the examples come important lessons we can learn to avoid their mistakes. Sometimes, a right and godly favoritism is shown—particularly by God Himself—and an unrighteous, human reaction causes a great deal of trouble. Yet, more often, human partiality toward or against others opens the proverbial can of worms. A number of examples come immediately to mind.

» When God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's—favor based on obedience and proper attitude—hatred, jealousy, resentment, and murderous rage resulted (see Genesis 4). This first example is one of godly favor taken badly.

» Through favoritism, [Isaac](#) (toward Esau) and Rebecca (toward Jacob) instilled a spirit of competition, strife, and resentment between the two brothers, which led to an even-now ongoing feud, more than 3,500 years later (see Genesis 25 and 27)!

» Jacob's partiality to Rachel was the source of a great deal of hostility and scheming among Jacob's wives and concubines (see Genesis 30). This also created rivalries between their sons.

» Jacob's favoritism for Joseph made his half-brothers so jealous that they were ready to murder him (see Genesis 37). Instead, they "only" sold him into slavery, telling their father that he had been torn to pieces by a wild beast. This caused the patriarch no end of grief.

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» Through his partiality as a father, Eli allowed himself to become complacent to the gross sins of his two sons (see I Samuel 2-4). This led both to calamity for Eli's house and national defeat at the hands of the Philistines.

» King David's partiality blinded his eyes to his children's evil actions, particularly Amnon's rape of his half-sister, Tamar; and Absalom's murder of Amnon and his rebellion against David himself (see II Samuel 13-18). Later, he ignored Adonijah's preparations to take over his throne, in spite of his expressed desire to have Solomon succeed him (see I Kings 1).

» In the story of Esther, Haman's prejudice almost cost the lives of all the Jews living in the Persian Empire (see Esther 3-8). Only an act of great courage and self-sacrifice saved the Jews from annihilation.

The Bible contains a host of other examples that thoroughly demonstrate the insidiousness of this potential [sin](#). It is clear that the effects of partiality are the real problem. A person can have the best of intentions and reasons for his bias—as God's favor certainly is—but the reactions of those not in favor cause events to spin out of control. At other times, and certainly in most cases of human bias, the respect of persons is clearly wrong from the outset, and the carnal reactions of those it affects just makes matters worse.

— Dan Elmore

To learn more, see:
[The Sin of Partiality](#)

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