

Wrong Choices: Sour Apple, Rough Blamket, ... Tight Shoes

“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of Him to whom you belong?” (James 2:1-7)

Come with us to the supermarket! Some will go to the fruits and vegetables section to purchase the fresh, ripe, delicious and healthy items. Some of you may visit the household section to select a suitable blanket. Some of you may go to the footwear section and select a comfortable size shoes. And still others may wish to select other items. Whatever the items we are purchasing, two things will be considered: First, our need to buy the material, and Second, our principles or criteria for the selection of that material. But, the variety and quantity of items that are present in the supermarket are more or less similar to the great number of types of people around us, and the principles or skills we use for the selection of materials when we buy things is the same as we use to build relation with people. From childhood we first learn skills from our parents. Then as we grow up from one stage of life to another, bonuses are added to those skills at school, in our societies, from customs, traditions, and own experiences.

James, while writing he knew his letter will be chiefly read by the Christians, but he hoped that his voice would be heard beyond the boundary of the church to the multitude. He wrote about favouritism: the desire and the action to pick up one thing and neglect the others. He spoke on how human drives toward the rich and neglect the poor behind. This subject is not only to be explored to the believers in the church, but as well to those outside the church.

What we put on the throne of our life push us to behave in such a way. The evil thoughts and the dreams of wealth is the harmful judge, and it is by the eyes that we recognize and are enticed by the gold rings and fine clothes. These made us say: he is the director of..., she is the wife of..., he is the owner of..., they are very powerful..., he is very rich..., they can do everything..., they will help you..., he is wealthy-if you have relation with him..., you can rely on them..., if you will just marry him...,etc. Out of these evil burdens over our thrones, and from what overfilled our hearts, our mouths speak, the hands extend, the heads bow, wide smiles are given, and the following praises are uttered to the rich man **“Here’s a good seat for you.”**

I am not speaking only on how we construct our relations inside the church, but how we build our relations outside the church. Study your behaviours with your neighbours, friends and people

around you in your job and observe the type of relations you are making. Are you showing less favouritism to the poor people around you? Neglecting them, unpicked in the basket! Or you are throwing them at your back by these words **“You stand there.”** Or you step on them by these words **“Sit at the floor by my feet.”** We may have not yet reached this stage, but we may approach it soon if we will not correct ourselves. We may have not yet said these words, but our actions and attitudes with the poor may have already expressed such.

I am not against the rich, or against you to be rich. But I am warning you from falling into the trap of treating the rich with greater respect than the poor. James described the poor as those who are poor in the eyes of the world but in general they are rich in faith in God. That is why James described the poor as those chosen by God to be rich in faith. They have more love in their hearts toward God, whom He promised them to inherit His kingdom. The poor are simple, smooth, less ambitious, less demanding, easily managed and they are easily satisfied. They are even easily managed by God than the rich, because they are simple in accepting God’s truth and not blaspheming the noble name of the Lord.

Listen, my dear brothers: If we try to coax the rich people in order to gain part of their wealth, or they may give us part of their power and possession, we are deceived. We will only be serving them and wasting more time for them. James described the rich as:

1) Those who are exploiting you: The rich people and those who are in the high position whom we have relation are those who may control us and harm us. To them we may even surrender our precious private possession just to satisfy them. But the fact, this is not the key for them to treasure us but the license for them to abuse us! To the contrary, the poor people are simple, innocent and harmless.

2) Those who are dragging you: If we observe our main troubles is mainly with the rich and authoritative people. They may file a case against us, while the poor are self-limited, and even if they are hurt their replies are inclusive with silence.

If you are making your relations with rich and powerful people of the world because you are thinking they will stand beside you when you are in trouble and in need for them that is not true. They will be the one to forsake you, and all what you spent to charm them and serve them will go in vain. They will look at you in the same bad way you are looking toward the poor, and they may even tell you **“You stand there,” or “Sit on the floor by my feet.”**

My Dear and Beloved: At this time that we reached our homes, and at this station of our lives, let us check what we purchased from the supermarket or what we have built as relationship. I don’t want to discourage you, but if you used to show favouritism toward the rich and negligence toward the poor, you will find the red and shiny apple that you purchase is sour to the taste, the thick and big blanket is itchy and rough to the skin, and the elegant shoes is tight and painful to the feet.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself into your hand. I repent from my sins _____ . Lord I will change my priorities in life; You will be the first in my life and I will put my full trust in you and in your word. This is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*