

set by a local church: 1.) We are commanded not to forsake assembling (Hebrews 10:25), 2.) We are commanded to submit to the eldership (Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:5). **The Contribution (and its Use)** – I Corinthians 16:1 describes giving in the assembly as “**the collection for the saints.**” Philipians 4:18 refers to the use of such as “**an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.**” Money that is “set apart” for God’s people to be used in acts of worship to God must no longer be viewed as “common.” Its use must fall within the realm of those things authorized as works of the church and things purchased with it must be given a degree of reverence as belonging to God. **God’s Words** – The modern pulpit often differs little from the politician’s podium or the motivational speaker’s seminar. The use of Scripture in lessons has become a “filler” inserted between comical anecdotes and emotional illustrations. While even Jesus and His disciples used illustrations to demonstrate spiritual truths, the focus of our

messages and of our attention must be on what God says. It is the Lord’s words that will judge us on the last day (John 12:47, 48). His words deserve reverence.

By Kyle Pope



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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Vol. X, No. 25

June 22, 2008

### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

#### Elders:

Ken Ford  
Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

#### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
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## Without Respect of Persons

James 2:1 declares, “**My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality**” (NKJV). The King James version and the American Standard version use the phrase “with respect of persons” instead of the word “partiality.” In the original Greek the word from which this part of the verse is translated is the word *prosopolepsia* (προσωποληψία). This word is derived from two words: *prosopon* (πρόσωπον) meaning “the face ... countenance... outward appearance” (Thayer, p. 552) and *lambano* (λαμβάνω) meaning to “take, take hold of; receive, get, obtain...” (Newman, 106). According to Vincent this is a Hebrew phrase which may be understood to mean “To receive the countenance” (Vol. I, 737). That suggests the idea of favoring someone because of their appearance or status. The Bible has much to say about this kind of behavior. The Scripture is emphatic in declaring that it is never practiced by God. In Acts 10:34 when Peter comes to preach to Cornelius (a Gentile) he begins by stating, “**...In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.**” In Romans 2:11 after warning the

Roman brethren about hypocrisy and the future judgment of all, Paul states simply, **“For there is no partiality with God.”**

When Paul instructs slaves and masters about how they should behave towards one another, he concludes by saying, **“And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”** Finally, in Colossians 3:25 we find a general warning about the fact that God’s judgment is impartial, **“But he who does wrong will be repaid for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality.”**

Beyond the fact that God does not show “respect of persons,” the text we began with in James is probably one of the most extensive examinations of this tendency in all of Scripture. Immediately after the verse quoted, James offers an example of partiality. He writes, **“For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?”** (2:2-4). This shows it is sinful to give special treatment because of appearance, wealth or status.

After offering this example James makes two more statements about partiality, **“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors”** (2:8,9). The message is clear: Christians should love their neighbor as themselves, and partiality is a violation of God’s law.

#### *How May We Show Partiality?*

- By avoiding those we view as unattractive, and yet... ☞ being anxious to speak to those we find attractive.
- By acting with respect toward those with wealth and position, but... ☞ looking down on those with less money and prominence.
- By judging someone’s character and ability by their race, then ... ☞ overlooking the misdeeds of others who belong to our own race.
- By demonstrating great concern for those we enjoy being with, but... ☞ ignoring the hardships of those whose company is less enjoyable.
- By praising the efforts of those with talent and ability, and yet... ☞ feeling embarrassed by the efforts of those less capable.
- By assuming someone is poor because of their own mismanagement, while... ☞ assuming the rich possess “wise judgment.”
- By offering the best things to those we like, but... ☞ giving the leftovers to others.
- By assuming that all people of a different background will act a certain way, and so... ☞ refuse to associate with those who are different from ourselves, or feeling resentment while in their presence.

Partiality comes from a failure to see others as creatures made in the image of God. It is a sin both against someone else and a sin against the One in whose image we have been made. Let us commit ourselves not to judge people based upon their race, attractiveness, popularity, wealth or status. We must always remember, **“...the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”** (1 Samuel 16:7).

By Kyle Pope

## The Lack of Reverence in Modern Religion

**E**zekiel 22:26 contains a frank rebuke of the Priests of Ezekiel’s day claiming, **“...They have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean...”** (NKJV). In a class I once had with teenagers who had grown up with Christian parents I asked the question “are there ‘holy things’ in the Christian age?” The answer given was “no — except the Bible.” I found this to be a reflection of a problem I fear is plaguing the Lord’s church in this generation a failure to attach reverence and sanctity to anything.

What are things which are “holy?” They are things dedicated or (set apart) unto the service of God. Such can be material objects (Leviticus 27:14,16), times of worship (Nehemiah 13:22) or even people (Exodus 29:44). When things are “sanctified” (that is set apart unto God) they are no longer viewed as common or ordinary but they are approached with a reverence do to the fact that they belong to God.

Consider some things which are “set apart” unto God in the Christian age: **God’s People** – The Bible refers to Christians as “saints” (Romans 1:7) from a word which is generally translated “holy” in Scripture. Christians are special people separated from the world and set apart unto God. As a result we should treat one another with respect and reverence as children of the King.

**Acts of Worship** – Our generation has seen a massive rejection of any type of formality in worship. Where this has served to abandon vain ritual it may be well and good. Yet, if this has led us to approach worship to God with a casual and thoughtless lack of reverence we need to reevaluate things. Acts of worship in our daily life or in the assembly should be thought of as offering God our very best.

**Times of Worship** – Though specific times of worship (other than the Lord’s Day - Acts 20:7) are not commanded in Scripture two principles taught demand that a degree of reverence be attached to times that are