

Application Notes for James 2:8-13

1) Read and Reflect on Luke 6:27-36, 'Love for our Enemies.' Jesus Christ's mercy was not based on worthiness, but it was given to make us worthy. How then should our mercy be given to others? In these verses, Jesus illuminates for us the action of love when understood in light of the mercy he has given us. We love our enemies by doing good to them, by showing mercy, by being impartial, etc. Like James, Jesus uses mercy as an acid test of true faith. The signs of a heart motivated by God's love and mercy that is being poured out for the sake of others is a mark of a gospel changed heart. What marks in your life show evidence of a gospel changed heart verses a morally restrained heart?

2) Read and Reflect on Luke 10:25-37, 'The Good Samaritan.' Jesus defines for us how to inherit eternal life through a conversation with the expert of the law. How does Jesus define righteousness? Mercy! We stand before God spiritually bankrupt, as beggars who have no righteousness of their own. Even our best moral efforts are as filthy rags. How often do you recognize your own poverty before God? Consider one man who after hearing George Whitfield preach said, "Hearing him preach gave me a heart wound. By God's blessing, my old foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness would not save me." How can anyone be righteous before God? It is only through the mercy of God. Has your heart been wounded by the Gospel lately?

3) Read and Reflect on Luke 18:9-14, 'The Pharisee and the Tax Collector.' How does mercy and humility relate to one another? This is an incredible illustration of showing partiality that highlights the deception of our hearts. Who is the greatest sinner you know? If the answer isn't yourself, then why not? The kingdom of God is about becoming a beggar who shows other beggars where he happened to have found some bread. Mercy and Humility are the marks of understanding the nature of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. How has the mercy of God affected your pride? What areas of pride need to be repented of?