

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

April 7, 2019

## Lights in the World

by Frank Himmel

Paul reminded the Philippians that they were lights in the world (Philippians 2:15). He also showed them how to be that.

Paul was a light when he preached. "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

Paul was a light in all his work. "...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Paul was a light amidst affliction. "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

Paul was a light while being persecuted. "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God" (1 Timothy 1:8).

Paul was a light when on trial. He freely acknowledged his Christianity to Felix (Acts 24:14-16), and he boldly

told Agrippa, "I would wish to God, that...not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26:29).

Paul was a light when in jail. At Philippi, he and Silas sang hymns of praise to God from the inner prison (Acts 16:25).

Paul was a light in death. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness..." (2 Timothy 4:7-8a). ■

## Spiritual Red Flags



Bible lessons presented by  
**John McPherson**

**April 12-14**

Friday, 7:00 pm: *Envying Sinners*

♪ Saturday, 6:00 pm: Singing directed by Tim Stevens ♪

Saturday, 7:00 pm: *Sinning Without Godly Sorrow*

Sunday, 9:30 am: *Seeking the "New": Changing Positions*

Sunday, 10:00 am: *Rejecting "Doctrine"*

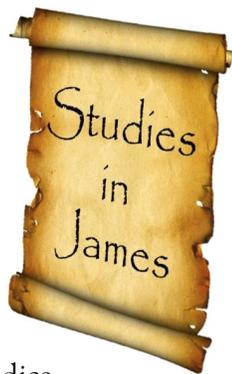
Sunday, 11:00 am: *Declining in Spiritual Behaviors*

### Church of Christ

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# The Problem with Prejudice

by Frank Himmel



Prejudice is so widespread that it can even be found at church. Having noted the problem of prejudice (James 2:1-4), James proceeds to show the problem with prejudice.

*It is not God-like.* Some of James’s brethren may have favored the rich, but God does not. “Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man” (vv. 5-6a). The gospel is extended to all, rich and poor. Since it begins with a recognition of our spiritual bankruptcy (Matthew 5:3), the poor more often respond favorably (1 Corinthians 1:26). Nevertheless, all have their opportunity, “for there is no partiality with God” (Romans 2:11).

*Prejudicial judgments are often incorrect.* James challenges his original readers to ask themselves, “Why favor the rich?” “Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?” (vv. 6b-7). Acts 16:16-21 gives one example of such conduct. The broader point is, prejudicial favor or disfavor is so often inaccurate. How often have our first impressions proved wrong? How often do relationships based pri-

marily on external factors such as physical attraction prove unsatisfactory? How many opportunities do we miss because we do not give someone a chance?

*It is opposite the fundamental spirit of the royal law.* “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well” (v. 8). This requirement is the summation of many others (Romans 13:8-9) and thus is royal or rules over them. Loving others decrees fair treatment, not prejudicial treatment.

*It is sinful.* “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (v. 9). Is it a big deal? Listen to James. “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not commit murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law” (vv. 10-11). The same divine authority underlies every requirement and every prohibition. Any sin makes us guilty before God. That makes partiality the same as murder and adultery!

*It negates mercy.* “So speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment” (vv. 12-13). As lawbreakers, our only hope is for mercy. Justice demands punishment, while mercy pleads for forgiveness. Mercy triumphs in Christ (Romans 8:1-4). But mercy cannot effectively plead on behalf of one who himself has not been merciful, which the prejudicial are not. ■

## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	David Gray	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Clifton Lefort	Adam Wilson
OPENING PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Adam Gibson	
CUP	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Carlos Garcia	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Greg Winget
CLOSING PRAYER	John Baucom	Ian Brown