



11.07.10/James 2:8-13

Materials Needed

pen and paper for making a list

Opening Discussion

Tell the children that we are going to talk about God's law tonight. Ask them to help you make a list of some of God's laws. (*No other gods before God, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, etc. . .*) Now talk about two specific people – one is a grown man who murdered someone, the other is a 10-year-old girl who stole a cookie out of the cookie jar when her mother wasn't looking. Ask the children who they think is a "worse" sinner and why. *In our eyes the murderer would be seen as a worse sinner than the little girl. The murderer ended someone's life, obviously hurting that person as well as that person's family and friends. The little girl's actions didn't seem to hurt anyone, and don't seem like that big of a deal compared to the murderer.* Tell the children that tonight we are going to see what James has to say about who the "worse" sinner is in God's eyes.

Read James 2:8-13

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love you neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment."

Question 1

James tells us that if someone keeps the whole law except for one point that they are guilty of breaking the whole law. In our previous example of the murderer and the little girl who stole the cookies, who's sin is worse, according to James? *They both broke a part of the law, so they are both equal sinners in God's eyes. Sin is sin in God's eyes, and both the murderer and the little girl are in desperate need of a Savior.*

Discussion

James tells us that God won't have mercy on us if we do not show mercy to others. What are some ways that we can show mercy to those around us in our day to day lives? *Examples will vary, but could include things like – forgiving someone that gossips about you, helping someone that was rude to you, sharing with people even though they take your toys sometimes, etc.*

Question 2

James says that anyone who loves their neighbor as themselves is "doing well." In Mark 12, Jesus said loving our neighbor was the second most important commandment. What are some ways that we can shower our neighbors with love? *Answers will vary, and may include things like – volunteer to mow someone's lawn, take a friend out for coffee, pray with someone, help someone rake leaves, walk someone's dog, listen to someone who's having a hard time, tell a neighbor about Jesus' love for them, etc.*

Reflection

If we keep the whole law and just break one tiny little part, then we are law-breakers just like those who break lots of laws. We are guilty and there is no way that we can cleanse ourselves from our sins – we all deserve judgment. That sounds kind of depressing, doesn't it? What is the good news in all of this? The good news is that God knew that we would be law-breakers. He didn't want us to be separated from him, so out of His great mercy and love, He sent His only Son Jesus to die on the cross for us and then to come back from the dead! When He did this, He conquered the sin that separated us from God! Jesus' death was



the payment for our sins. Because Jesus died and came back to life, now we can live forever with Him! Reflect as a group on how living in this knowledge day to day might change your perspective and attitudes.

Wrap Up

Close in prayer with a confession time (individually, or as a group, depending on everyone's comfort level). Acknowledge that on our own we will always fall short of God's standard of perfection. Thank God for His plan of redemption, and for His mercy that saves us from the judgment that we all deserve, whether we are murderers or cookie-thieves. If someone in the group would like to know more about what it means to believe that Jesus is Lord and that He came back to life to save us, encourage them to ask their parents to tell them more about this!