

Utensils

Scripture:

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (James 2:1-5)

Main Message:

We should not show partiality based on appearances.

Materials List:

- (1) Silverware
- (1) Utensils

Song: *I Love You with the Love of the Lord*

Lesson:

My entire family enjoys having dinner guests at our house and we love entertaining. In an effort to make our company feel "at home", we attempt to create a relaxed atmosphere. One of the ways we accomplish this is by beginning many of our meals at the island, in the middle of our kitchen. Here, we place the food where our guests can scoop up any portions they choose before taking a seat. On the end of the island next to the plates is an item that has become a favorite of mine: a basket designed to hold napkins, forks, spoons, and knives. It makes these items easily accessible to our guests.

There have been times when groups in our home were so large that I didn't own enough silverware for each guest, so I quickly threw some plastic utensils in the basket with the silver. At that point they were left with a decision of which they were going to choose to consume their meal. There was the silverware: Shiny, larger, sturdy looking, and elegant with lovely designs etched in the corner. Contending with the silver was the smaller, plain, plastic piece looking less glamorous, but crafted to accomplish the same task as the silverware.

In a recent study I conducted (just for fun), 7 out of 10 people chose the silver over the plastic. Could they have chosen the silver over the plastic for the same reasons listed above? Although my study wasn't scientific enough to figure that out, chances are good that appearance of the silverware helped make their decision.

If we use a similar method in the way we treat people, we are going against what the scriptures teach. We read in James chapter 2 that we are not to show partiality to people based on their appearance. Just because they come in dressed to impress, it doesn't give us license to treat them any better than those who have less. Just as the silver and plastic utensils have different exteriors yet were both made for the same purpose; Whether a human is rich or poor, he can still be an heir of the Kingdom of God.

Prayer: Thank God for giving all humankind the opportunity to become heirs of the Kingdom. Ask Him for help to not show partiality.