REFLECTION GUIDE

7.9.23

INTRO

James reminds us not to show favoritism based on external factors like wealth or status. As followers of Jesus, we are called to love and include everyone.

THOUGHTS

PRAYER

Loving God, forgive me for the ways I tend to consider some people to be better than others. Remind me that each person on earth holds equal value in your eyes and that you long for us all to love and celebrate each other. Help my perspective about what is important in life to constantly be changing and maturing so I see others as you do. Thank you for loving me even when I have offered you nothing in return. Amen.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Think back to elementary school. When sports teams were chosen at recess or gym class, were you often chosen or often overlooked?

- As an adult, have you ever felt like someone was shown favoritism over you? Why do you think that was the case?

- In The Message version of the Bible we read, "My dear friends, don't let public opinion influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith. If a man enters your church wearing an expensive suit, and a street person wearing rags comes in right after him, and you say to the man in the suit, 'Sit here, sir; this is the best seat in the house!' and either ignore the street person or say, 'Better sit here in the back row,' haven't you segregated God's children and proved that you are judges who can't be trusted?" [James 2:1-4]
  - Why do you think James begins this chapter the way he does in the opening sentence?
  - The church is warned not to become "judges who can't be trusted." What are some other ways we become judges in addition to judging people's financial status?
  - Segregation has been the modus operandi for centuries when people have decided a certain group is beneath them. What groups in our current society are experiencing this type of exclusion?

- When you consider your own method of picking and choosing whom you associate with, what tends to be your criteria? Why?

- How might God be challenging you to widen your circle?