

Living with No Partiality

And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean." . . . So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:28, 34, 35)

No partiality? Is that even possible for a human in these opinionated and self-focused days? It seems that everywhere we go and everything we read is beckoning us to choose sides and make judgments. The dangerous pride that lurks in the hidden places of each heart tells us that our rights, our thoughts and our culture are king. Jesus has given us a better way. He has opened doors, through his death on the cross, that will free us from the prisons of isolation we have made for ourselves. When he fills our hearts, he also enables us to see his beautiful and varied creation with new lenses of love and acceptance.

What a witness we, believers in Jesus, would be to the world if we allowed him to overtake our hearts and minds with his love! Prejudice of every kind is not only sin, it is a poison that will wreck our lives and cause devastation to our communities. The impartial and welcoming love of Jesus is a healing ointment that soothes pain and corrects generational wrongs. Let's repent. Let's turn from our wicked ways. Let's allow Jesus to heal and unite in the way that only he can.

Loving Father, we love you, and because we love you we want to love the people you love. Forgive us for every way we have shown partiality and harbored prejudice. We know that our sinful pride has separated us and for that, we repent. We ask you to give us your eyes to see those around us. Free us from

our dangerously sinful pride. Release us from bitterness toward those who have judged and mistreated us. We want to love as you love. We desire to love without preference and with your generous heart. Help us to take up the cause of those who have no one to defend them. Teach us to fight oppression and seek justice with integrity and humility. Use us to bring reconciliation and healing in our communities.

Would you give us fresh ideas as to how we can love? We know the work of restoration is hard and long. Would you empower us to stand for freedom and justice for all and to not grow weary when the battle takes longer than we'd hoped? We know you have called us to live in unity with our brothers and sisters. We believe that you have made us to bring many into your family. Teach us the way of love, Lord Jesus. We honor you and thank you for loving through us. It is in your loving and transformative name we pray and live.

Prayer Points

- Repent of all the ways you have shown partiality to those with whom you are more comfortable and of every way you have been prejudiced to those who are different from you. (Ask the Lord to bring specific examples and people to mind.)
- Think of those who have unfairly mistreated, judged or overlooked you. Forgive them and place them in Jesus' care. Release them from anything you believe they owe you.
- Ask the Lord to give you new eyes to see those around you. Listen and watch for specific changes he may bring to your thinking.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you proactive ways you may be an agent of unity and restoration in your community. As you pray, it may help to write down the ideas God gives you.

“As Christians, for us to reject the despised and the downcast and the overlooked and to receive certain persons because they are considered inherently more worthy of respect is a fundamental contradiction of grace.” –Ligon Duncan

–Trey and Mary Anne Kent from Praying God’s Word Over Your City (2021 PrayerShop Publishing)