

IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING NO FAVORITES

By Adrian Savedra

In today's competitive business environment, it is easy to fall into the trap of showing favoritism. Whether gravitating toward employees who share our interests, promoting those who mirror our communication style, or giving choice assignments to people we simply "connect" with, workplace partiality can create toxic environments that diminish both morale and productivity.

When looking for guidance regarding workplace relationships, there is no better place to look than the Bible, which offers timeless wisdom for modern business leaders. James 2:1-4 directly addresses this challenge:

"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"

James speaks primarily about treatment in the Church, but the principle applies equally to our workplace interactions. God's standard is clear – we are to treat all people with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their external characteristics or circumstances.

Deuteronomy 10:17 gives a powerful description of God's character: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes." As business leaders seeking to reflect God's character, this verse should shape our leadership approach. If the Creator of the universe shows no partiality, how can we justify showing favoritism?

The apostle Peter reinforced this truth: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). This statement came as Peter recognized God's message was for all people, not just a select few. Our workplace opportunities and recognition should also be based on merit, character, and performance, not personal preferences or surface-level connections.

Proverbs 28:21 warns, "To show partiality is not good—yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread." This sobering reminder acknowledges how easily we can compromise our principles for small gains or conveniences. As Christian business leaders, we must remain vigilant against this tendency.

Consider the example of Moses, who instructed, "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great but judge your neighbor fairly" (Leviticus 19:15). Showing

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favoritism to any group – whether privileged or underprivileged – distorts justice and undermines organizational integrity.

The consequences of workplace partiality extend beyond immediate morale issues. It can lead to:

- Decreased employee engagement
- Higher turnover rates
- Reduced innovation as diverse perspectives are marginalized
- Legal liability and reputation damage
- Spiritual compromise in our leadership witness

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you observed any examples of favoritism or partiality being displayed in the marketplace? If so, give an example.
2. Do you feel you have ever been a victim of partiality or favoritism where you work, or places you have worked previously? If you have, how did it make you feel? How did you respond – did you make anyone aware of the impact it had on you?
3. Possible causes of favoritism are mentioned? Do you believe that any of these – or other reasons are ever justified? Why or why not?
4. The Bible clearly states that God does not show favoritism or partiality, that He is “no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34, KJV). Have you ever doubted that, or felt at times that He was showing favor toward some people in how they prospered or advanced in their careers? Explain your answer.

Challenge for This Week

As we strive to build healthy organizational cultures, we should remember Paul’s words to his protégé Timothy: “I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism” (1 Timothy 5:21).

This solemn charge can serve as a reminder that our leadership practices reflect not just on ourselves, but also on our witness as Christian business leaders. It would be good to take some time this week to evaluate our own attitudes. Perhaps even asking a mentor or some trusted friends whether they have seen any favoritism or partiality in our interactions with others.

NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:
Exodus 23:2-3; Proverbs 24:23-25; Malachi 2:9; James 2:9, 3:17

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