



According to the Flesh

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Focus The Bible tells us to not regard any person according to the flesh. We should never judge anyone by their ethnicity, gender, age, or appearance. Instead, we should get to know people as God made them and by their spirit, not with human judgement.

Fun Think about when you were a kid—what did you want to be when you grew up? What do you think your life would look like right now if you were doing that?

Review Key Scriptures: John 20:11–14, 20:19–20, 20:26–28; Luke 24:30–31; 2 Corinthians 5:16–17; John 4:9–10; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 4:12, 5:1–2; 1 Samuel 16:6–7; Isaiah 53:1–5

1. Ethnicity

Prejudice comes when we pre-judge people. The Bible tells us not to judge any person after the flesh. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, she brought up their different ethnicities. Jesus responded to her as a person, not as someone with a different ethnicity. The Apostle Paul also said he did not judge any person according to the flesh. This doesn't mean we are blind to differences; instead, we are to get to know people by their spirit.

2. Gender

Galatians 3:28 tells us that in Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This addresses race, status, and gender. There are very clear differences between males and females, but in Christ, we are all one spirit.

3. Age

We are also not to judge according to the flesh when it comes to age. Paul told

Timothy not to let anybody despise him for his youth. The Bible tells us that the older generation is to look at younger men as brothers and younger women as sisters. It's okay to look up to someone, but it is not okay to look down on anyone.

4. Appearance

When Samuel went to anoint the next king of Israel, God told him specifically not to look at appearance or physical stature. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. We should not judge people based on any external appearance.

Group Dynamics Idea All of us have struggled with prejudice of some kind in our lives. After Pastor Robert's message, many people may have a lot of thoughts and feelings that come to mind. Allow your group to process the message together. Next, give everyone an opportunity to reflect on an area of their lives in which they would like to grow toward doing what God says about not regarding one another according to the flesh.

Discuss

1. Read John 20:14 and John 20:19–20. How is it that Jesus' disciples didn't recognize Him at first in these passages? What does that show us about making judgements based on what we see?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16–17. What does it mean to not "regard" anyone according to the flesh?
3. What are ways our society often pre-judges others? How does this prejudice bring destruction?
4. Have you ever felt pre-judged by someone else? How did it make you feel?
5. Read Matthew 7:12. How does following the Golden Rule keep us from pre-judging others?
6. What would it look like if every Christian took this message to heart and lived every day without judging any person after the flesh?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- We are to regard no one according to the flesh.

- We should never pre-judge people by their ethnicity, gender, age, or appearance.
- If we lived as the Bible directed, there would be no prejudice in the world.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Help us to lay aside prejudice and open our hearts to those who are not like us in the flesh. Please help us daily to be ready to include others and regard one another according to the spirit. Give us strength and wisdom to stand on Your promises and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Understanding your strengths and gifts will help you know your leadership style. One great resource is the StrengthsFinder Assessment. Check out the book *StrengthsFinder* or visit strengths.gallup.com. This is a great resource to help you learn how God has equipped you to lead.