

March 22, 2020

# **Viewpoint** from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

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## **Keeping Perspective**

By Joe R. Price

**W**e certainly regret that thousands have died from COVID-19, and that others will. Those with underlying immune system deficiencies and respiratory ailments are particularly vulnerable and should especially be careful at this time. There are prudent steps we can take to mitigate the exposure and contraction of this virus.

As of today (March 13, 2020), there have been approximately 140,000 reported cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide ([worldometers.info/coronavirus/](https://worldometers.info/coronavirus/)). For perspective, that is less than 0.002% of the world's 7.8 billion people. Yet, this new strain of coronavirus is currently consuming the psyche of Americans (and the world). Panic rather than prudence appears to be driving some of the reactions to this new health problem.

We do not take note of the statistics above to deny a problem exists. It does. We do so to discuss the subject of perspective. Whether we are talking about a pandemic that threatens our physical health and lives or the universality of sin that threatens our spiritual health, we need the right perspective to have timely and needful responses.

James reminds us life is uncertain and brief, and therefore we must first depend on God instead of ourselves (Jas. 4:13-15). This perspective prompts us to do the will of God instead of arrogantly ignoring reality (Jas. 4:16-17). Christians know this and live for eternity (2 Cor. 4:16-18). And perhaps this partially explains the difference between panicked reaction and prudent precaution in times of crisis. Faith convinces us to live with an eternal perspective. Without faith, the world only looks "at the things which are seen" (2 Cor. 4:18). Perspective.

Yes, be concerned about your physical health. But, what about your spiritual health? Are you distancing yourself from sin and its carriers (1 Cor. 15:33-34)? Are you washing your heart like you are washing your hands (Jas. 4:7-10)? Are you putting God's word in your heart to protect yourself against sin? Or, are you dying spiritually? Perspective.

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# Prejudice Makes Distinctions

By Joe R. Price

**D**iscrimination is alive and well in the world. It is a deplorable, lamentable condition wherever it is found. Christians are not immune from the sin of prejudicial hearts and discriminatory actions toward others, even toward fellow Christians.

Discrimination is called “respect of persons” or showing “partiality” in the Bible. God shows none when saving sinners and when executing His righteous judgment (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:4-11). Just as God is holy, we too must cast off every trace of the respect of persons (1 Pet. 1:15-17). In Christ “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11). Prejudicial hearts draw lines of distinction and division. Prejudicial hearts produce biased, critical, and cruel words and actions toward others. This is not the heart of Christ (Col. 3:12-15).

I have seen the discrimination of the caste system in India. Although it is against Indian law to discriminate on the basis of caste, the reality is racial prejudice between castes is prevalent there. (Again, discrimination is worldwide and in our country, too.) I’m using India to make this point: It takes more than laws to change prejudice and discrimination. It takes a change of heart. (Discrimination in spite of laws against it testify to this reality in our country, too.)

The inspired writer meets this issue head on in James 2:1-13. Some Christians were discriminating against people coming into their assemblies. James sets forth the case in verse one that we cannot hold “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality” (“respect of persons,” ASV). Then, he illustrated his point: A rich man enters your assembly and you heap upon him honor, but a poor man enters in among you and you assign him a place of reproach (2:2-3). How is this living the faith of Christ? The Holy Spirit’s assessment of such conduct is given in verse 4: “have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” Here is the danger of treating people with discrimination: Distinctions are made where none exist. And, by doing so, one becomes a judge of others with evil thoughts (Jas. 4:11-12). This is sin (Jas. 2:9).

Respect of persons must be overcome in our treatment of sinners, too. Jesus warned of the pitfall of only loving those who love us (Matt. 5:43-48). We must work hard to hold and show “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” to those who need it the most (Jas. 2:1). Is this not one reason why Jesus ate with

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sinner (Matt. 9:10-13)? He was showing them God's mercy as He taught them and saved them (Matt. 9:12-13; Lk. 15:1-7). The Pharisees could not tolerate the thought of Jesus communing with publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:11). The Pharisees were making distinctions where there were none. They were also sinners who needed the gospel of Christ. Who were the judges with evil thoughts? The Pharisees. It is still true that those who show no mercy will receive none (Jas. 2:13; Matt. 5:7).

The principle that overcomes ill thoughts and ill treatment of others is applied by the Holy Spirit as James wrote: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (2:8). As we do this, we fulfill the law of our King. Such expressions of our faith glorify the Lord of glory by refusing prejudice in all its forms (2:1).

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## Is Belief In God Reasonable?

By Heath Rogers

**H**ow does one know that God exists? We know that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17), but is there any evidence outside of the Bible that can help man believe?

**Cause and Effect.** We all understand there can be no effect without a cause. Something has to be behind the things that we see and experience. Where did the universe

come from? There are only three ways that we can account for the existence of our universe. The first is the theory that the universe is eternal — that it has always been here. We know this is not a realistic explanation, for matter is not eternal. Science has proven that the universe is "winding down," which indicates that it had a beginning. The second explanation is that the universe created itself. However, there is no known natural process by which matter spontaneously creates itself. Nothing comes from nothing. The third explanation is that the universe was created by some force outside of itself. This is the only alternative that reasonably explains our existence. Something was in existence before this physical universe that was greater than the universe and caused it to come into existence.

### ***Design Demands A Designer.***

The universe is full of examples of intelligent design. The sun exerts its gravitational pull upon all the planets in such a way that everything in our solar system is kept in balance. Scientists can accurately predict events in our solar system because they have discovered the pattern by which it functions. The earth is the perfect distance from the sun, and rotates at the perfect speed, to sustain life. If we were closer to the sun, we would burn up. If we were further away, we would freeze. The earth rotates at a fixed tilt of 23 degrees, which gives us our seasons. The moon is at just the right size and distance from the earth to affect the

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tides, which keep the oceans from becoming stagnant.

Your car is made up of many different parts which work together. No one would argue that a car created itself or suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It was obviously designed and manufactured by intelligent people. The human body is made up of millions of interrelated parts which depend upon one another in order to function properly. Any auto mechanic can look at the human body and appreciate the fact that it was designed and created by someone.

There is perhaps no greater question than whether or not one believes in God. If one chooses not to believe in God, he will have no authority outside of himself (he will live however he wants to live). However, if one believes that God exists, he will have a reason to live in accordance with that belief, recognizing that he is accountable to God as his creator and judge. What do you believe?

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## Study Your Bible

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*Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.*

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### March Birthdays:

The 18th Amy Hisaw  
The 25th Megan Morgan

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**Sunday**  
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

**Wednesday**  
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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