



**SERIES: JANUARY – BECOMING SPIRITUALLY FIT**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Monday, 02/21/2022**

**Scripture: James 2:8-9**

**TITLE: Love Who?**

At our house, we are both Cornhusker fans and Duke Blue Devils fans. Now, this isn't an issue until they play each other. Now, this likely won't happen, but if it happens, the color we wear will reveal where our loyalties lie.

Well, we represent team Jesus each and every day. Well, at least we should. Listen to what James says about the importance of our consistency of faith. James says this in James 2:8-9.

Indeed, if you fulfill the royal law prescribed in the Scripture, Love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. If, however, you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

It's Monday, and we're still talking about favoritism. Is it really such a big issue? Well, maybe not for you, but for me, it is. It's so easy how it sneaks into my life. And James recognizes that Christians of any and all maturities can be subject to it.

James continues his teaching in verse 8 by saying, if you fulfill the royal law, which is referencing Leviticus 19:18. Jesus himself declared that this is the second greatest commandment. The first is to love God with our whole being. From that flows loving others.

James says, "love your neighbor." Well, who is our neighbor? Is it your physical neighbor in your neighborhood? Yep. Is it your neighbor in your cubicle? Sure is. Is it that democrat or republican down the street? Even them. Is it that wealthy person? What about the poor person who is in a perpetual state of struggle? Yes, to both. What about that jerk at work or that family member who is always under your skin? Absolutely.

Your neighbor is anyone whose need you can meet. Just like the Good Samaritan selflessly and generously helped the person who had been robbed and beaten.

You see, it's easy to help and love on those who we like. It's a no-brainer to help the people who are like you. But to love all people without prejudice is a mark of a true Christian. That's why James says to deny love and grace to someone who needs it is a violation of the law. It's the mark of a non-believer. It's like putting on the colors and swag of the opposing team.

Instead, we should demonstrate Christ's love to everyone when the opportunity arises.

So here's my challenge for you today: show love to someone who you don't want to. Now, don't shut off the program. Pastor Nat has to take the challenge as well. Immediately, I had that person

in mind. I don't like it. But I should. So, I'll need supernatural help. But with God, all things are possible...even loving the seemingly unlovable.

So love someone as God loves you. When we love this way, Christ will win the day for us.