

The Clock (Unhurried Friend)

Phil EuBank · What Is A Follower Of the Way? · James 2:1-4; James 2:5-7; James 2:8-13

AT A GLANCE

Phil EuBank argues that hurry is never neutral — it is a verdict, sorting people into worth-my-time and not-worth-my-time before conscience is consulted. James 2 exposes this as partiality, a sin James places beside adultery and murder. The remedy isn't more willpower but recognizing we live from mercy already given, which frees us to be unhurried with people who can offer us nothing.

- Hurry isn't neutral scheduling — it silently sorts people into worth-my-time and not-worth-my-time before your conscience gets a vote.
- James places partiality beside adultery and murder because breaking one point of the law makes you guilty of the whole law.
- Unhurried love toward the marginalized becomes possible only once you know yourself as someone who received mercy you never earned.

“The fastest decision about a human being will always be a category.”

EXPOSITION

Scripture engaged

[James 2:1-4](#) — My dear brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So don't treat some people better than others. Suppose someone comes into your meeting wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor person comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. You show special attention to the person wearing nice clothes. You say, “Sit here in this good seat.” But you say to the poor person, “Stand there!” or “Sit on the floor by our feet!” Doesn't this show that you think some people are more important than others? You set yourselves up as judges—judges who make bad decisions. (ERV)

[James 2:5-7](#) — Listen, my dear brothers and sisters. God chose the poor people in the world to be rich in faith. He chose them to receive the kingdom God promised to those who love him. But you show no respect to those who are poor. And you know that the rich are the ones who always try to control your lives. And they are the ones who take you to court. And the rich are the ones who insult the wonderful name of Christ, the name by which you are known. (ERV)

James 2:8-13 — One law rules over all other laws. This royal law is found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.” If you obey this law, you are doing right. But if you are treating one person as more important than another, you are sinning. You are guilty of breaking God’s law. You might follow all of God’s law. But if you fail to obey only one command, you are guilty of breaking all the commands in that law. God said, “Don’t commit adultery.” The same God also said, “Don’t kill.” So if you don’t commit adultery, but you kill someone, you are guilty of breaking all of God’s law. You will be judged by the law that makes people free. You should remember this in everything you say and do. Yes, you must show mercy to others. If you do not show mercy, then God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the one who shows mercy can stand without fear before the Judge. (ERV)

The argument

Hurry Is a Verdict, Not Just a Pace — Triage becomes a way of judging people before we've consciously decided anything

EuBank opens with an ER's triage protocol — sorting who receives care immediately and who waits — and argues we run an unconscious version of this daily, 'whether we realize it or not.' Hurry, trained by Silicon Valley's culture of busyness, sorts people into worth-my-time and not-worth-my-time before conscience is even consulted. James 2:1-4 names this exactly: seating the wealthy guest well while telling the poor man to sit on the floor. James refuses to call this logistics; he calls it 'judging with evil thoughts.' EuBank's point is structural: 'the fastest decision about a human being will always be a category' — the pace of your life makes decisions about people's worth before you've thought at all.

Insight — The speed at which you move through your day is already passing judgment on who is worth your attention.

Partiality Is a Capacity Problem, Not a Cruelty Problem — Speed only ever shows you the first layer of a person

EuBank connects James's 'distinctions' to the double-mindedness he preached the week before — the same inward fracture between trusting God and controlling outcomes now turns outward into a sorted room: 'first he divided himself on the inside by being double-minded and now he's dividing a room with the same attitude.' He contrasts this with Jesus, who lets a hemorrhaging woman interrupt his urgent errand to heal a dying girl, making room for both rather than triaging between them. EuBank is careful to lower the stakes for his listeners — this isn't about raising the dead — only that 'hurry is how we avoid the cost of actually seeing the other people in our lives.'

Insight — Only an unhurried pace lets you see past a person's surface into who they actually are.

God's Economy Inverts Cultural Sorting — Political and cultural categories can launder the same partiality as a wealth-based seating chart

James 2:5-7 reminds his readers that God has chosen the poor of the world to be 'rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom' — exactly the people the assembly just dishonored — while the wealthy they courted are 'the ones who drag you into court' and 'blaspheme the honorable name.' EuBank extends this into the present, naming political affiliation as a respectable way to launder partiality: assuming the poor deserve their poverty, or treating the poor as props and the rich as uniformly guilty. 'We're sorting others so that we can feel better about ourselves because we're running at a pace that's not sustainable.' Any framework that dismisses a person's 'second and third layer' is partiality by another name.

Insight — Political and cultural categories can become respectable disguises for the same sorting hurry produces.

The Law of Liberty: Mercy as the Ground of Unhurried Love — You cannot sustain unhurried friendship while still trying to earn God's approval

James shifts from the 'royal law' — love your neighbor as yourself — to the 'law of liberty,' and EuBank treats the move as decisive: break one point and you're guilty of all of it, because 'you're trying to achieve the law on your own.' The royal law exposes failure; the law of liberty describes a position already secured by grace — 'whether you're working for God's love and approval or from God's love and approval.' He grounds this in a story about Mary, a host-mother who kept her door open to a friend's son with nothing to offer her, a small picture of a God who 'did not scan the room and decide that you were worth his time' yet stayed anyway.

Insight — Unhurried love toward others is only sustainable when it flows from mercy already received, not obligation still being earned.

Cross-references

- [Mark 5:21-43](#) — Jesus stopping for a bleeding woman on the way to a dying girl models making room for both rather than triaging between them.
- [Mark 12:29-31](#) — Cited to show Jesus placing love of neighbor 'of equal weight' beside love of God.
- [Galatians 3](#) — Noted in passing as Paul making the same law-versus-grace argument James is making.
- [Romans 7](#) — Noted in passing alongside Galatians 3 as Paul's parallel treatment of law and grace.

DEVOTIONAL

There is a version of you that exists only at speed — the one who scans a room in half a second and already knows who is worth the conversation. James calls that version a judge with evil thoughts, and the accusation stings precisely because it rarely feels like cruelty. It feels like efficiency. It feels like a full calendar, a full inbox, a life that matters because it is busy. But underneath the hurry is a quieter claim: that you have the right to sort people the way God alone is permitted to. Every full schedule is, in its own small way, a courtroom you didn't know you were running. And yet the story underneath every other story is of a God who was not in a hurry with you. He did not scan the room of humanity, note your resume, your net worth, your usefulness, and decide you were worth the trip. He came anyway. He stayed anyway. He died anyway. The mercy you needed was not rationed according to what you could offer in return — and that is the only soil in which an unhurried life toward others can actually grow. Not gritted-teeth patience, but a slower pace grown out of having been on the receiving end of a love that never checked your credentials. Somewhere this week, someone is standing at the edge of your hurry, offering nothing you can use. That may be the appointment God arranged before the foundation of the world.

Reflection

- Who in your life this week did you give the 'three-minute version' of yourself to, and what were you protecting by moving quickly past them?
- Where has hurry become a substitute for discernment in your relationships — a fast category standing in for the second and third layer of someone you actually know?
- Can you name a time someone was unhurried with you when you had nothing to offer them, and how did that shape who you've become?

Closing prayer

God, thank you for the way you use us in ways we don't deserve and could never earn, and yet you do it anyway. Whatever we're navigating right now, whatever we feel pressed to rush toward, help us be present with you. Bring to mind the faces of people you want us to love and slow down for. Convict us — not to shame us, but to pull us forward into a life more in line with the one you died to provide. In Jesus' name, amen.

FORMATION

One thing to remember

Hurry itself is a verdict on people's worth — an unhurried friend refuses to sort, work, or judge the room around them.

This week

This week, set aside one unhurried hour with someone who can do nothing for you — no agenda, no explanation given. Before you go, sit with James 2:8-13 and ask God in prayer to bring to mind who that person is.

Return to [James 2:8-13](#)
