

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## GOD GIVES WISDOM TO ALL WHO ASK IN FAITH

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- A. THE OPTIMISTIC WAY FOR CHRISTIANS TO VIEW “TRIALS” IS GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING!
- B. DISCUSS MANY OF US HAVE CONTINGENCY PLANS IF THINGS GO WRONG.
- C. ... IN TRUTH, WE NEED A PLAN FOR WHEN THINGS GO BAD.
  - 1. IF WE ASSUME THAT LIFE IS TROUBLE-FREE, WE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH CONSTANT DISAPPOINTMENT.
    - a. AND... DISAPPOINTMENT (= SADNESS/ANGER CAUSED BY THE NONFULFILLMENT OF ONE’S HOPES OR EXPECTATIONS) WILL CAUSE US TO REACT INSTEAD OF RESPONDING.
    - b. WHEN WE REACT WE ACT IN OUR OWN POWER.
  - 2. IF WE REALIZE THAT LIFE INVOLVES A MIXTURE OF TROUBLES AND BLESSINGS, WE WILL HAVE A BETTER REASON TO PLAN WITH HARDSHIPS IN MIND.
    - a. TROUBLE/TRIALS MAY NOT BE HERE AT THIS MINUTE, BUT THEY ARE COMING.
    - b. “WHEN” (NOT IF) “TROUBLE/TRIALS” COME JAMES, WANTS US UNDERSTAND THAT GOD ALLOWS THEM FOR US TO GROW.
    - c. IF WE “RESPOND” BY ASKING HIM FOR WISDOM TO GROW THROUGH OUR TROUBLE/TRIALS, HE WILL GIVE WISDOM IF WE ASK IN FAITH WITHOUT DOUBTING.
  - 3. GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO WORRY ABOUT WHY TROUBLE/TRIALS COME;
    - a. INSTEAD, HE WANTS US TO PREPARE AND TRUST GOD “WHEN” TROUBLE/TRIALS DO COME.

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- b. THAT'S WHY JAMES SAYS WE ARE ABLE TO, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials..."

## 2. REVIEW

- A. **James 1:2-4 (NASB)** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- B. WHEN POTTERS BAKE A POT IN THEIR KILN, THEY "THUMP" IT TO SEE IF IT IS SOLID.
1. IF IT "SINGS", IT'S READY.
  2. IF IT "THUDS", IT'S PLACED BACK IN THE OVEN.
  3. THE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANS IS ALSO CHECKED BY "THUMPING"!
  4. .... HAVE YOU BEEN "THUMPED" LATELY??
- C. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A GOOD "THUMP" TO REVEAL THE NATURE OF OUR HEART!
1. OUR TRUE CHARACTER IS NOT SEEN IN "MOMENTARY HEROICS" ... BUT, IN THE "THUMP-PACKED" HUMDRUM OF DAY-TO-DAY LIVING.
- D. REMEMBER ...GOD DOES NOT CAUSE "TRIALS/THUMPS" BECAUSE, HE IS A "GOOD FATHER".
1. AND, LIKE A GOOD FATHER, HE USES "TRIALS/THUMPS" TO HELP US TO GROW.
  2. GOD DOES NOT ALLOW "TRIALS/THUMPS" TO MAKE US FALL, THEY ARE MEANT TO MAKE US SOAR,
  3. GOD DOES NOT ALLOW "TRIALS/THUMPS" TO DEFEAT US, THEY ARE MEANT TO BE DEFEATED,
  4. GOD DOES NOT ALLOW "TRIALS/THUMPS" TO MAKE US WEAKER, THEY ARE MEANT TO MAKE US STRONGER,

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5. **THEREFORE**, JAMES SAYS... WE SHOULD **NOT COMPLAIN** ABOUT **"TRIALS/THUMPS"**... BUT, AS WE GO **THROUGH** THEM WE CAN ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**... IF WE HAVE
  - (1) AN **"ATTITUDE OF JOY"**
  - (2) AN **"UNDERSTANDING MIND"** AND
  - (3) A **"SURRENDERED WILL"**.
3. **THREE ESSENTIALS FOR VICTORY IN TRIALS**:
  - A. THE FIRST **ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **A JOYFUL ATTITUDE** ... **"CONSIDER IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS"**...
  - B. THE SECOND **ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **AN UNDERSTANDING MIND**... **"KNOWING** THAT THE **TESTING** OF YOUR **FAITH** PRODUCES **INDURANCE**.
  - C. THE THIRD **ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **A SURRENDERED WILL**... **"LET** ENDURANCE HAVE ITS PERFECT RESULT SO THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE LACKING IN NOTHING".
4. **WISDOM**: THE **NEXT** SECTION IN **JAMES** AFTER "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." IS TO **ASK GOD FOR WISDOM**.
  - A. BECAUSE THAT IS THE **MOST PRACTICAL SOLUTION** "WHEN" WE ARE IN A **"TRIAL"**.
    1. AND **JAMES** IS THE **MOST PRACTICAL** BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.
  - B. **REMEMBER KNOWLEDGE IS NOT WISDOM**.
    1. SOME OF THE **SMARTEST** PEOPLE **DO** SOME OF THE **DUMBEST** THINGS.
      - a. **DISCUSS**
      - b. THEY **MAY** HAVE **KNOWLEDGE** BUT THEY ARE **NOT** VERY **WISE**.
        - 1) **EXAMPLE** STEPHEN HAWKING WAS AN ATHEIST.

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- c. **Proverbs 3:5-8 (NASB)** **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart And **do not lean on your own understanding**. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. **Do not be wise in your own eyes**; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.
- d. **Job 28:12-15,20,23,28 (NASB)** "But **where can wisdom be found**? And where is the place of understanding? "Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. "The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.' "Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. ... "**Where then does wisdom come from**? And where is the place of understanding? ..." **God understands its way, And He knows its place**. ... "And to man He said, 'Behold, **the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom**; And to depart from evil is **understanding**.'"
- C. **James 1:5 (NASB)** But if any of you **lacks wisdom**, let him **ask of God**, who **gives to all generously** and **without reproach**, and **it will be given to him**.
- D. **"WISDOM" DEFINITIONS (WHAT IS WISDOM?)**:
  - 1. **KNOWLEDGE** IS THE **ABILITY TO TAKE THINGS APART...** **WISDOM** IS THE **ABILITY TO PUT THEM TOGETHER**.
  - 2. **WISDOM** IS THE **PROPER APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE**
  - 3. **WISDOM** GIVES CHRISTIANS **INSIGHT** INTO THE **WILL OF GOD** AS WELL AS THE **WAY IT IS TO BE APPLIED**.
  - 4. **CHRISTIAN WISDOM** IS **ESSENTIALLY PRACTICAL...** IT IS **KNOWLEDGE TURNED INTO ACTION** IN THE **DECISIONS** AND **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF EVERYDAY LIFE**.
  - 5. **WISDOM** IS **PRACTICAL**. IT IS **NOT PHILOSOPHIC SPECULATION OR INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE**;
    - a. **WISDOM** IS **CONCERNED** WITH THE **BUSINESS OF LIVING**.
- E. **WHY DO WE NEED WISDOM** WHEN WE ARE GOING THROUGH **"TRIALS"**?

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1. WE NEED WISDOM SO WE WILL NOT WASTE OPPORTUNITIES TO MATURE/GROW SPIRITUALLY.
  - a. WISDOM HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO USE “TRIALS” FOR OUR MATURITY.
- F. GOD GIVES “WISDOM” GENEROUSLY TO ALL WHO ASK IN FAITH WITHOUT DOUBTING BY TRUSTING HIS WILL.
- G. “But if any of you lacks wisdom”... THE MEANING HERE IS “IF, AND SINCE” YOU LACK WISDOM.
  1. Matthew 4:1-3 (NASB) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”
    - a. JAMES IS USING “IF” IN THE SAME SENSE AS IN MATTHEW 4:3... “IF, AND SINCE” YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD.
- H. WHY DO TRIALS OVERWHELM US... WHY DO WE SOMETIMES CAVE IN...
  1. WHAT BLOCKS THE “JOY” OF LIFE IN A TRIAL???
  2. THE ANSWER... OUR LACK OF WISDOM.
    - a. “WISDOM” = THE ABILITY TO VIEW LIFE FROM GOD’S PRESPECTIVE.
- I. “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God”
  1. JAMES SAYS THIS KIND OF WISDOM COMES BY PRAYER (1:5).
  2. PRAYER MIGHT BE SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS, “LORD, IN THE MIDST OF THIS LOSS OR HEARTACHE OR FAILURE, I ASK YOU FOR WISDOM. HELP ME, FIRST, TO SEE WHAT I’M GOING THROUGH FROM YOUR VIEWPOINT, AND THEN PLEASE GIVE ME FAITH NOT TO GIVE UP.”
- J. “... who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

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1. JAMES REMINDS US THAT GOD GIVES WISDOM “GENEROUSLY” TO “ALL” WITHOUT FINDING FAULT (“... without reproach”).
5. “WHEN” WE ARE GOING THROUGH “TRIALS” JAMES TELLS US NOT ONLY WHAT TO PRAY FOR (“WISDOM”)... BUT, ALSO HOW TO ASK!
  - A. James 1:6-8 (NASB) But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
  - B. NOTE THE GREATEST ENEMY TO ANSWERED PRAYER IS UNBELIEF!
  - C. JAMES NOT ONLY TELLS US WHAT TO ASK FOR (WISDOM) WHEN WE EXPERIENCE TRIALS/TROUBLES, HE ADDS THAT WE MUST REMEMBER HOW WE ARE TO ASK.
    1. HE SAYS, WE MUST ASK WITHOUT “DOUBT”.
      - a. THAT MEANS THAT WE MUST BE SURE OF BOTH THE POWER AND THE DESIRE OF GOD TO GIVE US HIS WISDOM.
        - 1) WHEN WE ARE SURE OF HIS DESIRE AND HIS ABILITY TO GIVE US WISDOM, WE CAN “ask in faith without any doubting”.
        - 2) QUESTION ARE YOU SURE OF GOD’S POWER AND OF HIS DESIRE TO GIVE YOU WISDOM?
  - D. THE OPPOSITE (FLIP-SIDE) OF FAITH IS DOUBT.
    1. JAMES ISN’T REFERRING TO SAVING “FAITH” IN 1:6...
      - a. HE HAS IN MIND SUSTAINING “FAITH” — THE KIND OF “FAITH” THAT ALLOWS US TO GROW THROUGH “TRIALS” BY ALIGNING OUR WILL AND OUR ATTITUDE WITH GOD’S WILL.
        - 1) THAT IS SUSTAINING FAITH.
          - i. AND JAMES SAYS THAT WE HAVE TO PRAY WITH “FAITH” THAT GOD WILL GIVE US HIS “WISDOM”.

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- ii. REMEMBER THE GREATEST ENEMY TO ANSWERED PRAYER IS "DOUBT"!

E. "For" ... JAMES SAYS, "the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind..."

1. "SURF" = klydōn (GK) WHICH DOES NOT MEAN A WAVE HEADING TO THE BEACH, BUT A WIND DRIVEN AND CHAOTIC OPEN SEA.
2. JAMES COMPARES THOSE WHO PRAY WITHOUT "FAITH" TO "the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind..."
3. "the surf of the sea" (klydōn) IS THE SAME WORD LUKE USED (LUKE 8:24) WHEN THE DISCIPLES THOUGHT THEY WOULD PERISH IN A STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE. THEY WOKE JESUS UP AND HE IMMEDIATELY "rebuked the wind and the surging waves (klydōn)"
  - a. INTERESTINGLY, THE FIRST WORDS JESUS' SPOKE AFTER CALMING THE STORM WERE...
  - b. Luke 8:25 (NASB) "And He said to them, "Where is your faith?"
4. JAMES SAYS PEOPLE WHO "DOUBT" GOD'S ANSWER WHEN THEY PRAY DO NOT POSSESS AN UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S ABILITY OR DESIRE TO ANSWER.
  - a. THEY LACK "FAITH".

F. JAMES FURTHER DESCRIBES THOSE WHO "DOUBT" WHEN THEY PRAY AS "being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

1. PEOPLE CHARACTERIZED BY "DOUBT" AND DIVISION MUST NOT EXPECT THAT GOD WILL RESPOND TO THEIR REQUESTS, FOR THEY ARE INSINCERE AND INCONSISTENT IN THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO GOD.
2. JAMES SAYS THAT, "that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord"

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3. THE WORD “**DOUBLE-MINDED**” (**DIPSYCHOS**) LITERALLY MEANS ‘**DOUBLE-SOULED**’, A SUGGESTIVE INDICATION OF THE **DEPTHS** OF THE **DIVISION** WITHIN THIS PERSON.
4. THIS IS THE **EXPERIENCE** OF THE “**DOUBLE-MINDED**” MAN...
  - a. **FAITH** SAYS “**YES!**” BUT **UNBELIEF** SAYS “**NO!**” THEN “**DOUBT**” SAYS “**YES!**” ONE MINUTE AND “**NO!**” THE NEXT.
  - b. **Matthew 14:28-31 (NASB)** Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "**Come!**" And Peter got out of the boat, and **walked** on the water and **came** toward Jesus. **But** seeing the wind, he became **frightened**, and beginning to **sink**, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and \*said to him, "You of **little faith**, why did you **doubt?**"
5. MANY **CHRISTIANS** LIVE LIKE **CORKS** ON THE **WAVES** THAT ARE “DRIVEN AND TOSSED BY THE WIND”.
  - a. **UP** ONE MINUTE AND **DOWN** THE NEXT.
  - b. THAT KIND OF **EXPERIENCE** IS **EVIDENCE** OF **SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY**.
    - 1) ... AND THAT IS THE **VERY CONDITION** THAT “**TRIALS**” CAN **HELP!**
    - 2) **Ephesians 4:13-15 (NASB)** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, **we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves** and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,
6. **NOTE** A “**DOUBLE-MINDED**” PERSON IS ONE WHO WANTS **THEIR WILL** TO BE **DONE**, AND AT THE SAME TIME FOR **GOD’S WILL** TO BE **DONE**.



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a. JAMES SAYS A “**DOUBLR-MINDED**” PERSON IS “dipduchous” (GK).

1) WHICH LITERALLY MEANS SOMEONE WITH **TWO SOULS**, OR **TWO MINDS**.

i. **ONE BELIEVES**, THE **OTHER DISBELIEVES**,

7. **WORD PICTURE** “DIPDUCHOUS” (GK) IS THE **ROOT WORD** FOR THE ENGLISH WORD “**DUPLEX**”.

a. A **DUPLEX** IS LITERALLY **ONE HOUSE** WITH A **DIVIDING WALL** DOWN THE **MIDDLE**.

b. THAT IS WHAT **SATAN** AND HIS **DEMONS** **ATTEMPT** TO DO IN THE **MINDS** OF MANY **CHRISTIANS**... TO **ERRECT A DIVIDING WALL** TO **CAUSE US TO DOUBT GOD**.

1) OFTEN TIMES THE RESULT IS A CHRISTIAN WITH **TWO MINDS** IS.

i. **ONE BELIEVES**, THE **OTHER DISBELIEVES**,

2) AND THE INDIVIDUAL IS A **WALKING CIVIL WAR** IN WHICH **TRUST** AND **DISTRUST** OF GOD WAGE A **CONTINUAL BATTLE** **AGAINST EACH OTHER**.

### 6. CONCLUSION TO **JAMES 1:1-8**:

A. JAMES IS **NOT** SAYING THAT A **SINNER** IS **SAVED** BY **ENDURING TRIALS**. HE **IS** SAYING THAT A **BELIEVER** IS **REWARDED** BY **ENDURIG TRIALS**.

1. **HOW** ARE WE **REWARDED**?

a. BY **GROWTH IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**.

B. **GOD DOES NOT HELP US BY REMOVING** THE “**TRIALS**” ... **BUT**, BY **MAKING** THE “**TRIALS**” **WORK FOR US**.

C. **SATAN** WANTS TO USE “**TRIALS**” TO **TEAR US DOWN**... **BUT GOD** USES “**TRIALS**” TO **BUILD US UP**.

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1. **Genesis 50:20 (NASB)** "As for you, you meant evil against me, **but God** meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.