

James 1:5-8
May 26, 2024



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

A pursuit of wisdom that does not have its starting point in the love of the Father ends in dissatisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Would you rather have to skip lunch or dinner every day for the rest of your life?

Would you rather win one million dollars next month or 999,000 dollars today?

Would you rather ride an elephant or a camel?

When has there been a time you had to choose between two things that seemed equally good or bad? How did you decide?

Sometimes in life we are double-minded, not knowing which of our choices is best. Spiritually speaking, that's especially true when our faith is tested by unwelcome



circumstances and we need to seek God's wisdom. Solomon began Proverbs by stating, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7). Apart from God's grace and the power of His Spirit, our judgments about circumstances and decisions in them will be double-minded at best. True wisdom is only found in the Giver of wisdom. He is ready and willing to lead all who trust in Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

🌿 *ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JAMES 1:5-8.*

Look back at the first four verses of James 1 that we studied last week. What is the context for verses 5-8?

What does verse 5 say about God's wisdom in such times?

What does it mean to pray in faith? Do you think it's possible to pray in faith without any doubt? Explain.

Read Matthew 7:7-8. What additional insight does Jesus's teaching give you into James's instruction that we are to ask God for wisdom?

God intends for believers to be "complete, lacking nothing" (v. 4). When any of us lacks wisdom, we are to ask God for it. James assures believers God will not only give wisdom impartially (to all) but also solely from His desire to bless (generously). God gives us wisdom gladly. The assurance that God gives the requested wisdom echoes Jesus's words in Matthew 7:7-8, where He says God's presence and power is with those who turn to Him.

How does James's analogy of a wave help make his point clearer?

What are some of the things that keep us from turning to God for wisdom during challenging times?

Receiving wisdom from God hinges on a condition. The believer asking for wisdom must do so in faith without doubting. "In faith" expresses total trust in and commitment to God. This personal reliance is essential to all prayer. James used the analogy of a wave of the sea, driven and agitated by the wind. The image is that of a strong wind causing whitecaps, so the sea's surface swells and wavers. The doubter's commitment constantly wavers between God and self.



What does it mean to be a double-minded, or indecisive, person as James referenced in verse 8? What impact does this have on the way a person faces trials? What impact does it have on one's faith?

Based on the description in this text, would you consider yourself to be indecisive? How can we avoid being indecisive in relationship with God?

Authentic, vibrant Christianity depends on our living moment-by-moment in the reality of knowing Jesus Christ, a knowledge that comes through faith. The terms "double-minded" and "unstable" describe people with divided loyalties in heart and mind. They attempt to serve both God and self, seeking heavenly wisdom and human wisdom. No wonder such people are unstable and restless. They pray but their prayers are not genuine. They step out in faith but then doubt and step back. They seek spiritual answers but explain them away with human wisdom. As long as divided loyalties rule, confusion and instability remain.

What would it look like for you to present your requests to God in prayer in complete faith, without any doubt? What could help you do that?

What would it take for you to receive testing and trials in your life, knowing they will make you stronger and more mature?

When we have God's wisdom, we can tackle trials and testing with joy because we know they provide opportunities for us to mature as Christians. When we realize we need God's wisdom, we can request it and be certain He will give it. However, we are to ask in total commitment. Our faith cannot be mixed with indecision.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

When have you prayed for and received God's wisdom? Describe that experience(s).

What do you do when you pray but doubts remain?

Are you currently facing a trial? If so, what would it take for you to face that trial with a James 1:5-8 perspective?

How can our group help and encourage you through this experience?



PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for promising to give wisdom when we ask. Thank Him for making us wise unto salvation in Christ Jesus. Ask God to help us recognize how dependent we are on Him for everything.

LOOKING AHEAD

*Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study, **Faith and Works: A Study of James.***

June 2, 2024 --- James 1:9-12

COMMENTARY

James 1:5-8

1:5. Christians need wisdom and faith as they encounter trials. We are encouraged to pray for wisdom and to pray with faith. To James and to Jews, wisdom was much more than knowledge and intelligence. Wisdom was a spiritual trait which developed from a wholehearted love for God's ways. With wisdom Christians can understand how their trials merged into God's plan for their lives. They have the commitment to His will necessary to assure that they follow God and not wander from the path of His plan. But how do Christians get this wisdom? They must ask God for it.

1:6-7. These verses deal with the need for faith in prayer. Whoever asks God for wisdom must believe and not doubt. Faith is a complete commitment to God in trusting obedience. Two reasons to encourage faith are presented. First, a doubting person is spiritually unstable like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. We must endure in the confidence that God will answer our request according to His will. Second, doubters should not even imagine that God will answer their prayers. Faith alone opens the door to God's limitless treasury of wisdom.

1:8. Verse 8 provides an additional description of the spiritual makeup of a doubter. The doubter is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. Doubters display no stamina in their commitment to the Lord. One moment they are inclined to obedience; another moment, they follow their own ways. Failure to endure with faith in prayer is an indicator of the doubter's general character.

