

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“If Any of You Lacks Wisdom”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 1:5-8

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-8.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 9.** We continue today in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #3. I have titled today’s message *“If Any of You Lacks Wisdom”* (1:5).
-) Last week we learned in our study of v2-4 that trials test our faith. When we have trials, how must we respond? And the answer is that a Christian responds with joy, not joy in the trial itself (we are never joyful that our furnace quit working in the middle of winter or our spouse left us for another partner), but joy in the fact that our faith is being tested.
-) It’s almost like we can say, *“Thank you Lord because I know I am being tested, and being tested draws me closer to You.”* But then, even as Christians, our humanity kicks in and says, *“But, Lord, could you please use some other means to test my faith? I’m really not fond of trials.”*
-) Today’s we move on to verses, 5-8. These verses can be easily misinterpreted. I know because I have misinterpreted them myself. And I need to point out my error to you this morning. And my error surrounds the word *“wisdom.”*
-) **SLIDE 10.** The word *“wisdom”* used here in v5 is the Greek word *“sophia”* which means wisdom.
-) **SLIDE 11.** We are all familiar with wisdom. Webster. We say that as we grow older, we get wisdom (or at least we should). I’ve seen things happen in my past and now I know what to do and what not to do.

-) We make wiser choices based on our past experiences. We know certain people not to associate with. We know certain restaurants that are better than others. We know certain ways to arrange our office or kitchen that best suits our routines.
-) We all understand this wisdom. It's a secular human wisdom. But this is not the wisdom James is talking about here. He's not talking about wisdom in who to purchase your next donkey from or how to double-talk the tax collectors.
-) And this is where I made my error in interpreting this passage. I defined "*wisdom*" incorrectly. I gave it the secular definition.
-) **SLIDE 12**. Webster 1828 definition. Let's use this definition. What kind of knowledge is James be talking about? Human knowledge? No. James would say the knowledge of God.
-) **SLIDE 13**. We would say Biblical knowledge. This definition of "*wisdom*" is what James wants us to understand.
-) **SLIDE 14**. So, let's do a little substitution here with v5 and instead of the word "*wisdom*" which is in the text, let's use our Webster 1828 definition of the word wisdom.
-) Knowing how James is defining the word "*wisdom*" in this text makes all the difference in how this passage is interpreted,
-) **SLIDE 15**. Wisdom, as used in this passage, is how we **APPLY** what we **KNOW** about the Word of God. Charles Stanley is good at preaching life application. And there are Life Application Bibles available that help us apply the Scriptures to our everyday life.
-) **SLIDE 16**. The apostle Paul writes of similar wisdom in 1COR 2:6-8. Only those who are in Christ will be able to understand this kind of wisdom.
-) On one hand we could say that we have experienced the ways of the world. How can we apply that for our good? That would be the secular way of looking at wisdom.

-) Or we could say, we are learning the ways of God. How can we apply this for our good? That is the Biblical way of looking at wisdom. And that is the heart of our text for today.
-) **SLIDE 17.** 1 COR 2:15-16. Again, only those who are in Christ will be able to understand this kind of wisdom.
-) As Christians, we do not immediately get everything right in our Christian walk. We learn but sometimes we stumble and we fall. Back in GALATIANS 2:11-14 the apostle Paul had to rebuke the apostle Peter for his unchristian like behavior. He could eat with the Gentiles until the Judaizers showed up. Even the pillars of the church mess up.
-) And God understands that we are on a learning curve in our Christian walk and that we are all at different levels in our Biblical knowledge. But He wants to help us grow. And Christian growth comes in the form of applying what we know.
-) So the question now becomes this: "*How much do we want to apply what we know about the Word of God?*" (Hands know and apply)
-) James has already challenged us on trials. Now James is about to challenge us on this topic of wisdom too. If we are really Christians, how much do we want to apply of what we know about the Word of God?
-) **SLIDE 18.** The **PROBLEM** is we lack wisdom.
-) **SLIDE 19.** JAMES 1:5. James is saying that there will be some who do not apply what they know. They lack Biblical wisdom. And if we look at the context of this text, he is also saying that this might be why there are some who are not joyful in their trials. They lack wisdom.
-) **SLIDE 20.** The **SOLUTION** is we ask God.
-) **SLIDE 21.** Every problem requires a solution. James provides a solution. JAMES 1:5. Ask God.

-) The true Christian will want to apply the Word of God in his/her life. And if anyone struggles with that, the solution is simple.
-) **SLIDE 22**. The **RESULT** is we receive.
-) **SLIDE 23**. Every solution has a result. James gives us that result. JAMES 1:5. We receive. The true Christian will receive the wisdom they ask for. Ask and you shall receive.
-) The problem is we lack wisdom. The solution is we ask God. The result is we receive. Sounds pretty simple, right?
-) **SLIDE 24**. But we just can't ask any old way we want. What is our true desire? Where is our heart? In what manner should one ask? JAMES 1:6. We ask in faith.
-) **SLIDE 25**. The **MANNER** is we ask in faith and without doubting.
-) Now this is where we need to be careful. I am convinced that if we ask God, in faith and without doubting, to help us apply the Word of God in our lives, He will certainly honor that request. James says back in v5 that He will.
-) BUT it does not mean that if we ask God, in faith and without doubting, for anything and everything that our carnal minds can conjure up, that He will honor those requests. He's not our personal genie who grants our every wish and desire.
-) No. We are talking about petitioning God for His help in our walking the Christian walk. He will gladly supply that wisdom.
-) **SLIDE 26**. JAMES 1:6-8. James says three things about those who ask but doubt.
-) **SLIDE 27**. These are not good credentials to have. 1) We know that the sea tosses and never settles. It's constantly moving. 2) Being double-minded means that person's mind is divided between the things of God and the things of the world. 3) And unstable is like the sea. That person cannot focus on the truth.

-) Today's lesson on wisdom is another Christianity test. James is writing this letter to the those he calls "*the brethren*," people who are claiming to be Christians. Are they (are we) truly Christians? If we are, then when we ask in faith for wisdom (how to apply our Biblical knowledge) and do not doubt God's ability to provide, we will receive.
-) **SLIDE 28.** Definition of wisdom. Let's ask that question again. "*How much do we want to apply what we know about the Word of God?*" Our goal is to apply all of it because the Christian has the mind of Christ in how we act, how we speak, in our thoughts and in our decisions.
-) (Hands) this is how much we know. This is how much we need to apply. Wisdom. The right use or exercise of Biblical knowledge.

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