

Salt Church
James 1:5-11
Wisdom & Humility
July 12, 2026
The Fruit of Salvation

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Recap

- We established who wrote the book of James.
 - There were four possibilities
 - **James the father of Judas**, only mentioned once in the Bible. This James was the father of the Apostle Judas.
 - **James the lessor**, an Apostle that we know very little about. (“Lessor” due to his age and position within the 12)
 - **James the son of thunder**, an Apostle and the brother of John.
 - He was a leader among leaders and would have been the strongest candidate for the authorship of the book of James except he was murdered before it was written.
 - **James the Just**, the half-brother of Jesus.
 - He emerged as the only logical choice.
 - He became the leader of the church in Jerusalem and is clearly recognized by the other Apostles as the leader of the church in the New Testament.

Here is what we covered last week

1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes who are in the Dispersion: Greetings.

- **James identifies himself as a bond servant or slave of Jesus Christ.**
- The Greek word is **doulos**, which is a slave that is born into slavery.
 - **A slave** that does not want his freedom
 - **A slave** that is completely dependent upon his master.
 - **A slave** is how James wants us to see him.
 - Not as the brother of Jesus Christ but rather as a servant or slave of Christ.

² Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance. ⁴ And let perseverance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We closed out last week's teaching with a **perspective change**.

- James desires that every Christian see life through the lens of faith.
 - His hope is that we would see how God the Father is using every moment to grow our faith.

Here is the key to understanding James 1.

- We must as a Christ follower learn to embrace various trials with ***“all joy.”***

Step 1

- ***Understanding that the trials have a purpose.***
 - The purpose is developing perseverance or endurance.
 - This is listed 1st because God has not promised to keep us from various trials, tribulations, pain, or suffering.
 - ***He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us.***
 - He has also promised us that **He will use all things for the good of those who love Him.**
 - Therefore these trials test our faith.
 - In the testing of our faith we have a chance to grow.

Step 2

- ***“The need of wisdom”***

Let’s look at today’s text together

James 1:5

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom,

- What is wisdom?
 - What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?
 - Can you have knowledge and lack wisdom?
 - **Where does wisdom begin?**

Proverbs 9:10

***10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***

- The Bible says that if we are to be wise, we better have a healthy fear of the Lord. (WHY?)

I can remember being taught this as a young man.

- And I remember teaching this the same way until I studied it for myself.
 - Here is what I was taught:
 - The fear of the Lord is not a dreadful fear but a fear that comes with respect.
 - God would not want you to fear Him in that way.

But there is a big problem

- The Hebrew word for fear is “yirah”
 - Which means ***dreadful, exceedingly, fearfulness***
 - Why would God desire that we fear Him in this way?

One of Gods attributes is that He is “just.”

- Some people tend to forget that He is just.
 - And they lean upon His love, grace, and mercy as if He is willing to sacrifice His justice for His love.
 - **God is not willing to sacrifice one of His attributes for another.**
 - How do we know?
 - The cross!
 - Hebrews tells us that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness.
 - If God was willing to sacrifice justice for love, Jesus would have never gone to the cross.

(side note)

- We are also command by God to pursue justice.

Micah 6:8

⁸He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To **act justly and to **love** mercy and to **walk** humbly with your God.**

Now, with all of that understood, how does fear of the Lord bring about wisdom?

- **If we understand** that we will on day stand before a Holy and Just Judge and give an account for our lives it should change how we live.
- **If we understand** that God has already said that non-believers will give an account and will be sentenced to an eternity in Hell it should change how we live.
- **If we understand** that Christians will also stand before the Lord
 - Their works will be judged
 - There will be loss and reward even to the point of so having total loss
 - Yet not losing their salvation but escaping the flames of Hell and entering into Heaven with the smell of smoke upon them,
 - It should change how we live.
 - Amen!

But there is a danger that goes beyond agreeing with Proverbs 9:10.

- The danger is in confusing knowledge and wisdom.
 - They are not the same.

What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

- Knowledge is the reception of information.
 - Wisdom is the application of the knowledge.
 - **Wisdom is knowledge applied.**
 - Example:
 - If you learn that an antibiotic can cure a bacterial infection that is knowledge.
 - But if you get a bacterial infection and apply what you have learned and take the antibiotic and it cures the infection, then you have moved from having knowledge to wisdom because you applied it to your life.

(Can you have knowledge and lack wisdom?)

- Absolutely!
 - You can know that antibiotics cure bacterial infections and refuse to take them.
 - This would make you knowledgeable and unwise at the same time.
- The same can be said about the Bible.
 - You could hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - You could know the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - Therefore you would be knowledgeable of the gospel but you would not be wise in the gospel **until**

confess, repent, and place your faith, hope, and trust in Christ.

- Satan knows the scriptures.

- But he is not wise in the scriptures.

- Why?

- Because he does not fear the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- Isn't interesting how God placed wisdom above knowledge.

- **We better get this right!**

- Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (and this is good) but...

- If that knowledge does not produce a healthy fear of God then it is not wisdom.

Back to James:

So, James says that all Christ followers should ask for wisdom (not knowledge). WHY?

- If we have any hope in surviving, growing, and persevering in our faith as we encounter various trials, we are going to need wisdom.

- We are going to need to apply what God gives us so that we can become more like Christ.

⁵ 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.

- So, we have established that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
 - Meaning we understand that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere at all times.
 - Therefore, it is a legitimate fear.
 - For He is under no obligation to anyone and could at any moment decide that our time on this earth is finished.
 - And He can do without being guilty of sin.

But what does God want?

James teaches us that our Father wants to give us wisdom.

- In fact he says that our Father says “if you ask for it, He will give it generously to you.”
 - This tells us that we have a part in this process.
 - We ask by faith for wisdom
 - We believe **by faith** that God will give it to us because He is not a liar.
 - We are going to talk about “belief” but before we get there let me remind you of a moment in which God was pleased to pour wisdom upon one of His servants.

1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, “What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!”

⁶ Solomon replied, “You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

⁷ “Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. ⁸ And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be

counted! ⁹ Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. ¹¹ So God replied, “Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— ¹² I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have!

- Wow!
 - Do you see and hear the heart of our Father in Heaven?
 - He wants to give us wise and understanding heart.
 - So, how do we get wisdom?

We continue

⁵ 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

Why does James who is under the power of the Holy Spirit say “without reproach?”

- Some of you Bibles say “without finding fault.”
- It is written this way so that you and I don’t have to feel like we need to be mature in our faith before we ask.
 - **Don’t you understand that this is the whole point?**
 - If we are to mature in our faith, we are going to need wisdom and therefore wisdom is **required on the front end** and **not the fruit of maturity on the back end.**
- James through the power of the Holy Spirit says that God will not hold our immaturity against us and will generously give us the wisdom we need to mature.

But there is a condition:

⁶ **But he must ask in faith, doubting nothing**, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,⁸ being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Being a double minded human being is the worst of all human beings.
- This is a person who has knowledge and says that they believe but they live a life that is contrary to what they say they believe.

- In other words, God has given us the greatest source of wisdom and knowledge, **His written Word.**
- When we say that we believe it is truth.
- And we know the truth about our sin, meaning we know that we are living in active willful disobedience to Gods Word, the scripture says we are double minded.
 - This shows up in so many ways but mostly it shows up in the fruit of our lives.
 - Our children see it and think that our faith is a sham.
 - And we struggle with their lack of faith saying:
 - I took them to church!
 - They were raised in the church!
- It shows up in the fact that we continue to deal with the consequence of the same sins for years never maturing beyond that issue.
 - We blame so many things instead of falling before the feet of Jesus and confessing it's my fault, I did this!

What the Holy Spirit is trying to convey through our brother James is you can't be a fence rider.

- You can't be double minded. (WHY?)
 - Because ***there are no fence riding double minded children of God.***
 - You and I cannot serve two masters.
 - We can only love one master.

Here is what we have learned so far:

Step 1

- Consider it all joy when various trials come

Step 2

- Understand that those trials are how maturity in Christ comes and God uses them for that very purpose
 - This purpose is to develop and grow perseverance/endurance
 - “from the Greek **joyful consistency**”

Step 3

- We need wisdom
 - Ask for it because the Father knows we need it as we grow
 - And He gives it even if we are not perfect
 - But we cannot expect anything if we are double-minded.

Step 4

- We need Humility

⁹But the brother of humble circumstances is to boast in his high position;

- What an odd thing to say
 - A humble brother should boast?
 - No in himself but rather in his high position.
 - What is his high position?
 - He is a child of God, which is the “free gift of God lest any man should boast”

¹⁰ and the rich man is to boast in his humiliation,

- What is the rich man's humiliation?
 - It is simply that he like the poor man will also die taking nothing with him except one of two things:
 - If he dies without Christ, he takes his sin
 - If he dies in Christ he takes with him the grace of God.

¹⁰ and the rich man is to boast in his humiliation,

because like flowering grass he will pass away.¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching heat and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

- To the brother who is in humble circumstance The Holy Spirit says remember who you are in Christ.
- To the brother who is wealthy The Holy Spirit says be humble for your wealth will not accompany you in Heaven.
 - Both of you will die.
 - Both of you will give an account.
 - Both of you will have the works you did here on earth tested by the fire of Jesus Christ's judgement.
 - If anything was done out of selfish ambition or self-glorification there will be loss and no reward.

King Solomon said it is better for us to contemplate our death than to go to a party, why would he say that?

Ecclesiastes 7:2

² Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties.

After all, everyone dies—so the living should take this to heart.

- **Our death is a reality** and one day we will stand before the King.
 - *What would happen if we allowed that nugget of wisdom to sink deep into our hearts?*

Jesus said it this way in Matthew 6

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

What have we learned so far?

- ***1st Christ followers are called to receive various trials with joy.***
 - We are called to see our various trials as opportunity to grow in Christ.
 - We are called to receive our trials with consistent joy.
 - If we embrace this philosophy of life which is shaped by our theology, then will be able to persevere until the day of redemption.
- ***2nd We embrace the need for the testing of our faith.***
 - The purpose of this testing is the development of perseverance and endurance.

- If you are a child of God you will persevere to the end.
- **3rd We need wisdom**
 - Wisdom is knowledge applied.
 - Wisdom only comes from the Lord for the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.
 - God our Father desires to give wisdom generously all that is required of us is faith, belief, and a request.
- **4th We need humility**
 - Humility is the fruit of Godly wisdom.
 - If we understand who we are in Him
 - If we understand that we have only Him to boast in then humility is the natural fruit of Godly wisdom.
 - Our brother James is very clear as he lays the foundation for what is coming next in his precious letter.