RECENT CHURCH PERSECUTION

- **Jordan:** On October 23–25, 2026, gunmen opened fire at St. George's Greek Orthodox Church in Hamoud, Karak, Jordan, during a funeral. At least nine Christians were killed and roughly 40 others were wounded, leading to mass burials and mourning across the community this week.
- **Ethiopia:** Two days ago, October 26, armed groups carried out a deadly attack targeting followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in Oromia, killing more than 60 people.

FAITH THAT SEEKS WISDOM

James 1:5–8 and Acts 9:1–19

THE PERSECUTOR ENCOUNTERS JESUS

-Last week, we **stepped away** from our verse-by-verse study of **James** to better understand the **historical setting** of the early church.

-We examined the **persecution** that followed **Stephen's death**.

-We saw believers being **arrested**, **imprisoned**, and **scattered** throughout Judea and Samaria.

-But we also **discovered** something remarkable.

-The **persecution scattered** the church, but it didn't silence the gospel.

-And we were **introduced** to a young man named **Saul**.

-He was **present** when Stephen was **stoned**.

-He **approved** of Stephen's **execution**.

-And **Acts 8:3** tells us that he began going from **house** to **house**,

-**dragging** Christians away and **putting** them in **prison**.

-By the time we reached Acts 9, Saul was taking his **persecution beyond Jerusalem**.

-He had **obtained authorization** to travel to **Damascus** and **arrest** followers of Jesus.

-That's where we **left** him **last week**.

-And I want us to **finish** that part of the **story** before **returning** to **James**.

1. Saul Encounters the Risen Jesus

Acts 9:3–9 [3] As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [4] He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" [5] "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. [6] "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." [7] The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. [8] Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. [9] For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

-Now, **think** about what **Saul was expecting** when he **left Jerusalem**.

-He was **traveling** to Damascus with a specific **purpose**.

-He intended to **find Christians**, **arrest** them, and **bring** them back to **Jerusalem**.

-He believed he was **defending** his **religious convictions**.

-But somewhere **along that road**, something happened that Saul **never anticipated**.

-A **light** from **heaven** flashed around him.

-He **fell** to the **ground**.

-And he **heard** a voice asking: **"*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*" *(Acts 9:4)***

-Now, I want you to **pay attention** to that **question**.

-Jesus didn't ask, **"*Why are you persecuting my disciples or my followers?*"**

-He didn't ask, **"*Why are you persecuting my church?*"**

-He didn't ask, ***"Why are you persecuting my followers? My believers?"***

-He asked: **"*Why do you persecute ME?*"**

-Think about the **significance** of that statement.

-Saul had been **arresting believers**.

-He had been **attempting to destroy** the **church**.

-But **Jesus** personally **identified Himself** with the **people** Saul was **persecuting**.

-To **persecute** those who **belonged** to **Jesus** was to oppose Jesus Himself.

-Jesus is not **indifferent** to the **suffering** of His **people**.

-He **knows** what His **followers** are **experiencing**.

-And here, He **confronts the man** who has been **persecuting** them.

2. Saul Discovers He Was Wrong

-Now look at **Saul's response** in verse 5: **"Who are you, Lord?"**

-And the **answer** comes: **"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."**

-Imagine that moment; Saul had been **convinced** that **Jesus** was **NOT** the **Messiah**.

-He had been **determined** to **stop** those who **proclaimed** His resurrection.

-And now the **risen Jesus** was **speaking** directly to **him**.

-Remember what we discussed last week?

-**Saul** was **sincere**, but he was **sincerely wrong**.

-His religious **commitment** was **genuine**.

-His **convictions** were **strong**.

-But he had **misunderstood** the very **One** he **believed** he was **serving**.

-And now everything was **changing**.

-The man who had **traveled** to **Damascus** intending to **arrest Christians** was being **confronted** by **JESUS CHRIST** Himself.

3. Saul Is Led Into Damascus

-Jesus tells Saul to **get up** and enter the **city**, where he will be **told** what he must do.

-Verse 8 tells us that when Saul **opened** his **eyes**, he **COULDN'T** see.

-the **men traveling** with him took him by the hand and **led him into Damascus**.

-Saul **entered** the road to **Damascus** believing he knew exactly what **needed to be done**.

-But he **arrived** in **Damascus** unable to see and **dependent** on others to **lead** him.

-And verse 9 tells us that for he **three days** was **blind** and did **NOT** eat or drink.

-Now, I want us to **stop the story** here for a moment.

-Because while **Saul** was sitting in **Damascus**, God was **preparing** another man for an **assignment**.

-His name was **Ananias**.

-And Ananias **knew about Saul**.

-He knew **Saul's reputation**.

-He knew what Saul had **done** to **believers** in Jerusalem.

-And he knew why **Saul** had **come** to **Damascus**.

-But Ananias was **about to be asked** to do something that would **require** extraordinary **courage**.

-We're going to **come back** to his **story**...maybe **tonight**, but maybe **next week**.

-Because I believe it **provides** a meaningful **illustration** of what **James teaches** us next.

4. Returning to James

-Now, let's **return** to **James 1**.

-**Remember** what we've already **studied**.

-In verses 2–4, James tells believers to **consider it pure joy** when they encounter **trials** of many kinds.

-Why?

-Because the **testing** of their **faith** produces **perseverance**.

-And **perseverance** contributes to **spiritual maturity**.

-But that raises a few **questions**.

- ***When we're going through a difficult situation, how do we know what to do?***
- ***How do we respond when we don't understand what's happening?***
- ***How do we remain faithful when we can't see what God is doing?***
- ***How do I respond when someone treats me unfairly?***
- ***How do I make decisions when I'm facing uncertainty?***
- ***How do I know the difference between responding in faith and reacting out of fear?***

-And I think that's **precisely** why **James** moves into **verse 5**.

-Because trials **DON'T** simply require **perseverance**...they also **require wisdom**.

-Let's read **James 1:5–8** together.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

WISDOM BEGINS WITH RECOGNIZING OUR NEED

-Let's focus in on verse 5.

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

-Now, **remember** what **James** has been **discussing**.

-In **verses 2–4**, he's talking about **trials**.

-He's **writing** to **believers** who are experiencing **difficulties**, **persecution**, and **scattering**...

-James encouraged them to **persevere** because the **testing** of their **faith** produces **spiritual maturity**.

-But then he **moves** immediately into **verse 5**.

-And I **DON'T** think that's **accidental**.

-Because **trials DON'T** simply require **perseverance**...they also **require wisdom**.

-It's one thing to **know** that **God wants** us to **persevere** through **difficulties**.

-But it's another thing to **know HOW** to **respond** when those **difficulties** come.

-And **James recognizes** that **believers WON'T** always **know** what to **do**.

-That's why he **begins** verse 5 with an **invitation**.

A. Recognize Our Need for Wisdom

-Notice how James begins: **"If any of you lacks wisdom..."**

-I find those words **encouraging**.

-James **DOESN'T** say, "If any of you **lacks faith**."

-He **DOESN'T** say, "If any of you isn't **spiritual enough**."

-He says, **"If any of you lacks wisdom."**

-James recognizes that **even faithful believers** will encounter **situations** where they **DON'T** know how to **respond**.

-And there's **NO CONDEMNATION** in acknowledging that **need**.

-In fact, **recognizing our need** for **wisdom** is the very thing that should **move us toward God**.

-Now, the **Greek word** translated ***wisdom*** is ***sophia***.

-It's a **familiar word** in the New Testament, but its meaning is **important**.

-Biblical wisdom is **MORE** than **intelligence**.

-It's **MORE** than **education**.

-And it's **MORE** than having **accumulated** a great **deal** of **information**.

-Biblical wisdom involves **understanding** how to **live faithfully** in **God's truth**.

-You can have **tremendous knowledge** and still make **foolish decisions**.

-If **knowledge** is "**gaining information**" ...then **wisdom** is **knowing** how to **apply** the information.

-**Example:** I can go to **school** and **gain knowledge** on becoming a **pastor**...

-But **wisdom** learning how to **apply** the **acquired knowledge**.

-I've always **believed** that real **school starts** when **college** is **over**!

-You can **know** what **Scripture says** and still **struggle** to **apply** it to your circumstances.

-Wisdom **involves taking** what we **know** about **God** and His **Word**...

-And allowing that **truth** to **shape** how we **live**.

-And that's why James **directs believers** to **God**.

-Because God is the **source** of the **wisdom** we need.

-Now, let me **ask** you some **more questions**.

-***When you face a difficult situation, what's usually the first thing you do?***

- ***Do you immediately begin trying to solve the problem?***
- ***Do you seek advice from someone else?***

- ***Do you start thinking through every possible outcome?***
- ***Or do you begin by asking God for wisdom?***

-There's **nothing wrong** with seeking **godly counsel** or carefully **considering** our **circumstances**.

-But James wants us to **recognize** that our **dependence** must **be upon God**.

B. God Invites Us to Ask

-Now look at the next phrase… ***"…you should ask God…"***

-That seems like a **simple instruction**.

-But I think we sometimes **overlook** its **significance**.

-James **DOESN'T** tell **believers** to **figure** everything **out** on their **own**.

-He **DOESN'T** tell them to **pretend** they have all the **answers**.

-He tells them to **ask God**.

-The **Greek** verb translated *ask* is ***aiteō***.

-It means to **ask** or **request** something from another in **authority**.

-The **Greeks** had another word for "ask", ***erotāō.***

-It's **asking** a **question** to someone who is an **equal**.

-It's **Oliver Twist asking** for more **gruel**… ***"Please sir, I want some more…"***

-Now **read** what **Jesus said** in John 14…

John 14:15-16 [15] "If you love me, obey my commandments. [16] And I will <u>ASK</u> the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. [17] He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.

-Jesus uses ***erotāō*** in this **passage** in John.

-In fact, when **Jesus** was **praying** to the **Father**…He **ALWAYS** uses ***erotāō***

-And in James 1:5, he uses ***aiteō*** to describe **believers** bringing their **need** before **God**.

-I want you to **notice** something about this **instruction**.

-God **DOESN'T expect** us to **possess** all the **wisdom** we need **before** we **come** to Him.

-He **invites** us to **come** precisely because we **lack** it.

-Sometimes we **think spiritual maturity** means **always knowing** what to do.

-But James **reminds** us that **spiritual maturity** includes **recognizing** when we need **God's help**.

-And that **recognition** should **lead** us to **prayer**.

-Not simply asking God to **remove** the **difficulty**.

-Not simply asking Him to **change** our **circumstances**.

-But asking: "Lord, **give** me the **wisdom** to **respond faithfully** in the middle of this."

-That **may be** one of the most **important prayers** we can learn to **pray**.

C. The Character of the God Who Gives Wisdom

-Now, I want us to **look** carefully at the **remainder** of verse 5.

-Because James **DOESN'T** simply tell us to **ask** God.

-He **tells us** something **about** the **God** we're asking.

"...who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

-There are **two descriptions** here that I **DON'T** want us to **miss**.

-First, God gives **generously.**

-The **Greek** word translated *generously* is ***haplōs***.

-It carries the **idea** of giving **freely**, **generously**, or with **sincerity**.

-In this **context**, James is **emphasizing** God's **willingness** to give.

-God **ISN'T reluctant** to **provide** wisdom to those who **seek** Him.

-He is trying to **make** the process **easy** and **simple**.

-And **notice** that James says He **gives to all**.

-Within the **context** of this **passage**, James is speaking to **believers who come** to God **seeking wisdom**.

-He **ISN'T** describing a **special privilege** reserved for a select group of **spiritually mature Christians**.

-This **invitation extends** to the **believers** he's addressing.

-But there's a **second description** that I think is **encouraging**.

-God gives "**without finding fault**."

-The **Greek** verb is ***oneidizō***, meaning to **reproach**, **criticize**, **insult**, or **rebuke**.

-James tells us that God **DOESN'T respond** to our requests for **wisdom** in this **manner**.

-Have you ever asked someone a question and felt foolish for not knowing the answer?

-Maybe they **responded** with something like: **"Well, you should already know that."**

-Or: **"How many times do I have to explain this to you?"**

-James tells us that God **DOESN'T treat** His **children** that way when they **come seeking wisdom**.

-He **DOESN'T shame** us for **acknowledging** our **need**.

-He **invites** us to **ask**.

-And I think that's a **beautiful picture** of God's **character**.

-He **knows** our **limitations**.

-He **understands** our **circumstances**.

-And He **generously provides** the **wisdom** we need as we **seek and ask Him**.

-Now, this **DOESN'T** mean God will always **give** us the **answer** we **want**.

-And it certainly **DOESN'T** mean He **promises** to **reveal** every **detail** about our **future**.

-But James **assures believers** that God is **willing** to **give wisdom** to those who **ask** Him.

D. Wisdom for the Circumstances We Face

-Now, let's bring this back to the **original context**.

-James is **writing** to **believers** who are **experiencing trials**.

-He's **NOT** primarily discussing which **career** someone should **pursue** or which **house** they should **purchase**.

-Those are certainly **situations** where we can **seek** God's **wisdom**.

-But in this **passage**, James is particularly **concerned** with how **believers respond** to the **difficulties** they're **facing**.

-And I want us to **recognize** something.

-Sometimes the **greatest need** in a **trial ISN'T** an immediate **change** in **circumstances**.

-It's **wisdom** to **remain faithful** while we're **going through** it.

-We may **NOT understand** why something is **happening**.

-We may **NOT** know how **long** it will **last**.

-We may **NOT see** what **God is doing**.

-But we can **ask Him** for **wisdom** to **respond** in a way that **honors** Him.

-And that **brings us back** to the **story** we began with tonight.

-Remember Ananias?

-He's **living** in **Damascus**.

-He knows **Saul's reputation**.

-He knows what Saul has **done** to **believers** in **Jerusalem**.

-And he's about to **receive** an **instruction** from the **Lord** that will **challenge** him.

-**Scripture DOESN'T** tell us that Ananias specifically **asked** God for **wisdom**.

-But his **experience** helps us **picture** the kind of **situation**...

-where faithful **obedience requires** more than simply **knowing** the **facts**.

-Ananias **knew** the **facts** about Saul.

-What he **needed** was to **respond faithfully** to what God was **revealing**.

-And we'll **circle back** to that in a few moments.

-But before we do, James **adds** an important **qualification** to this **promise** of **wisdom**.

-He **tells** us something about **HOW we** are to **ask**.

WISDOM REQUIRES TRUST IN GOD'S CHARACTER

James 1:6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

-Now, I want us to be **careful** with this **verse**.

-It's **possible** to **read** these words and **come away** with an **understanding** that James **NEVER** intended.

-We might **conclude** that if we **experience** any **uncertainty**, any **fear**, or any **questions** about our circumstances, then we **DON'T** have enough **faith**.

-But is that really what James is saying?

-Let's **examine** it.

A. Asking in Faith

-Notice how James begins: **"*But when you ask, you must believe...*"**

-The **Greek** word translated ***believe*** comes from ***pistis***, the word commonly **translated *faith*.**

-More **specifically**, James uses the **expression *en pistei***, meaning ***in faith***.

-James is **telling believers** that when they **ask** God for **wisdom**, they are to ask "**in faith**."

-But what does that mean?

- ***Does it mean we convince ourselves that everything will work out exactly as we want?***
- ***Does it mean we must have complete confidence in our own understanding?***
- ***Does it mean we can never experience fear?***

-I **DON'T believe** that's what James is **teaching**.

-Remember the **context**.

-These are **believers experiencing trials**.

-Their **circumstances** are **difficult**.

-Their **futures** may be **uncertain**.

-And James is **encouraging** them to **seek wisdom** from God.

-Faith **ISN'T confidence** that I **understand everything**.

-Faith **IS confidence** in the **God** who **does**.

-That's an **important distinction**.

-When James tells us to ask **"in faith"**, he's **directing** our **confidence** toward **God**.

- Toward His **character**.
- Toward His **generosity**.
- Toward His **faithfulness**.
- And Toward His **willingness** to **provide** the **wisdom** we need.

B. What Does James Mean by Doubting?

-Now, look at the **next** phrase: **"...and not doubt..."**

-The **Greek** word here comes from ***diakrinō***.

-This word can have **several meanings** depending on the **context**, including **making judgments**, **disputing**, or **wavering**.

-In James 1:6, it **describes** someone who is **wavering** rather than **approaching God** with **trust**.

-And I think we need to **distinguish** between **two ideas**.

-Having **questions** about our **circumstances ISN'T** necessarily the same as **having** a **divided trust** in God.

-Let me give you an **example**.

-Think about the **father** who **brought** his **son** to **Jesus** in **Mark 9**.

-The boy was **suffering terribly**, and the father **desperately** wanted **Jesus** to **help** him.

-Jesus told him in ***Mark 9:23 "Everything is possible for one who believes."***

-And the father responded in ***Mark 9:24 "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!***

-I **love** that **statement**.

-Because it's **remarkably honest**.

-This **father believed** Jesus could **help** his son.

-But he also **recognized** the **struggle** taking place **within him**.

-And what did he do?

-He **brought** that **struggle** to **Jesus**.

-He **DIDN'T walk away**.

-He **DIDN'T pretend** to have **perfect faith**.

-He **asked Jesus** to **help** him.

-Now, Mark 9 and James 1 are **different passages** addressing **different situations**.

-But I think **Mark helps** us **recognize** something **important**.

-The **PRESENCE** of a **struggle DOESN'T** automatically **mean** the **ABSENCE** of **genuine faith**.

-Sometimes **genuine faith** expresses itself by **bringing** our **uncertainties** before the Lord.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

The Situation: King Jehoshaphat of Judah faced a massive, overwhelming invading alliance of armies (Edomites, Ammonites, and others) and felt completely powerless.

The Response: Instead of panicking or trying to fight in his own strength, he gathered the people together, admitted his fear and lack of answers, and turned his focus toward God.

2 Chronicles 20:12 We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.

The Answer: God answered through a prophet, telling them not to be afraid because the battle belonged to God, and they won the victory through faith and praise.

2 Chronicles 20:14-15 & 17 [14] Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel…as he stood in the assembly. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. [17] You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'"

The Battle: Instead of putting elite soldiers or heavy armor at the front lines, King Jehoshaphat positioned a choir of worship leaders at the head of the army. They marched out singing, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.*"

The Result: The moment the people began to sing and praise, the Bible says the Lord set ambushes against the invaders. Confusion swept through the enemy alliance, causing the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to turn on each other. By the time the army of Judah reached the lookout tower in the wilderness, the threat had completely dissolved, the enemy forces had destroyed one another

The Blessing: When Judah went down into the valley where the enemy had gathered, they found an overwhelming abundance of equipment, clothing, and valuables. The plunder was so massive that it took three full days to collect it all.

2 Chronicles 20:25 So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and also articles of value—more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it.

-Now you've seen both a New Testament and an Old Testament response.

-If you have **doubt**, **unbelief**, **fear**, **questions**... **bring** it to God!

-And **King Jehosophat** did in 2 Chronicles.

-**Bring** it to Jesus!

-The **Father** did in Mark 9.

JAMES 1:6

-And that **brings** us **back** to James.

-He's **NOT condemning** every believer who **experiences** a **difficult emotion**...

-or **asks** an **honest question**.

-He's **warning** against an **unstable posture** of **trust** toward **God**.

-We'll **see** that even more **clearly** when we **examine** the **word double-minded** in verse 8.

C. The Picture of a Wave

-Now, James **gives** us an **illustration**.

"...because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

-That's a powerful **picture**.

-Imagine standing beside **a large body of water** on a **windy** day.

-The **waves** are constantly **moving**.

-They're **being pushed** in different **directions**.

-They're **reacting** to the **forces AROUND** them.

-And James says the **person** who **wavers** in **faith** is like that.

-Their **confidence** is being continually **redirected** by whatever is **happening AROUND** them.

-When **circumstances** are **favorable**, they may **express confidence** in God.

-But when **difficulties arise**, that **confidence** begins to **shift**.

-And James is **warning believers** about that **kind** of **instability**.

-**Remember**, he's **writing** to people **experiencing trials**.

-And **trials** have a way of **revealing** where our **confidence** is **resting**.

-Are you trusting God because His character is faithful?

-Or are you trusting Him only when our circumstances appear favorable?

-Here's the **million-dollar** James **question**...

-When your circumstances change, does your confidence in God's character change with them?

-I think that's a **question** worth **considering** and **asking** yourself...

-Because **God's character DOESN'T change** simply because our **circumstances** do.

- He remains **faithful**.
- He remains **generous**.
- He remains **wise**.
- And He remains **worthy** of our **trust**.

D. Faith Is Anchored in God's Character

-Now, let's **bring** verses 5 and 6 **together**.

-Verse 5 tells us **WHAT God is like**.

-He **gives generously**.

-He **DOESN'T scold** or **rebuke** us for asking.

-He **invites** us to **seek** Him for **wisdom**.

-And verse 6 tells us **HOW we're to approach Him**.

-In **faith**.

-With **confidence** in the **God** who has **invited** us to **ask**.

-Our **faith rests** on **God's character**, not on **our ability** to **eliminate** every **uncertainty**.

-And I think that's especially **important** when we're **going** through **trials**.

- We may **NOT understand** what **God is doing**.
- We may **NOT know** how **long** a **difficult season** will **last**.
- We may **NOT know** what the **outcome** will **be**.

-But we **can** still **trust** the **character** of the **One** we're **asking** for **wisdom**.

ANANIAS

-We're going to **return** to Ananias' **story**, but I want you to **consider one thing**.

-When Ananias **learned** that **God** was **sending** him to **Saul**, he had **legitimate concerns**.

-He **knew** Saul's **reputation**.

-He **understood** the **danger**.

-But the **presence** of those **concerns DIDN'T prevent** him from **obeying** the Lord.

-Ananias's **courage WASN'T demonstrated** by having **NO REASON** to be **afraid**.

-It was **demonstrated** by **obeying** God **DESPITE** those **reasons.**

-And that's an **important distinction** as we **consider** what it means to **trust** God.

-Because in **verses 7 and 8,** James is about to **describe** someone...

-whose **problem** goes **deeper** than **uncertainty** or **fear**.

-He's going to **describe** a person who is **double-minded**.

-But you **must wait**...until **next week**.

WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

-As we **finish** tonight, I want to **bring us back** to something **James** has been **teaching us**.

-In **verse 5**, James tells us that **when we lack wisdom**, we should **ask God**.

-And he **reminds** us that **God gives generously**, without **finding fault**.

-Then in **verse 6**, James tells us that **when we ask**, we should ask **in faith**.

-And I think **these two verses** give us something **important** to **remember**.

-We **DON'T** have to **know everything** to **trust** the **One** who **does**.

-**Think** about the **people** we've **talked** about tonight.

-**Saul** was **convinced** he knew what was **right**.

-But on the **road** to **Damascus**, he **discovered** just how **wrong** he had been.

-The **father** in Mark 9 **believed** Jesus could **help his son**,

-but he also **acknowledged** his **struggle** with **unbelief**.

-And **Jehoshaphat** stood before an **overwhelming enemy** and **admitted**:

"*We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.*"

-I think that's a pretty **good prayer** for us to **learn**.

-Because there are **going** to be **moments** in our lives when we **simply don't know** what to **do**.

-We **WON'T** have all the **answers**.

-We **WON'T** understand **every circumstance**.

-And we certainly **WON'T** know how **everything** is going to **turn out**.

-But James **reminds us** that we have a **God who invites** us to **ask** Him for **wisdom**.

-Our **confidence ISN'T** supposed to **rest** in **OUR ability** to **understand** everything.

-Our **confidence rests** in the **character** of the **God** we're **asking**.

-So, here's what I want to **challenge** you with this **week**.

-What situation in your life right now requires God's wisdom?

- Maybe it's a **decision** you need to **make**.
- Maybe it's a **relationship** you're **struggling** with.
- Maybe you're **going** through a **difficult season**, and you're **not sure** how to **respond**.

-Instead of simply **asking** God to **change** your **circumstances**...

-what would **happen** if you **began praying**:

-"Lord, give me the wisdom to respond faithfully to what I'm facing."

-Or "I don't know what to do but my eyes are on you."

-And as you **pray**, **remember** what **James** has **told** us.

-God is **generous**.

-He **DOESN'T shame** us for **acknowledging** our **need** and He is **worthy** of our **trust**.

NEXT WEEK

-Now, we're going to **stop here tonight**, but James **ISN'T finished** with this **subject**.

-In verses 7 and 8, he introduces the word **Double-minded.**

-We're going to **explore** that **next week**.

-And we're also going to **return** to **Damascus** and **Ananias**

-God was **preparing him** to **visit Saul**.

-And Ananias **knew** exactly what **kind of man** Saul had been.

-He **knew** Saul had **persecuted** Christians and had come to **Damascus** to **arrest believers**.

-And yet **God** was about to **ask Ananias** to **walk** into the very **situation** he had **every reason to fear**.

-Will Ananias allow what he knew about Saul to determine his response?

-Or will he trust what God was telling him?

-We'll **discover** what **happened** next week.

-But until then, **remember** this:

-When you **DON'T** know **what to do**, you can **still know** who to **trust**.