

THE POWER OF WISDOM (Part 4) (James 1:5-6)

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~"I will walk into the EXPECTED END of God—by the power of Wisdom."

~We have been teaching and talking about GROWING toward maturity.

~We are in a season where God is demanding Spiritual Maturity from the Remnant that He has called to impact the earth during the last days.

~If we refuse to GROW and MATURE—we will forfeit our place at the table.

~"Maturity is necessary for Destiny."

~If we want to walk in our purpose we must be willing to go through the **process** of maturity.

~Discipleship is the process of maturity—if we are to mature, it will be because we become submitted to the Discipleship process and become willing learners.

~WISDOM is what enables us to take knowledge to the market place—it's what empowers us to make Godly decisions where we live, work, and play.

(A. W. Tozer) "In the Holy Scriptures wisdom, when used of God and good men, always carries a strong moral connotation. It is conceived as being pure, loving, and good... Wisdom, among other things, is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means. It sees the end from the beginning, so there can be no need to guess or conjecture. Wisdom sees everything in focus, each in proper relation to all, and is thus able to work toward predestined goals with flawless precision."

(J. I. Packer) "Wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it. Wisdom is, in fact, the practical side of moral goodness. As such, it is found in its fullness only in God. He alone is naturally and entirely and invariable wise."

~**To obtain wisdom to endure trials joyfully, 1.) see your need, 2.) know your God, and then 3.) ask Him in faith to meet your need.**

1. To obtain wisdom to endure trials joyfully, you must SEE YOUR NEED.

~The first step to walking in the wisdom of God is to be AWARE that you NEED it.

~God's hands are tied until we CONFESS our need for His involvement, especially when TRIALS invade our lives.

~The important questions to ask when a trial hits are, **A.)** "How can I understand this trial from God's perspective?"

~**B.)** "How can I navigate through this storm in such a way as to bring glory to God?"

~**C.)** "How can this trial help me grow in maturity?"

~"Pray that I'll have the wisdom not to waste all of this!"

~This is the KEY...God's wisdom will enable you to not waste even one tear or trial!

2. To obtain wisdom to endure trials joyfully, you must KNOW your God.

A. KNOW THAT GOD REVEALS HIS WISDOM BY HIS SPIRIT THROUGH HIS WORD.

(1 Cor. 2:6-16) READ

~That wisdom has to do with knowing how to apply biblical truth to particular situations in life.

~Thus if you are not spending consistent time learning God's Word, you will not have the wisdom that you need when trials hit.

~The time to seek wisdom from God is before the calamity hits

(Prov. 1:20-33) READ

B. KNOW THAT GOD REVEALS HIS WISDOM BY HIS SPIRIT THROUGH HIS WORD TO THOSE WHOSE HEARTS ARE FULLY HIS.

~James goes on to say that we must ask God for wisdom “in faith without any doubting” (1:6), and that the one who doubts is “a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (1:8).

~The Greek word, literally, is a “double-souled” man.

~It refers to a man whose heart is divided between allegiance to God and the allurements of the world. In other words, he’s not sure that he wants to know God’s wisdom, **because he isn’t fully committed to submitting to it.**

~It would be nice to know God’s wisdom for his situation, but before he commits to obeying it, he needs to find out if he “likes” it. In other words, he’s “shopping” for answers that fit what he wants to do.

~If God’s wisdom sounds good, he’ll follow it. But if worldly wisdom sounds better, he’ll follow that. James says that such a person will not receive anything from the Lord.

~If we want God’s wisdom in any decision or in any trial, we must be fully committed to obey Him.

C. KNOW THAT GOD GIVES GENEROUSLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH TO ALL THAT ASK HIM IN FAITH.

~God is ready and willing to lavish His wisdom on His children who ask for it. So to obtain wisdom from God to endure trials joyfully, the first thing is to recognize your need for it.

~Then know your God, who is the source of all wisdom. He reveals that wisdom chiefly in His Word through His Spirit to those whose hearts are ready to obey Him. He gives generously and without reproach to all that ask.

3. To obtain wisdom to endure trials joyfully, ASK God in FAITH to meet your need.

There are three parts to this:

A. ASK.

~The verb **(1:5)** is present tense, indicating that you probably will need to ask more than once to obtain what you need. But it's a simple command, "Let him ask."

~There is no magic formula or special incantation that you need to mutter while you sprinkle holy water on a consecrated altar. He does not say, "Let him work for or earn or buy wisdom." It's not for sale; it's a gift. Just ask.

B. ASK GOD. ("Let him ask of God") (1:5).

~Every believer is a Priest who can approach God directly.

~You do not need to go through a priest or a Pastor. I am not saying that it is wrong to go to a spiritually mature counselor, who can help direct you to God's Word for wisdom. But you don't need to approach God through any human intermediary. If you know Christ, ask God directly.

~The Bible never tells us to pray to the virgin Mary or to some other saint. It never tells us to look within ourselves and decide what to do based on subjective feelings.

~It certainly never tells us to consult with a worldly psychologist or with Dear Abby, Dr. Phil, or Oprah!

~Peter tells us that God's "divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises..." **(2 Pet. 1:3-4)**.

~Paul assures us **(Eph. 3:12)** that in Christ "we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him."

~So, when you need wisdom to endure a trial in a manner pleasing to God, go directly to God in prayer through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

~Ask Him to direct you to the wisdom in His Word that you need. He promises to give it generously!

~Some Christians make the mistake of saying, “But I’m not worthy for God to grant my request. I’ve sinned too many times. I’ve failed Him so often. So I can’t go to Him and ask for wisdom.” But that’s an excuse for disobedience and unbelief.

~Every Christian has sinned. Every Christian has failed. Every Christian is unworthy.

~We do not come to God based on our worthiness. We come to God on the merit of Jesus Christ and His shed blood.

~Since God commands us to ask Him for wisdom, we are disobedient and unbelieving if we do not ask.

C. ASK GOD IN FAITH, WITHOUT DOUBTING.

~Faith is essential in approaching God, because as **(Hebrews 11:6)** says, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

~It would be silly to ask something of a Being that you weren’t sure existed. Or, if He did exist, you weren’t sure if He cared about your request or if He had the power to grant it.

~So to ask from God, you must believe that He exists, that He personally cares for you, and He is able to give you the wisdom that you need to endure your trial with His joy.

~If you doubt God’s existence or His ability to give you wisdom for your need, James says **(1:6)** that you’re “like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”

~The surf has no inner power or principle to direct itself. It is totally at the will of the wind. It is completely unstable and chaotic. And, it can be a destructive force as it batters a boat or drives it against the rocks.

~That’s a picture of the person who lacks faith in God.

~The root of this unbelief is being double-minded. The person who doubts God is not committed to obey God no matter what. His heart is not fully surrendered to

do God's will.

~He's curious about God's wisdom, to find out if it agrees with him, but he's not committed to do it if it involves suffering or inconvenience.

~That person, James says, "ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord" (1:7).

~So the first thing in obtaining wisdom from God is to COME P L E T E L Y surrender your heart to Him.

WISDOM AT THE FALL OF MAN: GENESIS 2 AND 3; PROVERBS 3

~When we study man's disobedience in the garden, it is clear that Eve's desire for wisdom contributed to her fall:

(Gen. 3:1) "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

(Vs. 6) informs the reader just how Eve came to perceive the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

~She perceived it as good, good for food. She came to see it as delightful to look at and as desirable because she now believed the fruit of this tree would make her wise.

~Let us be very clear: the way Eve perceived the forbidden fruit of that tree was not reality.

~Eve now saw the fruit of that tree as Satan wanted her to perceive it. She saw the

tree as desirable because she was deceived:

(1 Timothy 2:13-15) “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

~The fruit of the tree was not good for food, because God had forbidden Eve and her husband to eat it. And neither was the fruit of that tree able to make one wise.

~The tree was able to do what its name indicates. It was not called the “tree of wisdom,” but the “**tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**”

~Eating of the fruit of the tree did enable Adam and Eve to “know good and evil.”

A. Wisdom is not “knowing good and evil,” Wisdom is knowing good FROM evil.

~Eating the fruit of the forbidden tree did cause Adam and Eve to know evil.

~They now knew evil by experience.

The worst of it is that Adam and Eve did come to a new awareness of “good and evil,” but notice what happened in the process... **What was evil became “good” in their eyes.**

~Eating of the fruit of that tree was forbidden by God. To eat that fruit was to do what was evil. And yet, with a little prompting and deception by Satan, Eve came to see this “evil” (by God’s definition) as “good” (in her perception, as suggested by Satan).

~After eating the forbidden fruit, that which was “good” came to be looked upon as evil.

~When God made Adam and then His wife, they (like all the rest of God’s creation) were good in His sight. They were created naked, and they knew no shame.

~Their nakedness was good in their state of innocence. But once they sinned by eating the fruit of that tree, they were ashamed of their nakedness and tried to

cover themselves.

~Their nakedness was no longer “good” but “evil.” And the fellowship they enjoyed with God was most certainly good.

~But once they disobeyed Him, they tried to hide from His presence rather than enjoy it. Why? Because this “good” (of enjoying God) was now “evil.”

~They knew good and evil, but now the labels have been switched. Is Satan not guilty of doing that which God forbade?

(Isaiah 5:20) “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

B. Satan assured Eve that in eating the fruit of the forbidden tree she would be “like God, knowing good and evil” (verse 5).

~Satan’s sin was in trying to be “**like God**” in a competitive way and by his own effort (Isaiah 14:14).

~I fear Eve’s motivation may have been similar. The truth was that eating of “**the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**” would not make Eve “**like God.**”

~Eating that fruit was disobedience; it was sin.

~God is righteous, and one does not become like Him by sinning.

~She was deceived, quite deceived, as Paul points out in **(1 Timothy 2:14)** “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

~But was it wrong for Eve to desire to be wise? Surely it cannot be evil to desire to be wise, can it?

~When “knowledge” is the knowledge of evil, then ignorance is bliss.

~But did God want to keep Adam and Eve ignorant? Did He forbid them to become wise?

~**Not at all! God wanted Adam and Eve to be wise concerning what is good**

and ignorant of what is evil!

(Romans 16:19) “For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.”

~Satan’s “wisdom” was a knowledge of “good” and “evil.” And in the knowing of evil, Adam and Eve became alienated from the enjoyment of “good.”

~Adam and Eve were given every opportunity and encouragement by God to know Him, to be like Him, and to be wise with respect to all that is good.

From a cursory study of this text, several truths are self-evident and serve as a most helpful commentary on Genesis 3 and the fall of man.

1. First, we are urged to desire wisdom as something of the highest value (see verses 13-18).

~Divine wisdom is to be greatly desired.

~Satan turned Eve’s desires in the opposite direction—to that which would lead her from wisdom to folly—from life to death.

2. Second, we are told that divine wisdom is evident in creation (verses 19-20).

~Adam and Eve had all creation before them to teach them of God’s wisdom. God was not withholding His wisdom from them, but displaying it before them.

(Ps. 104:24-26) “O LORD, how many are Thy works! in wisdom Thou hast made them all; The earth is full of Thy possessions. There is the sea, great and broad, In which are swarms without number, Animals both small and great. There the ships move along, And Leviathan, which Thou hast formed to sport in it.”

(Ps. 136:5) “Him who made the heavens with skill, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Prov. 3:19-20) “The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the deeps were broken up, And the skies drip with dew.”

3. Third, wisdom does not balk at discipline, but recognizes it as an evidence of the love of God (verses 11-12).

~Eve was led to believe exactly the opposite. Satan suggested God withheld the forbidden fruit because He was selfish and unloving.

4. Fourth, wisdom is the result of obedience (verses 1-2).

~Satan convinced Eve that wisdom would result from her disobedience.

~Disobedience is the PRACTICE of foolishness, ignorance, and stupidity...none of which can lead to wisdom.

5. Fifth, to have true wisdom, we must cease trusting in ourselves and our own assessment of what is “good” and trust rather in God’s wisdom and in His commands.

~”Trust” will ultimately determine every aspect of our obedience and affect every aspect of our relationship with God.

~Trust is developed by KNOWLEDGE—the more we KNOW about Him, the more trust we will have in His goodness toward us.

(2 Tim. 1:12) “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

6. Sixth, we should see that wisdom is a “tree of life” (verses 2, 18).

~I do not think this image of a “**tree of life**” is haphazard...Eating of the “**tree of life**” was the way to wisdom, which is why Satan sought to change the focus of Eve’s attention and desire from this tree to the forbidden tree.

~When we allow the enemy to shift our focus—we are on our way to a “decision” that will keep us from the EXPECTED END of God.

~As Paul urged, we must seek to be wise about what is good and ignorant concerning evil: “**I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.**” (Romans 16:19)

~We must learn to focus our desires on what is good and to discipline those desires which lead to our destruction:

(1 Cor. 10:6) “Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.”

~You must remind yourself daily that your fleshly desires are evil—and if you feed those desires it will lead to Spiritual death.

(1 Pet. 2:11) “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”

(Ps. 42:1) “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God.”

(1 Pet. 2:1-2) “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.”

~Christians today seek to be wise, but all too often it is not God’s wisdom they seek.

~We seem ignorant of the fact that there is a false wisdom which must be rejected:

(James 3:13-18) “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and [so] lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

(2 Cor. 1:12) “For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and Godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.”

(Col. 2:23) “These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

~The wisdom of God and the “wisdom” of men are not the same; they are not compatible. They are in direct opposition to each other.

(1 Cor. 1:18-25) “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

(1 Corinthians 2:1-7) “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.”

(Proverbs 2:6) “For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

(Prov. 8:12-21) “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly. I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.”