

James – 1:5-11 Wisdom and Trials

There is a correlation between trials and wisdom. Often trials expose areas in our lives where we lack wisdom. James tells us that when we find ourselves in those situations we should pray for the wisdom that we need to cope and grow in the midst of the trial. Our goal, from verse 4, is that we might be *perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*. If this maturity is to be realized then we must learn to be wise in the areas in which we are deficient.

Verse 5

If any of you lacks wisdom – Many times the trials we face are a result of our lack of wisdom in an area of life.

Let him ask of God – Dependence on God is foundational. When we try to figure it out we mess it up.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” Matt. 7:7

It will be given generously – God loves to bestow wisdom and He gives it bountifully to those who ask.

It will be given without reproach – He does not chide us for what we don't know. He is eager to supply us from His boundless treasure of wisdom.

How does God give us wisdom? One way is through His Word! The very purpose of Proverbs is that we might acquire wisdom. Note the following verses from Proverbs:

1:1-6 – The purpose of Proverbs; *to know wisdom...*

1:7, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

2:2, *“Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding.”*

8:11, *“Wisdom is better than jewels; and all desirable things can not compare with her.”*

9:10, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”*

16:16, *“How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.”*

24:3, *“By wisdom a house is built...”*

29:8. *“Scorners set a city aflame, but wise men turn away anger.”*

Verse 6

But let him ask in faith without any doubting – Faith and doubting are opposites. When you doubt you are not believing and when you believe you are not doubting. When we ask God for wisdom there must be a calm confidence in Him.

For the one who doubts... If you do not have confidence in God you are in the grip of uncertainty and turmoil.

“Don't tell God how big your storm is, tell your storm how big your God is.”

Verses 7-8

For let not that man expect... Doubting is an insult to God and His promise. However, wisdom may not come immediately. God may use the trial, as we endure it, to teach us the very wisdom we are praying about.

Being a double-minded man – The Greek word is *dipsuchos* which means literally 'two-souled'. He is wavering or divided in his interests.

Unstable in all his ways – This is the result of the double-minded believer. Simply put, he is going to make a mess of things.

Verse 9

James returns to the leading theme of our attitude toward trials, which is joy. He gives two examples of the proper response to trials.

Let the brother of humble circumstances – Those who are poor, when they face trials, must realize that the trial, properly responded to, will result in great reward and 'high position'.

Verses 10-11

Let the rich man... Those who are rich, when they face trials, must learn not to trust their riches. They need to be reminded that riches, like a flower scorched by the sun, are only for a short time. See Luke 12:16-21

Glory in his humiliation – He should be joyful that trials help him to see life in the proper perspective and teach him not to trust in his riches. See Proverbs 18:10-12

Proverbs 28:11, *“The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but the poor man who has understanding sees through him.”*