

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“God’s Wisdom: The Lens that Changes our Vision”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): James/Jacob 1:9-11; Jer. 22:3, 13-16; Mk. 10:42-45; Job 14:1-2; Ps. 103:15-17; Is. 40:6-8

There are moments when life exposes what we have really been leaning on. Trials have a way of revealing whether our joy is rooted in God’s character or in our circumstances. When things are comfortable, we may not notice how much our perspective is shaped by the mindset of this world. But when difficulty comes, when loss comes, when affliction comes, when our comforts are shaken, we begin to see whether we are asking God for wisdom or simply asking Him to make life easier.

Jacob has just told us to ask God for wisdom, and he reminds us that God gives generously, straightforwardly, and without reproach. This wisdom is not merely information. It is like a God-given lens that changes our vision. It helps us see things as they really are from a God’s-eye view. It is the wisdom that allows joy to lead the way in trials because we begin to recognize that God is forming us into His likeness. And now, in Jacob/James 1:9-11, he shows us one of the ways that wisdom begins to change our perspective: it reverses what we see, what we value, and what we boast in.

1. WISDOM HELPS THE LOWLY SEE THEIR TRUE HEIGHT

“But let the brother in humble circumstances boast in his high position” (Jacob/James 1:9). God’s wisdom gives the lowly, afflicted, or struggling believer a new lens through which to see their circumstances. From the world’s perspective, lowliness looks like loss. It looks like being overlooked, pushed down, forgotten, or behind. But through the lens of God’s wisdom, the believer in humble circumstances can see what is really true: their life is not defined by what they lack, but by who they belong to.

So Jacob says the lowly brother should boast in his high position. Not because the trial is easy, and not because affliction is enjoyable, but because God’s wisdom allows him to see beyond the surface. In Messiah, he has been lifted up. He is being formed into the likeness of Yeshua. He may look low in the eyes of the world, but from God’s-eye view, he stands in the heights of belonging to the One who is highest of all. He can say, “I am not defined by what I lack. I am not measured by what this world says I have lost. I have so much in the Lord.”

2. WISDOM HELPS THE RICH SEE THEIR TRUE LOWLINESS

“And the rich person in his humble position, because like the flower of the grass he will pass away” (Jacob/James 1:10). God’s wisdom also gives the person with plenty a corrected lens. The world teaches us to see wealth, comfort, status, and influence as proof that someone is elevated, secure, and important. But Jacob says the rich person is to boast in

his humble position. In other words, wisdom helps him see that his plenty does not place him above anyone else. His status is not rooted in what he owns, what he has built, or what others think of him.

This is where God's wisdom confronts double-mindedness. We cannot ask God to give us His perspective while continuing to chase the values of this world. If we have much, wisdom teaches us to hold it humbly, to recognize its danger, and to use it for God's glory rather than selfish gain. God's ways have always called His people to care for the weak, the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. *"Execute justice and righteousness. Rescue the one who is robbed out of the hand of the oppressor. Do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the fatherless or the widow"* (Jer. 22:3). Through God's lens, plenty is not a platform for pride; it is an opportunity to serve, bless, give, and reflect the character of Yeshua.

3. WISDOM HELPS US SEE WHAT IS FADING AND WHAT WILL LAST

"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 also the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will wither away" (Jacob/James 1:11). God's wisdom brings reality into focus. The things this world celebrates may look beautiful for a moment, like the flower of the grass, but they are temporary. The sun rises, the heat comes, the grass withers, the flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. Jacob is helping us see what is really true: wealth fades, comfort fades, status fades, beauty fades, and even the pursuits that seem so important eventually pass away.

This imagery appears throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Job says, *"Like a flower he comes up and withers; like a shadow he flees and does not stay"* (Job 14:2). Isaiah says, *"The grass withers, the flower fades. But the word of our God stands forever"* (Is. 40:8). When God gives us His wisdom, we begin to see through what fades. We recognize that joy cannot be rooted in stuff, because stuff is temporary. Joy must be rooted in God's character, because He does not fade. So wisdom changes our vision. It helps the lowly see their true height, the rich see their true lowliness, and all of us see that what matters most is not what we can gather for ourselves, but how we are being formed into the likeness of Yeshua.

CONCLUSION

This passage is not simply a warning to the rich or a comfort to the poor. It is a call for all of us to examine the lens through which we are seeing our lives. What is my attitude toward affliction? What is my attitude toward comfort? What am I clinging to? What am I afraid to lose? If I have little, am I letting the world tell me that I am low, forgotten, or insignificant? If I have much, am I letting comfort make me spiritually soft, blind, or self-focused? Jacob is inviting us to receive the wisdom that changes our vision.

So today, let our prayer be, not only, “Lord, help me through my trial.” Let it also be, “Lord, change the way I see.” Give me Your wisdom. Give me Your perspective. Let me see what is low and high, what is temporary and eternal, what is fading and what will last.” Ask the God who gives generously to give you wisdom—not a wisdom rooted in the mindset of this world, but wisdom that sees from His perspective, so that in every circumstance, joy can lead the way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Jacob tells the lowly brother to “boast” in his high position? What makes that difficult to do in real life?
2. What does it mean for the rich person, or the person with plenty, to boast in lowliness?
3. How does God’s wisdom function like a lens that helps us see our circumstances more clearly?
4. In our modern world, what are some things people boast in that are actually as temporary as the flower of the grass?
5. What is one area of your life where you need God’s wisdom to help you see from His perspective instead of the world’s perspective?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, we come to You and ask for the wisdom that only You can give. We need Your perspective. We need You to change the way we see our trials, our afflictions, our comforts, and our possessions. Give us the lens of Your wisdom so that we can see what is really true.

Lord, help the lowly to rejoice in the heights they have in You, and help those with plenty to walk in humility, generosity, and dependence on You. Keep our hearts from clinging to what is fading. Form us into the likeness of Yeshua, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life. Let joy lead the way in us because our hope is rooted in You.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.