

FAITH AND WISDOM

JAMES 1:1-11

Golden Text: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5 (KJV))

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SCRIPTURE

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM- JAMES 1:1-4

¹ James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

SCRIPTURE

THE MEANS OF OBTAINING WISDOM – JAMES 1:5-8

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

SCRIPTURE

WEALTH AND WISDOM JAMES 1:9-11

⁹ Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

¹⁰ But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

¹¹ For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.



INTRODUCTION⁵

- There are many contrasts between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom.
- The world generally does not look upon trials and tribulations as reasons for joy.
- James tells us that Christians should view trials with joy.
- James instructs believers to ask God for wisdom.
- The world teaches self-fulfillment and how to get your way; in contrast the wisdom of God is demonstrated in holiness and love.
- The false values of the world press us in all directions.
- It is crucial for us as Christians to study what it means to be wise.
- The wise man will heed the words of James.

BACKGROUND

- Most Bible scholars agree that the writer of the book of James was Jesus' half brother (See Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19).
- Mary's younger children didn't believe in Jesus during His earthly life (see John 7:5) but they joined Jesus' followers after His resurrection (see Acts 1:14).
- It is possible that James was converted by the risen LORD (see 1 Corinthians 15:7).
- James became the leader of the Jerusalem church (see Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:19; 2:9, 12).
- James wrote to the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" and facing severe trials. The Christians Jews.

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM (JAMES 1:1-4)

VS 1. JAMES A *SERVANT* OF GOD AND OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, TO THE TWELVE TRIBES WHICH ARE SCATTERED ABROAD, *GREETING*

- In verse 1 James calls himself “a servant”
- The word servant in Greek means a “slave” or “bondservant” which identifies someone who was purchased and owned by a master or lord.
- James recognized that he was bound to God’s service and that God owned him.
- James demonstrates great humbleness because even though he could have said he was the half-brother of Jesus; instead, he said he was Jesus’ slave.
- This should remind us that those who sit in the highest offices in the church of Jesus Christ *are still only servants*.
- Therefore, they should *not act like masters but as ministers* which means servants.
- James is also the leader of the Jerusalem church during this time.
- James sets the stage for his audience with use of the word “greeting”, a Greek verb meaning *“to be joyful”* or *“rejoice”*.

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM (JAMES :1-4)

VS. 2. MY BREATHEN, COUNT IT ALL JOY **WHEN YOU FALL** INTO DIVERS TEMPTATIONS

- The use of the expression "**my brethren**" tells us that James was writing to Christians who he was racially related to – Jewish Christians.
- He is taking time to teach these Jewish Christians the proper way to respond when **difficult times** come.
- Due to the "**Diaspora**"; the **scattering** of the Jews, they were facing severe trials; so James began his letter by teaching them.
- They were to consider their trials as "**joy.**" The expression "**all joy**" means **pure, unmixed "joy."** (Side note: *For the joy of the LORD is your strength. Nehemiah 8:10*)
- He tells them that even though trials are unpleasant, as believers they can rejoice in knowing that God uses trials to refine them.
- The expression "**when you fall**" simply refers to what someone might encounter in life. The term "temptations" is sometimes used in the sense of solicitation to commit sin, as Jesus was "tempted by the devil."

OPEN CHAT:

- *It is our Christian duty to find joy in difficult and trying circumstances.*
- Identify a time when you faced a difficult and trying circumstance.
- What was the circumstance?
- What did you do about it?
- In hindsight, do you think you should have approached the circumstance in a different way, if so, how?

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM (JAMES :1-4)¹⁰

VS 2. MY BREATHERN, COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO *DIVERS TEMPTATIONS*

- In other passages the word temptation is used to refer to *trials* or *tests* we experience because of our faith.
- James' readers were probably being persecuted for their faith.
- *All believers will have their faith tested in various ways.*
- James uses the word "divers" to refer to the different ways' believers will have their faith tested, such as through *persecution, poverty, economic oppression, and sickness.*
- Such troubles often arise *because of our stand* for Jesus Christ. (Acts 22:3-5; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:15)

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM (JAMES :1-4)

VS 3. *KNOWING* THIS, THAT THE *TRYING* OF YOUR *FAITH* WORKETH *PATIENCE*

- The word "*knowing*" means knowledge that comes by experience.
- James readers already know the truth through past trials.
- The term "*trying*" speaks of putting someone to the test for the purpose of approving.
- The object of this testing is specifically the Christian's "*faith.*"
- Godly "*faith*" believes the *great truths* of *Christianity*, and there is a conviction to hold on to them in times of trouble.
- The "*faith*" spoken of here as being tried or tested by afflictions consists of *believing in the POWER, the WORD, and the PROMISES of God as well as constant faithfulness to our* Savior, Jesus Christ.

OPEN CHAT:

- If someone asked you “What are the great truths of Christianity”?
- *How would you respond as a believer in Christ?*

FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM (JAMES :1-4)

VS 3. KNOWING THIS, THAT THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH WORKETH PATIENCE

- The “**trying**” of your “**faith**” has the capability of producing spiritual growth.
- **Patience** carries the idea of steadfastness or patient endurance.
- Through “**testing**”, the believer develops the “**patience**” or endurance to remain under trials **and still praise God**.
- Once we have encountered and overcome a trial, **we grow** stronger spiritually because of the experience.
- Such spiritual development prepares us for future encounters with both Satan and the uncertainties of life which are sure to come.
- **Trials** and **tribulations** should **not destroy** us **but develop** us.

THE VALUE OF STEADFASTNESS (JAMES :1-4)

VS 3. KNOWING THIS, THAT THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH WORKETH PATIENCE

- Trials can be considered pure joy only when there is knowledge that they are designed by God for a purpose.
- Trials are tests of faith given to us in order to develop perseverance in us; and perseverance produces mature Christian character.



FACING TRIALS WITH WISDOM - (JAMES :1-4)

VS 4 BUT LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK, THAT YE MAY BE PERFECT AND ENTIRE WANTING NOTHING

- When we bear all the trials that God allows to come our way and bear them for as long as He desires us to, and humbly rejoice in them, then "*patience (will) have her perfect work.*"
- A "*steadfast spirit*" will keep the Christian from being defeated before he or she reaches the goal.
- *That ye may be perfect*, refers to becoming more like Christ, not to a state of moral flawlessness or without sin.
- When the work of being patient is complete, the Christian is also complete and entire and does not need anything.
- "*Entire*" indicates that we will be furnished with everything that's necessary for our Christian race and will enable us to persevere to the end of the trail and pass the test of faith.

THE MEANS OF OBTAINING WISDOM – (JAMES 1:5-8)

VS. 5 "IF ANY OF YOU LACK *WISDOM*, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT *GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY*, AND *UPBRAIDETH* NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM."

- The word "*wisdom*" in Greek is "sophia" and it has a wide range of meanings. It generally refers to "*the practical use of knowledge*".
- The word often refers to knowing and doing what pleases God.
- "*Wisdom*" is inseparably connected to righteousness because it is a moral discernment that enables a believer to face life and its trials with actions and decisions that are in line with God's will.
- The Lord is the source of "*spiritual wisdom*", (See Daniel 2:20-21) and in fact He's the source of everything good. (See James 1:17).
- As the source of "*wisdom*", God gives it to those who sincerely "*ask*" Him for it.
- We should not pray so much for the removal of an affliction or trial as we should for "*wisdom*" to persevere with the trial.
- We should never feel unworthy to ask God for wisdom. God does not rebuke or scold us for asking for wisdom. The word "*upbraideth*" means to "rebuke" or to "scold."

THE REQUIREMENT – (JAMES 1:6)

VS. 6 "BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, **NOTHING WAVERING**. FOR HE THAT WAVERETH IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN WITH WIND AND TOSSED

- There is one thing that is necessary for us to do in our asking.
- We must ask in a "**believing**", "**steady**" mind.
- We cannot doubt God's ability or God's will to answer.
- A believer who doubts is "**not steadfast**".
- A believer who doubts is not able to focus his full attention on God because he or she lacks a firm foundation.
- In this verse, James is stressing the importance of "**faith**."
- As believers we have been "**justified by faith**" (See Romans 3:28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:24) and we must "**live by faith**", (See Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).

A WARNING - (JAMES 1:7-8)

VS 7 "FOR LET NOT THAT MAN THINK THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE ANY THING OF THE LORD"

VS 8 "A DOUBLE MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS".

- The expression "*that man*" refers to one who doubts in the previous verse.
- James makes it clear that he or she who "*doubts*" that God will give wisdom should not think that He will grant his or her prayer requests.
- Do not deceive yourselves, this verse is worded to combat any false hope that doubters might hold on to.
- "*Double minded*" literally means "*a two-souled man.*"
- The one who is double minded is as "*unstable*" as a person with a "*split personality*".
- This person *is torn* between God and the world. (James 4:8)

WEALTH AND WISDOM (JAMES 1:9-11)

VS. 9 LET THE BROTHER OF LOW DEGREE REJOICE IN THAT HE IS EXALTED;

VS. 10. BUT THE RICH, IN THAT HE IS MADE LOW: BECAUSE AS THE FLOWER OF THE GRASS HE SHALL PASS AWAY.

- In this verse James addresses the trial and test of being poor.
- The term “brother” indicates he is referring to Christians.
- The words “low degree” speaks of one who is poor.
- Although the Christian brother or sister may find themselves in humble or poor circumstances, which in itself can be a test of faith, should “rejoice” or glory in his or her “exalted” or high position as a born-again Christian who has been *called to true riches* (see Psalms 37:16; Proverbs 13:7; 22:1, 4; I Samuel 2:8) as an heir of God.
- “The rich”, (unsaved rich) is to rejoice or glory in being made low or humbled by trials that reveal his humanity and knowing that true riches are found in the grace of God.
- In other words, a rich man’s wealth will not keep him from facing God’s judgment and passing away like “the flower of the grass”.

WEALTH AND WISDOM - (JAMES 1:9-11)

VS. 11 FOR THE SUN IS NO SOONER RISEN WITH A BURNING HEAT, BUT IT WITHERETH THE GRASS, AND THE FLOWER THEREOF FALLETH, AND THE GRACE OF THE FASHION OF IT PERISHETH: SO ALSO SHALL THE RICH MAN FADE AWAY IN HIS WAYS.

- A **“rich man’s wealth”** will not keep him from facing God’s judgment and passing away like **“the flower of the grass.”**
- Just as the sun and its heat kills the grass and the grace of the fashion (meaning the beauty of the flowers), in the same way **“so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.”**
- The unsaved **“rich man”**, while he is still **“in his ways”** or still making plans for getting richer will eventually die.

PRACTICAL POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

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- 1. It is our Christian duty to find joy in difficult and trying circumstances (James 1:1-2).**
- 2. The key to accepting afflictions in a positive way is knowing that afflictions can produce something good in us (James 1:3-4; Romans 5:3-5).**
- 3. In the middle of a trial, it is best to specifically ask God how to turn that trial into a blessing (James 1:5).**
- 4. Genuine faith takes hold of God's promises with a steadfastness of mind and heart (James 1:6-8).**
- 5. Poor believers should rejoice in the fact that God can exalt them (James 1:9).**
- 6. Those who are rich should rejoice when they are humbled knowing that riches don't last forever (James 1:10-11).**

FINITO!