



A Systematic Expository Study on the General Epistle of JAMES

Study 3: THE PROMISE AND PRAYER FOR WISDOM **James 1:5-8**

These verses have a close connection with the preceding verses (i.e. verses 2-4). Wisdom is necessary in order to go through all tests and trials triumphantly. To emerge from all our persecutions and testing experiences with unswerving perseverance and with christian virtues, we need wisdom - we need practical insight to face the issues of life. The wisdom referred to is not philosophic speculation or mere intellectual knowledge. It is the knowledge given by God, helping us to take the right decisions and guiding us to actions that are pleasing to God in all things and in all situations.

Naturally, we lack divine wisdom. From Scripture and from experience we are all too conscious of the bankruptcy of human wisdom or reasoning. Our own knowledge and the wisdom and counsels of others often fail us. Whatever our advisers know they do not know the mind and purpose of God for every situation. Like the friends of Job, they often become "miserable comforters" to us (Job 16:2). We have a generous and loving God Who can give us wisdom; not only general wisdom, but particular wisdom for each specific situation in life.

The promise is given. We must pray. We must ask in faith. God will give the wisdom freely and generously - without reservation, without disappointment. A willing Father has promised; a trusting child must ask with unwavering faith.

WISDOM FROM THE FATHER

James 1:5; Job 28:12-14,20,23,28; James 1:17; 3:17; Proverbs 2:4-7; Daniel 2:20,21; 1 Chronicles 22:12; 2 Chronicles 1: 10-12; 1 Kings 4:29,30; 5:12; Eccl 2:26; Luke 21:15

There is "**the wisdom of the world**" which will come to nought in the hour of need. (1 Corinthians 1:19,20; 3:19,20). And there is a kind of "**wisdom**" from Satan which "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" which can only bring confusion, condemnation, wrath and judgment (James 3:15,16). Human and earthly wisdom will fail in the most critical hour. Such critical periods arise for everyone in life, when nothing except the wisdom from God, "**the wisdom that is from above**" will help and grant victory.

Divine wisdom, heavenly wisdom comes from God. This particular kind of wisdom will enable us to understand God's purpose in all our circumstances and trials, perform our duty and do God's will during those trials and learn lessons which God intends to teach us. It is our privilege to ask God for wisdom as Solomon did. In facing the awesome challenges of life, we all "lack wisdom". And we can ask God for an abundant supply of wisdom which He has promised to give.

He "**giveth to all men liberally**". God has the wisdom to give and He is of a giving disposition. His willingness, or promise to give is not limited to some for He gives to all men. And He does not give just a small portion - He giveth liberally, that is, generously. The promise is absolute, "it shall be given him".

THE WAY OF FAITH

James 1:6; Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 7:7-11; 21:22; Romans 4:20,21; 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 John 5:14, 15; Hebrews 10:22,23.

Praying to God, asking from God is necessary if we are to receive wisdom, indeed, if we are to receive anything from God. In the Scripture, the promise of Divine help is always limited to those who ask. "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). We cannot hope to receive heavenly wisdom to live a spiritual life if we do not ask God. No blessing is promised to the man who will not seek God with all his heart. God knows our lack and our need, yet He waits for us to ask before He gives.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). Unbelief dishonours God, but faith honours Him. If we would receive the wisdom from above, we must ask in faith - We come to God with utmost confidence, with full assurance that our request will be granted. Asking God for wisdom, there should be no doubting, wavering or vacillation. We are to come with total trust in Him, Who is "good unto all", Who "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not". Let us come to Him boldly, "**for He is faithful that promised**".

WAVERING BY THE FAITHLESS

James 1:6-8; 4:3,8; Hosea 10:2; Psalm 78:22,41,42; 2 Kings 7:2; Isaiah 7:9b; Hebrews 3:12,19.

"**He that wavereth**" while praying is faithless or unbelieving. He "is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed". He is "a **double minded man**". He has two minds inside him; one tries to believe, the other disbelieves. There is a civil war within him trust and distrust of God waging a continual battle against each other. Like the wave of the sea, there is no stability. He comes to God with unsettled convictions. At one moment, there is something like faith or confidence in God, then the next moment, the mind is filled with uncertainty and doubt. Hope on the one hand, and the fear of not obtaining the favour which is desired on the other, keep the mind restless and his life fruitless.

We can only hope to receive Divine wisdom from God if we pray to God with faith and expectation. If there is no reliance on His promises, His wisdom and His grace cannot be granted in answer to our petitions. As we ask wisdom from God, we must believe and rely on the absolute promise and generosity of God.

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*