



UNWAVERING REQUEST FOR WISDOM

JAMES 1:5-8 BIBLE STUDY

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JAMES 1:5-8 CONTEXT



- **1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. Joy be to you! 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your *faith* produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete – *lacking* in nothing.** (Jas 1:1-4, AT)
- James uses wordplay, repeating ***lacking*** (UBS, 15; Motyer, 36; Davids U, 46; Johnson, 179; Martin, 17; Blomberg/Kamell, 50) and ***faith*** (Osborne, 25) as he transitions to a related subject (UBS, 15)
- It's hard to consider trials as “stepping-stone[s] to maturity” (Motyer, 37; cf. Martin, 17). If we can't **wisely** see things this way, there is likely something we **lack**... (Motyer, 36; cf. Richardson, 64; McCartney, 88)
- James 1:2-4 may seem easier said than done. Doing the **complete opposite** is often our **natural** reaction
- We need **supernatural** help! (Davids U, 28)



JAMES 1:5-8

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

WHO YOU
GONNA
CALL?
Jesus

- When we are going through trials, we often don't know what to do! (cf. 2 Ch 20:12; Stulac 1:5; cf. Richardson, 64)
- We often experience (Stulac 1:5)
 - Guilt: maybe if I would have done this differently... (Stulac 1:5)
 - Confusion: Why me? "Is God punishing me? Does God love me?" (Stulac 1:5)
 - Fear: What more will I lose? What else could/will go wrong? What if...? (Stulac 1:5) vs. **even if** (Pastor Matt; City Light; cf. Dn 3:18; Job 13:15; Davids U, 30)
 - Anger: which cannot be sustained. When it subsides, it can lead to hopelessness and depression (Stulac 1:5)
- To cope with trials (Nystrom, 50), we need godly wisdom! So we have to call God! (cf. Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 25)

WHAT
YOU
NEED

JAMES 1:5
IF?

WHAT
YOU
NEED

- If any of you lacks wisdom, that person must ask **God** who gives to all sincerely and without reproaching, and it will be given to you (Jas 1:5,AT)
- **If:** a first-class condition that implies its actuality. Essentially means, “**Since** you need wisdom” (Osborne, 25; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 50)
- As servants of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jas 1:1), we **need** to ask for wisdom (Stulac 1:5)
- This addresses the root of the problem, not merely the symptoms (Stulac 1:5)



JAMES 1:5 GODLY WISDOM



- **Wisdom** (σοφία | *sophia*) is an important term in James (cf. Jas 3:13, 15, 17; UBS, 15; Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 25; Motyer, 38; Davids U, 28; Guthrie, 214; Richardson, 64; McKnight, 85)
- For Greeks, wisdom was about “knowledge, cleverness... learnedness” (UBS, 15)
- In Scripture, wisdom is “**practical, moral, and spiritual insight given by God**” (UBS, 15; Lockett/Evans, 266) – it stems from God’s grace (Stulac 1:5)
- In the OT Wisdom Literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes), wisdom is about living in God’s world by God’s rules (Osborne, 25)
- Wisdom is both practical (how to live by the rules) (Osborne, 25; Motyer, 37; Johnson, 179; Martin, 17; Blomberg/Kamell, 50) and spiritual (trusting in the One who makes the rules) (Osborne, 25; Martin, 17)
- There is a difference between **human** wisdom and **divine** wisdom (1 Cor 1:21-24; 1 Cor 2:4-6; Davids N, 72; cf. 1 Cor 2:13)
- Divine wisdom enables one to see things from “the divine perspective” (Davids N, 72; cf. Johnson, 179; Nystrom, 50). Understanding how trials can be occasions for joy (Jas 1:2-4) requires divine wisdom (Motyer, 38)



JAMES 1:5 GODLY WISDOM



- 13 Who is **wise** and understanding among you? Show **by your good life** that your **works** are done with gentleness born of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15 **Such wisdom does not come down from above**, but is **earthly**, unspiritual, devilish. 16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. 17 But the wisdom **from above** is first **pure**, then **peaceable, gentle, willing to yield**, full of **mercy** and good fruits, without a trace of **partiality** or **hypocrisy**. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in **peace** for those who make peace. (Jas 3:13-18, NRSV; Guthrie, 214; Richardson, 64, 68; McKnight, 85; Johnson, 179; Martin, 21; McCartney, 88; Nystrom, 58)
- There is a relationship between **wisdom** and **perfection** (i.e., maturity) (Jas 1:4; cf. 1 Cor 2:6; Col 1:28; Wis 9:6; McKnight, 87; cf. Martin 18; also see McCartney, 90; Nystrom, 59)
- 6 Yet among the **mature** we do speak wisdom, though it is not a **wisdom** of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish (1 Cor 2:6, NRSV; McKnight, 87)
- 28 It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all **wisdom**, so that we may present everyone **mature** in Christ. (Col 1:28, NRSV; McKnight, 87)

Wisdom is a Gift.

Wisdom is a Gift.

JAMES 1:5 GODLY WISDOM

- Wisdom is something that God has (cf. Eph 3:10; Osborne, 25). 33 Oh, the depth of the riches and **wisdom** and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Rom 11:33, ESV; Osborne, 25)
- Wisdom is also something that God gives – as a **gift** (Osborne, 25; Motyer, 38; Adamson, 56; Martin, 17; Nystrom, 50; cf. Jas 3:15; cf. Wis 8:21; McKnight, 85; Martin, 18).
- 20 and declared: May the name of God be praised forever and ever, for **wisdom** and power **belong to Him**. He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings. **He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding**. He reveals the deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. I offer thanks and praise to You, God of my fathers, because You have **given me wisdom and power**. And now **You have let me know what we asked of You**, for **You have let us know the king's mystery**. (Dn 2:20-23, HCSB; Osborne, 25)
- 15 For I will **give** you words and **wisdom** that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. (Lk 21:15, NIV; cf. Ac 6:10; Motyer, 37; cf. Mt 12:42; Lk 11:31; Richardson, 64)
- 23 Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in **wisdom**. 24 And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his **wisdom**, which **God had put into his mind** (1 Ki 10:23-24, ESV; Osborne, 25; cf. Ps 51:6; Richardson, 64)



JAMES 1:5 DISCERNING GOOD FROM EVIL



- **Knowing** the rules is one thing; **applying** them and being guided by them is another (Motyer, 37-38; Blomberg/Kamell, 50)
- Wisdom helps one discern between good and evil (UBS, 15); it helps one say the right thing or do the right thing – at the right time (UBS, 15; McCartney, 88; cf. Motyer, 37)
- 5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”
- 6 Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.
- 7 “Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9 So give your servant a **discerning heart** to govern your people and **to distinguish between right and wrong**. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (1 Ki 3:5-9, NIV; UBS, 15; Keener, 672 ; cf. Wis 7:7;

Johnson, 179; also see McCartney, 90)



JAMES 1:5

THE PRIMARY IMPORTANCE OF WISDOM



- 10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 11 So God said to him, “**Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself**, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. 13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” 15 Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. (1 Ki 3:10-15, NIV)
- 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘**What shall we eat?**’ or ‘**What shall we drink?**’ or ‘**What shall we wear?**’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Mt 6:31-33, NIV)

Seek
Wisdom



Seek
Wisdom



JAMES 1:5

THE IMPORTANCE OF GODLY WISDOM

- 1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding— 3 indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you **look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure**, 5 then you will understand **the fear of the Lord** and find the knowledge of God. (Pr 2:1-5, NIV; UBS, 15; Lockett/Evans, 266; Guthrie, 214; Richardson, 64)
- 6 **For the Lord gives wisdom**; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Pr 2:6, NIV; UBS, 15; Keener, 672; Guthrie, 214; Moo, 85; Richardson, 64; Martin, 18; cf. Pr 1:1-7; McKnight, 85)
- 7 He holds **success** in store for the upright, he is a **shield** to those whose walk is blameless, 8 for he **guards** the course of the just and **protects** the way of his faithful ones. (Pr 2:7-8, NIV; Guthrie, 214; Richardson, 64; McKnight, 85)
- Wisdom protects from wicked men (Pr 2:12f.) and adulterous women (Pr 2:16f.) (cf. Moo, 85; Richardson, 64)
- Wisdom must be sought (cf. Pr 1:2, 4:5-7, 16:16; Richardson, 64)
- 35 For those who **find** me [Wisdom personified] **find life** and receive favor from the Lord. 36 But those who **fail to find** me harm themselves; all who hate me love death.” (Pr 8:35-36, NIV; Moo P, 57)

Seek
Wisdom



Seek
Wisdom



JAMES 1:5 WISDOM AND WELL-BEING

- 1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but **keep my commands in your heart**, 2 for they will **prolong your life many years** and **bring you peace and prosperity**. 3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, **write them on the tablet of your heart**. 4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. (Pr 3:1-4, NIV)
- 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and **he will make your paths straight**. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; **fear the Lord** and **shun evil**. 8 This will bring **health to your body** and **nourishment to your bones**. (Pr 3:5-8, NIV; cf. Martin, 21; Osborne, 28)
- 13 Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, 14 for she is **more profitable than silver** and **yields better returns than gold**. She is **more precious than rubies**; nothing you desire can compare with her. **Long life** is in her right hand; in her left hand are **riches and honor**. (Pr 3:13-16, NIV; Lockett/Evans, 266; cf. Pr 9:1-6; Moo, 85)
- Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. (Pr 3:17-18, NIV; Lockett/Evans, 255)

THE FEAR OF
THE LORD IS
THE BEGINNING
OF WISDOM

PROVERBS 9:10

JAMES 1:5 THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

THE FEAR OF
THE LORD IS
THE BEGINNING
OF WISDOM

PROVERBS 9:10

- The fear of the **LORD** is the beginning of knowledge, but wisdom and discipline fools despise. (Pr 1:7, AT; Osborne, 25; Martin, 17; cf. Ps 111:10; Blomberg/Kamell, 61)
- 10 The **fear of the Lord** is the **beginning of wisdom**, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. 11 For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. (Pr 9:10-11, ESV; Blomberg/Kamell, 61; cf. Pr 15:33; Osborne, 25; cf. Pr 8:22-31; Lockett/Evans, 266; Johnson, 179)
- Reverence/devotion to the **LORD** (Martin, 17) is the foundational principle of wisdom. It is “**inseparable** from allegiance to God and moral living.” (Blomberg/Kamell, 61)
- 5 See, just as the **LORD my God** has charged me, I now teach you **statutes** and **ordinances** for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. 6 You must observe them diligently, for this will show your **wisdom** and **discernment** to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a **wise** and **discerning** people!” (Dt 4:5-6, NRSV; cf. Sir 24:23; Lockett/Evans, 266; Johnson, 179)



JAMES 1:5

YOU BETTER ASK SOMEBODY



- **Must:** another third-person command (Wallace, 486; UBS, 16; McCartney, 93; Blomberg/Kamell, 14)
- Wisdom is not acquired by effort; it's acquired by asking God! (McCartney, 88; Blomberg/Kamell, 51). Our daily bread is from God, but we still have to work; wisdom is from God, but we still have to ask (McCartney, 89; cf. Nystrom, 50)
- We cannot reach perfection/maturity without God's generosity (Blomberg/Kamell, 51)
- 7 "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. (Mt 7:7, NIV; Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 26; Richardson, 64; Johnson, 180; Martin, 18; cf. Mt 7:7-11; Jn 15:7; Davids U, 28; Moo, 85; McKnight, 88; McCartney, 89; Blomberg/Kamell, 51, 62; Nystrom, 50)
- 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give good gifts to those who ask him!** (Mt 7:11, NIV; UBS, 16; Moo, 86; McKnight, 88; Johnson, 180; cf. Mt 7:7-12 | Lk 11:9-13; Martin, 21; McCartney, 89)
- The fact that God is ready to give us wisdom should **motivate** us to pray for it! (UBS, 16; Moo, 86)
- 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, **because** he cares for you. (1 Pet 5:7, NRSV; Osborne, 26)



JAMES 1:5

GIVING WITHOUT GRUMBLING



- **Sincerely** (ἀπλότης | *haplotēs*): Can mean “without condition... without reservation” (UBS, 16; cf. Stulac 1:5; Davids U, 29; Moo, 86; McCartney, 89)... “without ulterior motives” (EDNT, 124), **single-mindedly** (without duplicity) (Blomberg/Kamell, 51; cf. Mt 6:22; 2 Cor 11:3; Eph 6:5; Motyer, 39; cf. Col 3:22; Moo, 85; McKnight, 88; Martin, 18; cf. Davids U, 46; Blomberg/Kamell, 61), “simply” (Adamson, 56), without “mixed motives” (Davids U, 29)
- Can also mean **generously** (UBS, 16; Johnson, 179; cf. Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 8:2, 9:11-13; Lockett/Evans, 266; cf. Motyer, 38;) – not stingy (Guthrie, 215)
- Can also mean “without hesitation... a God who responds immediately” (cf. Osborne, 25)
- James may be aware of the richness of the term and may mean all three (Osborne, 24-25, 26)
- In contrast to **double-minded** people (cf. Jas 1:6f.), God is **single-minded/sincere** (Osborne, 24-25; Martin, 18; McCartney, 89; Blomberg/Kamell, 51).
- Greek/Roman gods were capricious; they had to be “bought (or bought off)” (Osborne, 25)
- God is the One who gives (present tense participle) **continuously** (Osborne, 25-26; Motyer, 38; Blomberg/Kamell, 51; cf. Jas 1:17; Johnson, 179) – the “giving God” (Motyer, 38; cf. McCartney)
- **All**: likely meaning **all who pray for wisdom** (UBS, 16). There is not limitation to the invitation to trust in God (Stulac 1:5; Motyer, 38; Moo, 86). God gives wisdom “to **everyone who belongs to [H]im**” (Richardson, 65)



JAMES 1:5

GIVING WITHOUT GRUMBLING



- **Reproach** (ὀνειδίζω | *oneidizō*): “to find fault in a way that demeans the other” (BDAG, 710). God gives “**ungrudgingly**” (NIDNTTE, 514; NRSV; McKnight, 89; cf. Johnson, 180) or “without making them feel guilty” (UBS, 16) or stupid (Blomberg/Kamell, 51) (also see Lk 6:35; Nystrom, 51)
- God gives wisdom to people without “holding [their] failures or lack of wisdom against [them]” (Stulac 1:5; cf. Motyer, 39) – without throwing their faults in their face (Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 26)
- God gives graciously; we do not **earn** the **gift** of wisdom (Osborne, 26). God does not give backhandedly (McCartney, 89)
- Many times, our pride prevents us from asking for help. We don’t want to ask for handouts, aid, etc. because of shame. *What will people think of me?*
- God will not mock (Blomberg/Kamell, 51) and “will not rebuke you for asking” (Osborne, 26; cf. McCartney, 90) “*You need help **again?***” (Davids U, 29)
- A fool’s gift will profit you nothing, for he **looks for recompense sevenfold**. He gives **little** and **upbraids [oneidizō] much**; he opens his mouth like a town crier. **Today he lends and tomorrow he asks it back**; such a one is hateful to God and humans. (Sir 20:14-15, NRSV; EDNT, 518; Davids U, 29; Moo P, 59; McKnight, 88; cf. Sir 18:15-18, 41:22; Martin, 18)
- Not with reluctance, complaint, criticism, etc., God gives freely (Davids U, 29; Adamson, 56; McKnight, 89)

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

NAME IT AND CLAIM IT

JAMES 1:6 NAME IT AND CLAIM IT?

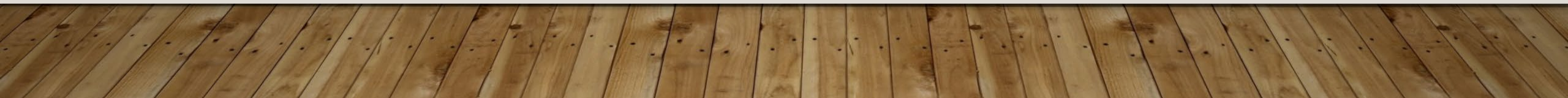


- **But they must ask in faith, not wavering in doubt. For the one who doubts is like a surge of waves on the sea, being blown by the wind and tossed back and forth (Jas 1:6, AT)**
- 21 And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have **faith** and **do not doubt**, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. 22 And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, **if you have faith.**” (Mt 21:21-22, ESV; Stulac 1:5; Motyer, 41; Davids U, 30; Moo, 87 || Mk 11:24; cf. Jn 15:7; Davids U, 28; cf. Mt 18:19; Richardson, 64; Martin, 18; cf. Mt 17:20; Richardson, 66; cf. Lk 11:9; Jn 16:23; Johnson, 180; cf. Mk 11:23-24; Blomberg/Kamell, 62))
- 13 And I will do whatever you ask **in my name**, so that **the Father may be glorified in the Son.** 14 You may ask me for anything **in my name**, and I will do it. (Jn 14:13-14, NIV; Osborne, 26; Davids U, 31; Martin, 18; Nystrom, 50)
- In my name = according to God’s purpose (Osborne, 26)
- 3 When you ask, you do not receive, **because you ask with wrong motives**, that you may spend what you get on your **pleasures.** (Jas 4:3, NRSV; Osborne, 26; Moo, 86)



JAMES 1:6 NAME IT AND CLAIM IT?

- This is **not “name and claim it”** (Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 26) taught by “health and wealth” false prophets (Moo P, 60). God does not just give us a blank check (Moo P, 60).
- We can’t just pray for whatever we want, believe and not doubt that God will grant it, and expect God to give it (cf. Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 26). **God is not our Fairy Godfather**
- We cannot manipulate God with our “own power of positive thinking” (Stulac 1:5) – God is sovereign (Osborne, 26)
- This is not a type of “self-hypnosis” where we have to convince ourselves that God will give us what(ever) we ask and push all doubts about it out of our minds (McCartney, 90)
- True faith is not believing God will grant our **every** petition, it is believing that He will do what is best for us in **every situation** (Osborne, 26)



Even
If . . .
Daniel 3:17-18

JAMES 1:6 “EVEN IF” FAITH

Even
If . . .
Daniel 3:17-18

- Fear will have us asking, “What if...?”, true faith will have us thinking “**even if...**” (Matt Cohen, City Light Sermon 4.5.20)
- 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But **even if he does not**, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (Dn 3:17-18, NIV; Davids U, 30)
- **Though** he slay me, **yet** will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own ways before him. (Job 13:15, KJV; Davids U, 30)
- 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. **Yet not as I will, but as you will.**” (Mt 26:39, NIV; Adamson, 57)



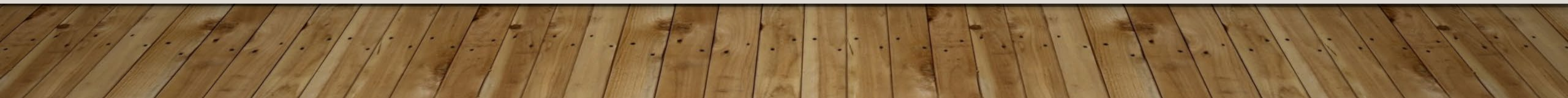


JAMES 1:6

FAITH (COMMITMENT): A PREREQUISITE



- Having faith is not merely being confident that God will give us what we pray for (Moo, 87; contra Adamson, 57)
- **In faith:** total, unwavering confidence/trust in and dependence on the Lord (UBS, 17; Osborne, 26; Moo, 87), which manifests itself in **obedience** (Jas 2:14-26; Keener, 672; Guthrie, 215; Martin, 19; Nystrom, 52; cf. Jas 1:27; 65) – not merely intellectual assent or a certain feeling (Davids U, 29). **“Active trust”** (Guthrie, 215; Richardson, 65; cf. McKnight, 89)
- 46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? (Lk 6:46, NIV; cf. Richardson, 67). We can’t claim to trust God and then not trust in Him (Richardson, 69)
- **Before** one prays to God, one ought to be committed to God (Davids U, 31). This promise is for believers! (Blomberg/Kamell, 61, cf. Jas 1:3; Richardson, 65)
- **Why would we expect God to listen to us if we don’t listen to God?**





JAMES 1:6

FAITH (COMMITMENT): A PREREQUISITE



- Why would we expect God to do what we want, when we don't do what He wants?
- When one **will not listen** to the law, **even one's prayers are an abomination.** (Pr 28:9, NRSV).
- The sacrifice of the **wicked** is an **abomination** to the Lord, but the **prayer of the upright is his delight.** (Pr 15:8, NRSV)
- The Lord is **far from the wicked**, but he hears the **prayer of the righteous.** (Pr 15:29, NRSV)

JAMES 1:6 NO DOUBT



- On some level, all praying entails some kind of “faith”; James is against the manner of praying with a divided mind (Johnson, 184)
- **Wavering in doubt** (διακρίνω | *diakrinō*): “to be **divided** against yourself.. to **waver** between two alternatives” (UBS, 17), to “**dispute with oneself**” (middle; Osborne, 27; Moo, 87; cf. Guthrie, 215; Adamson, 57)
- Not about doubting “that God is going to act, but rather to have a divided mind that keeps one from trusting God in the first place” (Osborne, 27; cf. McCartney, 90; Blomberg/Kamell, 52).
- Not about a certain **specific** request but doubting God in **general** (Davids U, 30; McCartney, 90). Not about doubting whether or not a certain request is God’s will (McCartney, 90; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 52) – and not doubting one’s worthiness (McCartney, 90)
- Not about doubting if God exists, but doubting the **kind** of God that exists -- calling His **character** into question (Richardson, 66; cf. Martin, 19; McCartney, 89; Blomberg/Kamell, 52).

JAMES 1:6 NO DOUBT



- Doubting is essentially wavering between **trust and distrust** of God (UBS, 17; Osborne, 27; Davids U, 30). Wavering between trusting in God and trusting in oneself (Davids U, 30), a “wavering of commitment to God” (McCartney, 90)
- We **must** be confident that God will answer our prayer **for wisdom** (Osborne, 26). We should have faith in God not only when asking for wisdom, but in **every** area of life (Osborne, 26)
- 6 And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must **believe** that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Heb 11:6, NIV; Adamson, 57)
- The context is about God graciously granting **wisdom** (Osborne, 26; Moo P, 60) – especially in the **midst** of trials (Richardson, 64; Blomberg/Kamell, 50).
- God promises to give us wisdom concerning how we should live (Blomberg/Kamell, 52)

Reduced for Quick Sale:

FOR SALE!
AGAIN!

The Brooklyn Bridge

JAMES 1:6

NOT DOUBTING GOD'S GRACIOUSNESS

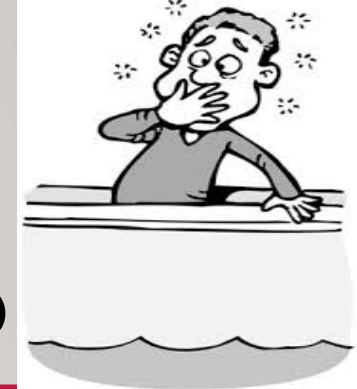


- Not saying don't doubt anything (McCartney, 91; Nystrom, 61). Likely **not about superficial doubts!** (Stulac 1:5) or honest doubts expressed to God (Osborne, 27; Nystrom, 53).
- Not about never questioning God's will (Blomberg/Kamell, 52). Psalmists often expressed their honest doubts (Osborne, 27; cf. Ps 35:17; Nystrom, 62), but ended in praise and trust (cf. Ps 13:5-6) when they remember God's goodness in the past (cf. Ps 77:7-12; Nystrom, 62)
- **1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long** will you hide your face from me? **2 How long** must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? **How long** will my enemy triumph over me? (Ps 13:1-2, NIV; cf. Ps 13:5-6; Osborne, 27; cf. Nystrom, 61)
- **5 But I trust** in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. **6 I will sing the Lord's praise**, for he has been good to me. (Ps 13:5-6, NIV)



JAMES 1:6 NOT DOUBTING GOD'S GRACIOUSNESS

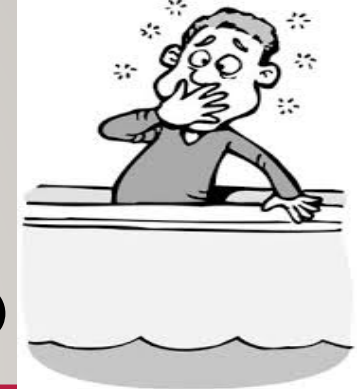
- We can be honest with God; He sees through our “holy talk” (cf. Nystrom, 62)
- God knows our thoughts and (these kinds of) doubts and yet gives sincerely/generously without throwing our failures in our faces (cf. Jas 1:5; Stulac 1:5)
- But we must have faith in the **grace/gracious character** of God and not **waver** in our commitment! (Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 27; cf. Rom 4:20; Moo P, 60-61; Richardson, 66; Martin, 19; McCartney, 90; Blomberg/Kamell, 52)
- James is writing not about **intellectual** doubt, but about **divided spiritual commitment/devotion** to the Lord (Motyer, 41; Moo, 87; Richardson, 67; cf. Davids U, 30; Guthrie, 215; McCartney, 91; Nystrom, 53).
We can't look back (cf. Gen 19:26; Richardson, 67)



JAMES 1:6

NO REST/STABILITY FOR THE WICKED/DIVIDED

- James likely grew up near the Sea of Galilee (McKnight, 90). Not a place for recreation, Jews thought of the rough seawaters as a symbol of uncertainty/instability and evil (UBS, 17)
- Romans were afraid of the sea's unpredictability and destructive power; some viewed traveling by sea as foolish (Lockett/Evans, 266)
- But the wicked are like the **tossing sea**, which **cannot rest**, whose waves cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (Is 57:20-21; Keener, 672; Lockett/Evans, 26; Stulac 1:5; Richardson, 67; Martin, 19; McCartney, 93)
- Some people go up and down like waves, up ("centered on God") and down ("centered on this world") (Osborne, 27). Seas are constantly in flux (Moo, 87; Adamson, 58; McCartney, 90). This is the way to **spiritual "seasick[ness]"** (Osborne, 27)
- We cannot waver between trust in God vs. trust in the world (Osborne, 27; Adamson, 60) or (trust in ourselves) – or between faith and skepticism (Blomberg/Kamell, 53)



JAMES 1:6

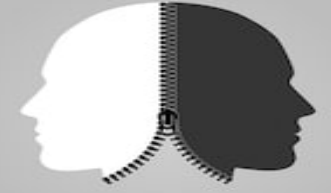
NO REST/STABILITY FOR THE WICKED/DIVIDED

- People can be blown here and there by the winds of false teaching, others' opinions, persecution, etc. (cf. Eph 4:14; Richardson, 67; Martin, 19; McCartney, 92; Nystrom, 51; cf. Moo, 88; Johnson, 180)
- 14 Then **we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching** and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the **mature [teleios]** body of him who is the head, that is, Christ (Eph 4:14-15, NIV)
- The testing of our faith produces perseverance, but doubt renders us unstable (Stulac 1:5; Osborne, 27)
- We can't stop trusting God when trials come (cf. Jas 1:3-4; Osborne, 27).
- **Do we only trust God in the good times?**



two face

JAMES 1:7 NO GIFT FOR YOU



two face

- **That person must not expect that they will receive anything from the Lord (Jas 1:7,AT)**
- 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. **He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous** (Mt 5:43-45, NIV; cf. Davids U, 31; McCartney, 89)
- In a sense, God gives to everyone whether we acknowledge Him or not (Blomberg/Kamell, 63). But there is **more** we can miss out on if we do not pray in faith (Blomberg/Kamell, 63)
- Another third-person command (McCartney, 93). People with **divided loyalties** should not **expect** God to reward their double-mindedness (Osborne, 27; cf. Davids U, 31; McCartney, 91)
- James may be focusing less on being two-faced and more on have two faces looking in opposite directions (Motyer, 40); **“Mr. Facing-Both-Ways”** (John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as quoted by Adamson, 60; McKnight, 91)



two face

JAMES 1:7

DOUBLE-MINDED, DOUBLE-TONGUED



two face

- Lord: likely here refers to God the Father (though Jesus was called Lord in James 1:1) (UBS, 20; Davids N, 74)
- Jewish texts condemned double-minded/double-hearted or double-tongued people – hypocrites who would say or think one way, but act another way (cf. 1 Ch 12:33; Keener, 672; Martin, 20; McCartney, 91; cf. 1 Enoch 91:4; Sir 5:9; Lockett/Evans, 266; cf. Davids U, 46; Adamson, 60; cf. 1 Ch 12:38-39; McKnight, 91; cf. Nystrom, 53)
- Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a **double heart** they speak. (Ps 12:2, ESV; Keener, 672; Lockett/Evans, 266; Davids U, 46; Guthrie, 215; Adamson, 60; McCartney, 91; cf. Hos 10:2; Moo, 88; McKnight, 91 FN; cf. Sir 1:28; Osborne, 27; Martin, 20; McCartney, 94; Nystrom, 53)
- Receive **anything** suggests that more than doubting that God would answer the prayer is in view (McCartney, 91)



JAMES 1:8 DOUBLE-MINDED



- -- a double-minded individual, unstable in all their ways. (Jas 1:8,AT)
- 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you **double-minded**. (Jas 4:8, NIV; EDNT, 338; Keener, 672; Osborne, 27; Motyer, 40; Adamson, 59; Martin, 20; McCartney, 92; Blomberg/Kamell, 53)
- δίψυχος | *dipsychos*: lit. “double-souled” (UBS, 19; Stulac 1:5; Moo, 88), “two-souled” (Motyer, 40; McKnight, 91) – James may have coined this term (Motyer, 40; Moo, 88; McCartney, 94; contra Johnson, 181). We have no evidence of its use in Greek literature before James (Davids N, 74; Moo, 88; Adamson, 59; Johnson, 181; McCartney, 94; Blomberg/Kamell, 53)
- Not about superficial doubts but a person who is divided within themselves (Stulac 1:5). Someone who lacks “single-mindedness” and is “torn between conflicting desires and wills” (UBS, 19) – torn between this world and the Way (Blomberg/Kamell, 54)
- Fickle people (Johnson, 181) who waver “between self-reliance and God-reliance” (Stulac 1:5; cf. Davids U, 30). There is no “safe middle ground between faith and unbelief” (Richardson, 70; cf. Davids N, 75; McCartney, 92)
- With God, we cannot have divided loyalty/trust (UBS, 19; Osborne, 27; cf. Stulac 1:5; McCartney, 91). We have to put all our eggs in one **Basket** (Davids U, 31). No other basket is worth our eggs!

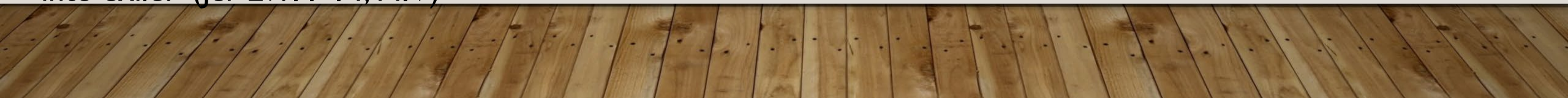


JAMES 1:8

WITH ALL (YOUR UNDIVIDED) HEART



- We are love (i.e., be loyal/devoted to) the LORD with **all** our heart (Blomberg/Kamell, 54; cf. Dt 13:3, 18:13; 1 Sam 12:20; Osborne, 27; Jer 29:12-13; Richardson, 65, 68; McKnight, 88; cf. Ps 101:2, 4, 6; 1 Ch 12:38; 2 Ch 31:21; Martin, 18; cf. Dt 26:16; Nystrom, 53) – **wholeheartedly** (Motyer, 40)
- 5 Love the LORD your God with **all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Dt 6:5, NIV; Osborne, 27; Davids U, 46; McKnight, 91 FN; Martin, 20; Blomberg/Kamell, 54)
- 30 Love the Lord your God with **all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (Mk 12:30, NIV; Osborne, 28; || Mt 22:27; Moo, 89)
- 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and **pray to me**, and **I will listen to you**. 13 **You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart**. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will **bring you back from captivity**. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” (Jer 29:11-14, NIV)





JAMES 1:8

WITH ALL (YOUR UNDIVIDED) HEART

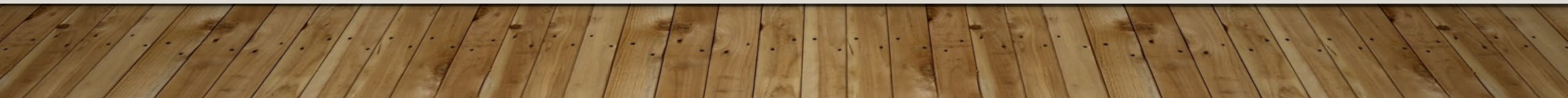


- “**No one can serve two masters**, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Mt 6:24, ESV || Lk 16:13; Osborne, 28; Motyer, 40; Moo, 87; Martin, 21; McCartney, 91; Blomberg/Kamell, 53, 62).
- Some may have been trusting in their wealth (Jas 1:11; Richardson, 67; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 62). Many turn to God when they have **nowhere else to turn** (Blomberg/Kamell, 62)
- 4 You **adulterous** people, don't you know that **friendship with the world means enmity against God?** Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (Jas 4:4, NIV; Moo, 87; Richardson, 67; Blomberg/Kamell, 54). We need **unadulterated** faith! (Richardson, 67)
- People have to make a choice; we can't **straddle the fence!** (Adamson, 60; McCartney, 91; cf. Davids U, 47). We can't be nominal Christians (Blomberg/Kamell, 54). We need a **total** commitment to God and **total** rejection of evil (Davids N, 74-75; cf. Richardson, 69)





JAMES 1:8 WAYS

- **Ways:** way of life, how one conducts oneself on a daily basis (UBS, 19-20; Lockett/Evans, 267; McCartney, 92; cf. Ps 145:17; Pr 3:6; Jer 16:17; Osborne, 28; cf. Ps 91:11; Martin, 20-21)
 - There are essentially “two ways” to live (Mt 7:13-27; Blomberg/Kamell, 63) – narrow vs. wide gate (Mt 7:13-14), true vs. false prophets/good trees, fruit vs. bad trees/fruit (Mt 7:15-20), true vs. false disciples (Mt 7:21-23), and wise vs. foolish builders (Mt 7:24-27)
 - I Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the **way** of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (Ps 1:1, ESV; Lockett/Evans, 267; Johnson, 181).
 - 6 for the Lord knows the **way** of the righteous, but the **way** of the wicked will perish. (Ps 1:6, ESV; Lockett/Evans, 267)
 - The Lord is righteous in all his **ways** and faithful in all he **does**. (Ps 145:17, NIV; Osborne, 28; Martin, 20-21)
 - Blessed are those whose **way** is blameless, who walk in the **law of the Lord!** (Ps 119:1, ESV; Lockett/Evans, 267; cf. Ps 15:11; 119:32; Pr 1:25; Johnson, 181)
- 



JAMES 1:8 UNSTABLE WAYS



- Hard to trust someone who doesn't know **Whom** to trust (Davids U, 31; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 54).
- People with divided loyalty to God are unstable in **all** they **do** – their “whole existence, not just spiritual life” (Nystrom, 53). There is an emphasis on **action** (Guthrie, 215; cf. Richardson, 69). How we think influences how we behave.
- One thinks of the instability of drunkards (McCartney, 92). The double-minded are “**morally incapacitated**” (McCartney, 92)
- Unstable people will be blown here and there during trials (McKnight, 92)
- “If we are not **secure** with God, then we are not **secure** at all” (Motyer, 41). Our **insecurities** likely show more during trials and tribulations (cf. Motyer, 41)
- James will use this same word (ἀκατάστατος | *akatastatos*) to describe **unstable** tongues (Jas 3:8; Guthrie, 215; Martin, 20-21; cf. Jas 3:16; Johnson, 181)
- One's basic spiritual instability (lack of commitment to God) “affects every area of life” (McCartney, 92). One has no **moral compass** (McCartney, 92)



JAMES 1:5-8

BELIEVE IN ~~YOURSELF~~ GOD



- We must resist the temptation of “self-trust” (Martin, 21). The world preaches a doctrine of “individual responsibility and rugged independence” (Nystrom, 68)
- Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe. (Pr 28:26, NIV)
- **5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.** (Pr 3:5-7, NIV)
- 18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are **wise** by the **standards of this age**, you should become “fools” so that you may become **wise**. 19 For the **wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight...** (1 Cor 3:18-19a, NIV)
- Do you see a person **wise in their own eyes**? There is more hope for a fool than for them. (Pr 26:12, NIV)
- Many in the world see trials and troubles as proof that God does not care (Nystrom, 59) or that there is no God. Godly wisdom sees trials as opportunities to rejoice, etc. (Jas 1:2-4)



JAMES 1:5-8 CONCLUSION



- When we fall into trials and don't know what to do, we need wisdom! Therefore we **must** ask God for wisdom (Martin, 21). The beginning of wisdom is the fear/reverence/ of and allegiance to the Lord (Blomberg/Kamell, 62) which differs from worldly wisdom
- When we ask, we must ask in faith (i.e., putting our confidence/trust in God). God is **sincere** in His giving; will we be **sincere** in our asking? (cf. Motyer, 39-40; Moo, 86). We should pray with **single-hearted** prayers to our **single-hearted** God (Nystrom, 53)
- Like God, we should say what we mean and mean what we say (cf. Is 55:11; Lk 6:43-44; Nystrom, 53)
- We cannot waver in our faith in God's grace. Those with divided loyalties have no genuine commitment or stability (Osborne, 28) and should not expect to God to answer prayers for wisdom. **“Christian doubter’ is an oxymoron”** (Richardson, 69)
- Such people are spiritually unstable; but our souls are anchored in the Lord (cf. Heb 6:19; Moo, 87).



JAMES 1:5-8 CONCLUSION



- God gives **wisdom** generously/sincerely without throwing faults in our faces. This should motivate us to ask for and seek wisdom!
- We **must** consider it joy when we go through trials, which test our faith, which produces perseverance, which leads to our Christ-like perfection (i.e., maturity) and wholeness (Jas 1:2-4) – “wholehearted character” (Moo, 89; cf. Richardson, 70)
- Such times are opportunities to turn to God in prayer, asking for His **gracious gift of divine wisdom** (Osborne, 25; cf. Guthrie, 215)
- We must be **single-mindedly** (Adamson, 60; McKnight, 90; McCartney, 91), **totally** devoted (i.e., faithful) to the Lord; can't have spiritual seasickness / “**schizophrenia**” -- a theme that runs throughout James (Moo P, 63)



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