

Fact Sheet for **“Wisdom from God”**
James 1:5-8

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04/07/2019

From time to time all of us have found ourselves in a situation when we don't know what to do. Some of these are momentary. Others last a lot longer. Some of these are minor. Others can be some of the greatest trials we will ever face. James 1:5-8 has a promise of God's help during these times. God can give us the wisdom we need when we need it. But that promise comes with a condition.

Last week we began the book of James, written by the half-brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem. He began with these words in 1:2-4...

ESV James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We looked at several of the words he used in these verses.

“trials” – something that will test, try, or even tempt you, and will bring to light the quality of your faith

“testing” (of your faith) – This is a very different word than “trials”. It has the idea that you have been tested and passed the test. Your faith has been put to the test and has been proven in its quality.

“your faith” – We asked, “How does your faith in God assay out?”

“steadfastness” – “patience, endurance, fortitude, perseverance”

James included two commands in these verses:

“Count it all joy”

“Let steadfastness have its full effect”

James used three terms to describe what that effect should look like...

“perfect” – This is a word that is also translated “mature” in other places.

“complete”

Then James used the phrase **“lacking in nothing”** as he closed out verse four.

Verse five does not begin a new subject, but it continues his thoughts from 1:2-4.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

This verse actually begins with the conjunction “but”. James is making the connection with the last words of verse four, “lacking in nothing” and “If any of you lacks wisdom”.

His thought is this. As your faith is put to the test, as you experience trials, and you are at a loss in knowing how to respond, as you lack the necessary wisdom to meet those trials, ask God for the wisdom to know how to respond rightly.

We tend to best grow strong and steadfast in our faith when the trials are the greatest. For instance, when do you pray most earnestly? God can give us the wisdom we need in these times.

To those who lack wisdom, God's wisdom is available to **all** who ask. God gives this generously. The word can also be literally translated "amply". And He gives this wisdom without reproaching, scolding, or reprimanding us.

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of this is Solomon. Take time to read 1 Kings 3:7-13.

However there is a requirement for our asking. We must ask in faith.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

Right off the bat this verse suggests that the person who chooses not to trust God's good news of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ (the Gospel), is not able to ask God in undoubting faith for this wisdom.

But Christians too can doubt God's promise of wisdom when they are in the midst of trial. Christians can also choose not to follow God's path of wisdom once they receive it.

Unfortunately, we all have experienced those times when we were being tested and we responded by doubting God.

This word "doubting" can be translated "wavering" or "hesitating".

If we ask God for wisdom in knowing how to respond in trial, then we say something like, "God's not going to answer" then we are doubting. When you ask for God's wisdom then look for it! God is fully able and willing to answer our request for wisdom when we need it. Trust Him in this.

James continued with the instruction that the one who doubts is as stable and firm as the waves of the sea... not stable at all.

⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

"Double-minded" means that you are wavering between faith and doubt in your trust of God. This can only lead to a weak and unstable Christian life.

Do you want to grow strong with God? Ask for His wisdom when you need it. Then trust God enough to follow that wisdom.

And be careful not to get this backwards. It is not the strength of our faith that will result in our receiving wisdom from God. It is the promise of a faithful God that will result in our receiving wisdom from Him, if we just trust Him.

How is God testing you right now? How are you responding?