

Wise Up

James 1:5

James 1:2-5 ²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

I. The Shortage Of Wisdom Is Guideless (5a) - *If any of you lacks wisdom,*

A. Wisdom Is Lacking At The Beginning Of Our Trials

B. Wisdom Is A Product Of Maturity Gained Through Trials (1 Cor 2:6-7)

II. The Source Of Wisdom Is God (5b) – *let him ask God* (1 Kngs 3:9)

A. God's Wisdom Is Different Than The World's Wisdom (1 Cor 3:18-23; Prov 1:1-7)

B. God's Wisdom Enables Us To Comprehend Our Trials From His Perspective

III. The Sharing Of Wisdom Is Guidance (5c) - *who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

A. God Gives Wisdom Generously (cf. Rom 8:32) - *who gives generously to all*

B. God Gives Wisdom Gladly - *without reproach*

C. God Gives Wisdom Guaranteed - *and it will be given him.*

Conclusion:

1. Wisdom puts our trials in God's perspective so we can accomplish His will.
2. Wisdom pieces our "various trials" into one picture (the image of Christ).
3. If God is eager, generous, not finding fault and simple in giving us wisdom, don't be awkward praying for it.

Discussion:

- Describe the experience of "lacking wisdom."
- When does a person reach a point when just getting facts about a trial/hardship is insufficient and we need to start pursuing God's wisdom?
- How can we shift from a "Why me?" mentality to a "What is your purpose, God?" mindset?
- Why might we be afraid or awkward to pray for wisdom? How does verse 5 change our fear?

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James 1:2-5 (ESV) ² 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. ⁵ **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.**

Introduction:

- Cancer: It's seems compulsory when first diagnosis with cancer to research furiously online rto learn all you can about cancer. Maybe we read more than necessary and we worry because we over-diagnose our oncologist. Knowledge seems to be our first avenue of comfort – getting a handle on our new trial. But genuine wisdom comes when we leave the treatment in the hands of the doctor and find the purpose for this trial in the Lord.
- Unemployment: What do I need to know about the market? What do I need to learn for a new career? Knowledge is good, but it has its limits. We need to eventually see God's purpose in a job loss and depend on Him for our daily bread.
- Untimely death: We ask why? Yet grief needs to come to grips with God's purpose.
- Then it's not unusual that all three happens at the same time – the various trials that come simultaneously.

I. The Shortage Of Wisdom Is Guideless (5a)

If any of you lacks wisdom,

A. Wisdom Is Lacking At The Beginning Of Our Trials

- "Lacks" = *leipo* = lacking, wanting, destitute

James 1:2-4 (ESV) ² 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.**

- V. 4 – "**lacking** nothing"
- V. 5 – "if any of you **lack wisdom**"
- God wants us to be **perfect** and **complete**
 - **Perfect** = *teleios* – mature, without defect, seasoned, experienced, developed
 - Donald Sunukjian: "Mature: that means **fully grown, fully developed, fully godly**—at the end of the process in **full strength.**" (*Invitation To James*)

- **Complete** = *holoklēros* - "something that is whole, having all its parts, undamaged" (Homer Kent, *Faith That Works*, Baker, 1986, p. 38)
 - Strong G3648: "complete, **sound in every part**" (*holos*, "whole," *kleros*, "a lot," i.e., with all that has fallen by lot)
 - Like a fully outfitted ship ready to sail for months on the sea
- V. 2 instructs us to "count it all joy" – when we don't know how all the pieces of our trials end in joy – we need **wisdom!**
- Wisdom will give us the reason for **joy** in the process of maturity
- Wisdom will put the pieces of "**various trials**" into one picture
 - Ie/ Jigsaw puzzle – many pieces put together 1 piece at a time that matches the image on the box (Christ)

B. Wisdom Is A Product Of Maturity Gained Through Trials

- "Wisdom" = *Sophia* = specifically wisdom gained from trials
- Homer Kent: "The believer needs 'wisdom' to see his trials in a true light and to profit spiritually from them." (*The Epistle Of James*, Moody Press, 1979, p. 79)
- Warren Wiersbe: "We need wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature. Wisdom helps us understand how to use these circumstances for our good and God's glory." *Be Mature (James): Growing Up in Christ (The BE Series Commentary)* (p. 38). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

1 Corinthians 2:6-7 ⁶Yet among the **mature** we do impart **wisdom**, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

- What's the difference between "knowledge" and "wisdom"?

Knowledge	Wisdom
Factual	Practical
Deconstructs Information Through Analysis	Coordinates Knowledge Towards Implementation
Knows Of God	Follows After God

- There are so many **facts** available to us, all we have to say is "**Hey Google,**" ask a question and get an answer.
- Google gives myriads of fact. But doesn't give us wisdom.
- We're not going to Google to make sense of life's deepest problems.
- We're to ask God for that!
- Homer Kent: "For James, wisdom is more than wide knowledge or that mental sagacity that can express itself in subtle rhetorical distinctions or abstruse arguments. As a Jew, James viewed wisdom as related to the **practice of righteousness in daily life**. It is that **moral discernment that enables the believer to meet life and its trials with decisions and actions consistent with God's call.**" (pp. 79-80)

- Ralph Martin: “For the Jewish mind wisdom meant **practical righteousness in everyday living.**” (*James: Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 8*, Word, 1988, p. 17)
- Douglas Moo: “Wisdom is the **means** by which the godly can **both discern and carry out the will of God** (e.g., Proverbs 2:10-19; 3:13-14; 9:1-6).” (*The Letter Of James, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 57)

II. The Source Of Wisdom Is God (5b)

let him ask God,

- This wisdom is more than street smarts or learning facts, but gaining God’s perspective
- Solomon asked for wisdom

1 Kings 3:9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

- “ask” = *aiteto* = in this context, it is a prayer – asking God through praying

A. God’s Wisdom Is Different Than The World’s Wisdom

1 Corinthians 3:18-23 18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” 20 and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

Proverbs 1:1-7

1 The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight,

3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;

4 to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—

5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,

6 to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. ¹

- God is not anti-wisdom – He wants us to pursue the superior wisdom

- Philosophy (Prov 1:1-7) – *Philo* = love, *Sophia* = wisdom
 - God wants us to love wisdom, but His wisdom
 - The fool seeks wisdom apart from God
 - Greece loved philosophy, but it was Godless
 - Greece had around 50 different philosophical parties
 - Some of that crept into the church

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Pr 1:1–7). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- Douglas Moo: "Finding wisdom, claims Proverbs, means finding life and receiving favor from the Lord (8:35)... Already in Proverbs ... wisdom is personified, given an active role in guiding the lives of God's people ..." (*The Letter Of James, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 57*)
- We're to love God's wisdom – loving wisdom is **PHILOSOPHY**
 - *Philo* = love
 - *Sophia* = wisdom
- C.S. Lewis: "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."
- Geisler & Feinberg: "This idea of [the love for] wisdom was central in the thought of the ancients. In this view of philosophy, the primary role of philosophy was ethical education. That is, philosophy was to teach the good life. Even the more abstract aspects of philosophy played their part in achieving this goal, because knowledge and understanding were a part of the good life. According to the Greek philosophers, the ignorant man cannot be genuinely happy. Socrates, whose maxim, 'The unexamined life is not worth living' is often quoted, was the embodiment of the ideal philosopher, or lover of wisdom." (*Introduction To Philosophy, pp. 13-14*)

1. **Personally, Philosophy Is How One Views The World**

- Philosophy can mean how one perceives reality
- Framework, conceptual grid, macroperspective, basis of interpretation
- Someone's "philosophy of life" is the framework which guides them, motivates them, guards them, teaches them and functions in

Titus 1:9 ⁹holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Hebrews 5:14 ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

2. **Academically, Philosophy Is How One Perceives Truth And Experience**

- David K. Clark: "Philosophical method typically involves a stress on clarifying concepts, criticizing assumptions, evaluating arguments, and constructing viewpoints." (*To Know And Love God, p. 297*)
- Universities would include: natural philosophy, logic, epistemology, metaphysics, esthetics and ethics

a. **Conceptual Analysis**

- Geisler & Feinberg: "Conceptual analysis is the belief that the sole or at least a central concern of philosophy is the analytic study of concepts. Philosophy's job is to define philosophic and scientific terms, and clarify the language of ideas... The aim of the analytic philosopher ... examines the basic

presuppositions and concepts that the scientist, moralist, and theologian use." (pp. 14-15)

b. Speculative Philosophy

- Geisler & Feinberg: "Speculative philosophy moves in a quite different direction from analytical philosophy. While analytical philosophy is interested in *analyzing the foundations* of knowledge, speculative philosophy, at least in its more extreme forms, is concerned with *synthesizing the results* of the conceptual inquiry into a comprehensive and integrated view of reality. The final goal of some speculative philosophy is to systematically explain the ultimate constituents of the world and reality, and define the proper place of man and his." (p. 16)

3. Religiously, Philosophy Is How One Comprehends Religious Beliefs And Experience

- To understand God's truth in a coherent manner
- Clark: "Philosophy intersects theology in at least two disciplines, 'philosophical theology' and 'philosophy of religion.' ... A scholarly study of religion may use anthropological, psychological, sociological, historical, or literary approaches. Philosophical theology and philosophy of religion, however, both take a philosophical approach to the content of religious believing. They focus on the meaning of and the truth status of religious beliefs. They assess the meaning, consistency, rationality, or warrant of theological ideas." (p. 297)

a. Philosophical Theology

- more constructive and employs synthesis
- works within a theological framework
- employs philosophical method (reason, proofs) within a theological framework

b. Philosophy of Religion

- more explorative
- assumes no theological framework, necessarily
- employs analysis and evaluation to explore a theological framework
- equivalent to philosophy of science, law, politics or history

Acts 26:27-28 Paul to: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do *believe*.' Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'"

Acts 18:4 ⁴And he **reasoned** in the synagogue every Sabbath, and **persuaded** both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:8 ⁸And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, **reasoning** and **persuading** concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

4. **Logically, Philosophy Is How To Analyze With Reason**

("Three Senses Of 'Reason'" is delineated by David K. Clark, *To Know And Love God*, Crossway Books, 2003)

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together"

a. **Autonomous Reason**

- This phrase was popularized by Francis Schaeffer
- Clark: "human thinking born out of an insistence on living independently of God. It is human thinking that demands ultimacy and priority for its own starting point, conceptual terms, and principles of method." (p. 299)

Romans 1:21-22 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

- This view of reason exalts human wisdom as authority and contradicts the authority of Scripture

b. **Reason As The Ability To Acquire Knowledge Generally**

- This is a general understanding of man's "knowledge-producing capacities, the entire set of our human noetic equipment. Reason in this broad sense is more nearly neutral in relation to the question of allegiance to God. In this sense, reason is simply the ability to think about an subject at all. ... Reason in this second sense includes all our belief-forming capacities." (Clark, p. 299-300)

c. **Reason Is The Ability To Draw Inferences And Examine Consistencies**

- Clark: "The God-given inferential equipment with which each person is endowed enables us to grasp God's revelation, distinguish it from other claimed revelations, and apply it appropriately to life.... To be committed to what is reasonable requires moral virtue. Reason is our friend if we seek what is true, but it is no friend to the man who hopes to cover his tracks." (p. 300)

B. **God's Wisdom Enables Us To Comprehend Our Trials From His Perspective**

- From "Why me?" to "Why not me?"
- From "This doesn't accomplish my purpose!" to "How will this accomplish God's purpose?"

III. The Sharing Of Wisdom Is Guidance (5c)

who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

A. God Gives Wisdom Generously - *who gives generously to all*

Generosity Includes His Son

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

- “generously” = *haplōs*
- Generously also means “simply” or “singly” (Moo, p. 58-59) which gives the sense of integrity
- Daniel Doriani: “Simplicity is generous in this sense: the simple gift is a pure gift. It neither returns a favor previously given nor expects a favor in return. The simple gift neither pays back nor expects a payback. That is, God’s gifts do not become debts. He delights in giving; it is his nature to give without calculating the return.” (*James: Reformed Expository Commentary*, P&R Publishing, 2007, p. 25)

B. God Gives Wisdom Gladly - *without reproach*

- “with reproach” = *oneidizō* = with **no** insult, complaint, ridicule or negative impression
- Wiersbe: “without finding fault”

C. God Gives Wisdom Guaranteed - *and it will be given him.*

- “it will be given” = *didōmi* – given, granted

Conclusion:

- 1. Wisdom puts our trials in God’s perspective so we can accomplish His will.**
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