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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in James

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### **James 1:5-8 Seeking Wisdom to Deal with Life!**

**The general idea:** James is addressing Christians who are relying on themselves and not really wholeheartedly seeking after God. He implores us to literally beg for wisdom because we are empty in of ourselves. If we do not seek wisdom, but remain in our own thinking, we will be un-tethered like a small boat without an anchor in a storm, tossed and tumbled in the waves of stress and life. We will be literally unstable mentally, relationally, and spiritually without our Lord's direction!

We, as Christians, need wisdom to take us through all of the avenues of life, especially through the hard times of stress and suffering. If we do not seek wisdom, we will never learn from our mistakes and experiences. We will never grow and, in fact, we just may keep repeating the same mistakes over and over. How sad it would be to go through a tough time and not get anything out of it! It would just be a waste, an empty experience void of meaning or benefit to us, or others around us. Without wisdom, we will neither learn His precepts nor have His wisdom and help. We will not be infused with faith; therefore, the ways of our self and the world will toss us about until we drown in anxiety and despair. Our life will have been a vapor that had little meaning or benefit—a life wasted instead of a life triumphant. What is the key? It is learning that our hope is in the Lord, not in our expectations (Psalm 25:4-5; Mark 9:17-27; John 16:33; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 11:23-27; Heb. 12: 6-10)!

**Vs. 5-6:** We are to accept God's plan for our life and then ask for wisdom to deal with it, not seeking what we think or want, or what others who are less mature have to say; rather, we are to seek God and His Word to give us the knowledge to grow and to get through. God assures us that when we seek Him, He will respond. When we ask for wisdom, He will give it to us! The key is to ask by faith. This is the confidence in God's power that without doubt, He is there and He will help. For, if we doubt, we will not have confidence, and we will be tossed, by our struggles, to the point that they drown us.

- *Wisdom* is not just knowledge and information; rather, it is practical, spiritual insight from God's values and then application of righteousness and truth. It means to be wise, as in understanding, to ask God for comprehension, what His perspective is, to cooperate with Him, not just asking why, but rather how we can learn and grow. It is also a response of being godly, how we can please God in character and maturity (Prov. 1:2-4; 2:10-15; 4:5-9; 9:10-12; 1 Kings 3; Heb. 5:14).

- *Ask God*, means to beg God passionately, realizing we are helpless and in great need. He is the source of wisdom and the One we are to go to for all aspects of life! He will grant our request as long as it is sincere and in His will (1 Kings 3:5-9; Prov. 2:6; Luke 11:9; James 4:2; 1 John 3:21-24; 5:14-15)!
- *Tossed* refers to being unstable, immature, and weak in faith (Eph. 4:14-16). We only become un-tossed by the Anchor of who Christ is in us, and pursuing Him!
- *Sea* is a term that drove fear into Jews then; they did not venture into the ocean, but relied on others to do that in fishing and commerce (Isa. 57:20).
- *Be given*. Life is about pleasing God, not pleasing one's self! It is about abandoning our desires and focusing on Him! His plan is far better than our desires!
- *Faith* is our object and loyalty. Christ is what we hope for; Christ is what is to be seen! Faith is the promise of God that gives us the hope and confidence, so we can receive, act on, obey, and trust God's promises because God is sovereign and trustworthy. Faith will help us perceive the world by what its potential is, not just by the suffering we experience and see. This helps us be implanted with hope (Matt. 6:33; John 14:9; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8; Hebrews 11:1).
- *Doubt* comes when we are not exercising our faith. We will be consumed with doubt and distrust—the opposite of God's call and plan for us. We will lose our trust and hope that God is in control! When we do this, we will lose or miss out on seeing God come through with His promises!

We may not understand our problems or ever get a reason, as Job did not; however, we can still trust in Him who loves us and is “caring” us through! Do you accept His caring? It is sad how so few Christians, when faced with problems, will really seek and rely on God. They tend to only see their situation, cowering in bitterness and anger, even aiming that anger toward God. They do not see that He is, indeed, in control (2 Cor. 4:7-12). Thus, many Christians withdraw into isolation, bitterness, and denial, and avoid His true love and plan for them. We have to learn to learn; we have to grow, so we can grow. If not, we stagnate and our circumstances will sink us. We have been given victory. That is what the Christian experience is all about, our victory over sin and despair by what Christ has done on our behalf. If we do not declare the victory, we will only see defeat. Even though we already have the victory, we will be defeated!

Doubts should not derail us unless it is the Holy Spirit saying we are going in the wrong direction. To know the difference, be in prayer. Take comfort; the impossible becomes the possible in Christ (Matt. 21:21-22)! Doubt will hinder you greatly in your service and growth in Christ; doubt can actually cancel out your

prayer and His work in you! We are not called to be perfect, as He uses our weakness and failures, but doubt is like putting our shoes on backwards; we will be uncomfortable, hurt, and not go very far! Doubt will greatly hinder us! We have to see how much God loves and cares for us, so we do not need to doubt! Have sin and discouragement got you by the heel or throat? Seek out why you are doubting; is there a good reason, or are past experiences and fears hindering you (Luke 11:10)?

We have to take the initiative to reach out and accept His Hand; allow Him lead you out. Do not try to swim by yourself, as the waters of life are too strong; the currents and tides of desires and wrong opportunities will overwhelm us. Anticipate what may lie ahead and prepare; this is James' whole point! Unequivocally, we have to reach out for Christ and Him only! We can choose not to be bitter, rather be better!

**Vs. 7-8:** What we receive from God is good. What we receive from self and others, with personal agendas that are not centered on God, will be bad and distract us from our growth. If we are being real with our spiritual formation, we will realize our need for Christ and our continual need for His wisdom (Matt. 5:3)!

- *Double minded* refers to being unstable emotionally and in thoughts, like a split personality or *schizophrenia*. It also means to be a person who has two souls in conflict, two desires that cannot be reconciled, two masters who ask different things at the same time. This is "I want my will *and* God's will." This just cannot be!
- *Doubt*, along with *double-minded*, is also a form of inconsistent living and hypocrisy, and is greatly condemned by God. It is saying one thing and doing another (1 Chron. 12:33; Psalm 12:2; Matt. 6:24; James 4:8). This is also indecision! It is not being willing to make up your mind and go in the right direction!
- *Unstable*. We are called to make decisions based on God's values and not our ideas or indecisions. How does our decision affect others? How is it relational and beneficial to others and God's glory?

Disappointments are the collision between our expectations and experiences, while ignoring the signposts of God's promises. Our expectations will collide with our experiences and then create a wrecked life of self-pity and resentment. Or, that can lead to a triumphant life. The choice is ours and the key is where we look for our hope! This is about our circumstances and how we look at our Lord. How we see adversity and His sovereignty will totally affect how we learn and deal with it (Phil 1:27-30). Unanchored stress and disappointments along with detachment from looking to God, will take us away from seeing His signposts of precepts. Thus, we ignore God's plan and this dumps us in the middle of a tossed sea (Job 23:10; Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Thess. 5:16-18). We cannot just expect

God to get us through without any effort on our part. To grow, we have to struggle and work it out (Phil. 2). It is the struggle that helps us; it is what builds us and forms us. Without it, there is no growth or real impacting faith, honest character, genuine patience, or maturity (Prov. 3:5-6; 20:30; Job. 36:5; Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 1:9; 1 Peter 1:6-7). When we do not rely on God, we are, in fact, not taking care of ourselves by helping Him out; rather we are insulting Him!

The key is to learn to take your life and your surroundings as they are, and then strive to build them to what they can be for His glory, not just as you wanted it. If our hearts and minds are divided between seeking God or seeking ourselves, we will become double minded and unstable. We will become spiritually and emotionally unstable and thus sink in the waves of stress and life! We will literally be torn apart spiritually and physically by our stress and worry, because we have not yielded to Him. Let go and let God; allow your wholehearted devotion to be on Christ and not on yourself. God will not make your decisions for you; you need to seek His precepts and distil what is best for value's and character's sake; then, He will enable us to form it and grow (Isa. 26:3; Matt. 6:33)

What do I do when I am overwhelmed? Ask God for help; for He is able! Trust in His control! He is the God who can keep us walking above the waves, and keep us alive and going when we are under them! Go through His Word, seek what you are to learn, how you can get through, and for wisdom. If we do not learn, all those "waves" will just be a waste, and perhaps we will keep going through them until we do learn (Psalm 142:1-7; John 7:17; 1 Peter 1:6-7). Do not escalate your situation by complaining, or distort it by denial, bitterness, or isolation! Do not be dumb, trapped in your own anger and regret. Be smart; be a Christian who learns and grows and who is committed to obedience, spiritual growth, and maturity. Instead of moaning, seek His grace to solve the situation! Do not blame, or seek fault in others or yourself; rather, get on with life and your commitment to Christ. Allow His amazing work in you! Resistance to God, our bad attitudes, and anger only cause us more harm, choosing for ourselves to be tossed by the seas of life without hope or purpose. Let Christ be your anchor, or else you will drown and your life will be a series of wasted opportunities. When you could have and should have grown, you will have squandered His call and put your energies into complaints, and your mindsets and attitudes into bitterness and anger. We need to come to the point that we trust in the Lord, regardless of how good or how bad life is, for it is temporary. What we learn will be eternal (John 7:17-18)!

***The Essential Inductive Questions*** (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?

3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there a sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed so I can learn and grow?
6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. Are you impulsive? Why and how so? How does this benefit your personal life? How can it distract you from growing in faith? What would be a healthy Biblical balance for you to be free and spontaneous yet be pious and reliant on Him?
2. What is not right in your life that needs wisdom and attention from God?
3. What causes you to be unstable? What do you need to do to become more stable and to have an Anchor for the storms of life?
4. How can you become more confident that God gives us the plan and the victory?
5. What do you do when you are overwhelmed? Because of this passage, what will you do now?
6. Why do Christians need wisdom to take us though the avenues of life? What happens if we do not seek wisdom? How will never learning from our mistakes and experiences affect us as well as others?
7. How would you define Wisdom?
8. How do you make decisions? How can this passage help you be more decisive?
9. How does Faith give us the promise of God, hope, and confidence? How will you receive, act on, obey, and trust in God's promises?

10. What happens when Doubt comes into your life? What will you do about it next time it happens?
11. How can you better deal with your expectations and experiences so they do not turn into disappointments?
12. How can you learn to take your life and your surroundings as they are, and then strive to become what you can be for His glory, not just for what you want? What would your life be like then? How would you benefit others?

*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:3-4

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