

Pt 2 James Series (Faith Made Perfect) - Wisdom

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 02-21-2018

† James 1:5-8

We began this study last week by giving an introduction to the Book of James which covered the who, where, and why, and then we began on the what of the book. Then we covered the first 4-verses.

After the introduction in verse one, James jumps right in to the meat and potatoes of the letter by talking about having joy through trials in our lives. We discussed how difficult it would have been for the Christians in James's day because of the heavy persecution they were under by the Romans and unbelieving Jews.

So, tonight we pick up in verse five with James discussing **wisdom**, look at it:

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

One thing that you will find when studying the Book of James is that it seems to almost be a New Testament commentary on the Old Testament Book of **Proverbs**. There are numerous things that James covers that you will find in that book as well. For example, here in James chapter one he speaks of wisdom and it looks very much like what Solomon wrote in **Proverbs 2:6-7** For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

The truth is, we pray for a lot of things in this life but how many times have you prayed for wisdom? If you think about it, wisdom is really one of the most lacking things in the lives of Christians today. It seems today in this world we live in of easy believism, and health, wealth, and prosperity, that people are being carried away by every wind of doctrine, as Paul said to the Ephesians. That is why it is imperative that the members of Highland Baptist Church seek for Godly wisdom. That is, after all, who James says to ask it from - **God**.

I guess we first have to admit that we lack wisdom before we feel the need to ask for it huh? But we are a bunch of know it alls. We think we are so smart and have everything under control. If we were truthful we would admit that we really don't know as much as we think we do and we are greatly lacking in true wisdom. We should pray that the Lord would give us wisdom. The Bible promises that if we do then he will give it to us **liberally**. That means bountifully, a whole bunch!

Speaking of Solomon, he also wrote this: **Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but fools despise wisdom* and instruction.

I've known a few people in my lifetime that I can say truly had wisdom. My dad was one of those men. He was a man of very few words but when he spoke, he spoke great words of wisdom. I pray that one day I will have half of the wisdom that he had.

James tells us that if we lack wisdom we should ask of God and it will be given to us. We can find a great example of this in the Old Testament when King David's son, Solomon, took the throne as King. Solomon wasn't sure what he needed to do or how to rule the kingdom and listen to what the Bible says in:

1 Kings 3:5-12

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

1 Kings 4:29-34

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that *is* on the sea shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that *is* in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

Not only did God give Solomon wisdom, but he gave it to him liberally! Maybe that is why he holds the record in the Bible for the number of times the word Wisdom is used – 54 times in Proverbs and 28 times in his book of Ecclesiastes!

Listen, God will give us wisdom as well if we desire it and pray and ask him for it.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

And here James reminds us that everything we pray for must be prayed with faith in God. How many times have you got down on you knees and went through the motions of praying but down in your heart you doubted that God would listen to or answer you prayers? Come on, am I the only one in this building that will admit to that? I'm preaching to a bunch of perfect people in here tonight, aren't I? Hey, I've done it. Pray about something and the whole time thinking, God's never going to

answer my prayer. James says when we pray like that, without faith, without believing we are [like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed](#). And, not only that, there's a problem with that type of praying, look at our next verse:

[7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.](#)

So, if we pray without faith, not believing that God answers prayer then we can guarantee that he's not going to answer it. Look at that again: "[let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.](#)"

Do you remember back in our Hebrew Bible Study when we were in that great faith Chapter, 11? The Bible says in [Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.](#)

Several years ago, I preached a sermon here called Prayers of Unbelief. It was based on the story of when Peter was in prison and the church was praying for him and when the Lord freed Peter from that prison and he showed up at the front door where they were all praying for him, they couldn't believe it was him. Not everyone that was there was praying in faith that God would release Peter. Some of them were so unbelieving that they told Rhoda, who answered the door that she was mad and that she was seeing ghosts.

We aren't any better. I think one thing that we need more of here at the Church is some earnest, faithful, prayer warriors who are diligently seeking the LORD.

[8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.](#)

Then James says that people who pray but they are not praying with faith or belief are "[double minded](#)." They aren't just unstable in their prayer life, they are unstable in "all their ways." A double minded man has two different spirits, two different souls, two different natures about them. One part of them tries to act one way and the other part of them acts the other. I think we call that "split personality" nowadays.

If you aren't careful, you will find yourself being a double minded man.

There was a time in my life that I thought I could live a Christian life and still hold onto the carnal life. You know, go to Church on Sunday and live any way I please on Monday. Put on one face in front of Christians and put on another in front of the lost. Try to live in both worlds.

I've told this before but I'll tell it again. When I was a young man probably 8 or 9 years old, I was walking with my Papaw, Lorn Chesney, up through the woods and cow pastures behind his house. We got up to the top of the hill just below Chester's house and there was an electric fence that was there to keep the cows out of Chester's yard. Lorn barely broke stride as he lifted one leg, threw it over the fence and stepped over to the other side. Well, I figured I could do the same thing. Of course I was about a foot shorter than Lorn at that time. I threw one leg over and sat right on top of that electric fence. I had one leg in Chester's yard and the other leg in the cow pasture. If that wasn't bad enough I decided to grab ahold of the metal fence post. I finally fell off of it and laid on the ground crying while Lorn stood there and laughed at me. Friends, I took the ride of my life that day.

But one foot was on one side and one foot on the other and just like on that electric fence, if you are double minded enough to think that you can have one foot in the world and the other foot in Christ you better get prepared for the shock of your life.

Living the double minded, unstable way is far from God. Social media is one of the worst places in the world to discover such people. You see them one minute posting prayer requests or Bible verses and the next minute their sharing a dirty video or using profanity in their posts. How this must sicken the Lord. You can't honor the Lord and honor the devil at the same time, it doesn't work like that. We aren't in Chapter 3 tonight but James talks about his more in [James 3:10-13: Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.](#)

One of the greatest damages to the Church in these days that we are living in is coming from those that profess Christ as Savior. It's as if they want the benefits of being a Christian without the Biblical instruction commanded to live a holy life. They have taken grace way too far. The Apostle Paul had much to say about this type of double minded person. In [Romans 6:1-2: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?](#)

In other words, once we became saved we became a new creature in Christ. A Christian has died to sin and we are no longer to live in it. Our old way of living, our old desires, our old conversations are to be a thing of the past. We don't live like a Christian on Sunday and like the Lost on Monday. The problem is that being double minded has much deeper implications.

[Matthew 15:8](#) says: [This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.](#)

Jesus says that these double minded people worship him in vain. In other words, they might as well not have even bothered putting on the pretense of worship because it was all for nothing. Their lips said one thing but their heart says another.

So, a double minded man has much more going on than just what's in his head, he also has a heart condition.

Also, notice that Jesus plainly says that these types of people teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. There is way too much doctrine of men in the Church today and not enough doctrine of Christ.

The pastors of today are double minded. They proclaim to be heralders of the Word of God yet their messages are heralding the words of men. More preachers are quoting business men and pushing CEO doctrine than they are quoting the Word of God and His doctrine.

Our take away from this tonight needs to be – As a believer in Christ, we should strive to have all of the wisdom of the Word of God as we can possibly have. We must believe by faith that if we ask Him for this wisdom, He will give it to us, and we need to examine ourselves and make sure that the faith we have is genuine and we aren't living a pretend Christian life and double minded life.