

Do You Really Want Wisdom?

[James 1:5-8](#)
James, Day 3

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 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. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- James 1:5-8, ESV

When I was a kid, I often had no idea what I really wanted. As the youngest of four children, I sometimes just wanted to have or do whatever my older siblings had or were doing. At school, I wanted to be accepted by the other kids in my classes, so I often wanted to do or wear or have whatever I thought might gain me acceptance by my peers. It took me a long time to figure out what I really liked and what I actually wanted. Even then, I later realized that many of my desires were foolish, selfish, and short-sighted.

Living as sinful people prone to foolishness in a sinful world in rebellion against God, one of our greatest needs is for wisdom. When Solomon prayed for wisdom, the Lord commended him and answered his prayer. Here in James 1, God promises to give wisdom to anyone who lacks it and asks it of Him.

What is being promised here? Is God telling us that if we're ever wondering what we should do, we can just pray to Him and He'll tell us what we should do? Is this a blanket promise for infallible divine guidance, a can't-miss guidance system for all of life's tough choices? No. What's promised here is much better. God will give us wisdom, but we need to make sure we understand what we really need and what we need to admit before we can receive it.

What we really need is wisdom. Wisdom is not "always knowing the right thing to do," as most people think of that concept. Many people want some sort of guidance from God that will always direct them down the right path in life, as defined by their expectation that they would have an easy life with abundant blessings and minimum problems. When they pray, "Lord, which job should I take?" they often mean, "Which job is going to pay me the best, be most satisfying, and have the fewest problems?" None of this type of guidance is ever promised by God, and none of it is real wisdom.

How can I say that? Because if this picture of maximum benefits and minimum problems was the picture of a blessed life of wisdom, then neither Jesus nor the Apostles lived blessed lives of wisdom. They all encountered lots of problems, trials, temptations, rejection, and hardship. In the end, most of their lives ended in poverty and violent death. And yet, they had wisdom and they were truly blessed.

So, what is wisdom? Wisdom is living life in harmony with God's will, living according to God's design and purposes, for His glory and kingdom. Wisdom is living well, not as the world or our selfish flesh defines it but as God alone defines it.

Do we want this kind of wisdom? Only if we want to live for the glory of God and our eternal joy in Him and not settle for anything less.

What do we need to admit before we can receive this wisdom? We have to admit that we don't have it and neither does the world. We have to admit that we need the Lord alone to give us this wisdom. And if we begin by refusing to look to ourselves or to the world, we are already on the path of wisdom.

The path of wisdom is laid out by the Word of God, and we are guided along it by the Spirit of God. By trusting in God and following His word as led by His Spirit, we can grow in true wisdom. And as we grow in true wisdom, we live life as God has intended and we are truly, eternally blessed.