

James 1:5-8

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Verse 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.” If any man lacks wisdom, he only has himself to blame. The Bible is clear that TRUE, spiritual wisdom only comes from above (See James 3:17; entire book of Proverbs; etc.), and one must seek out and RECEIVE such wisdom if he expects to gain it (Prov. 1:3).

Not only must we receive wisdom’s instruction through study, but also through prayer. God is ready and willing to give it, but only if we are ready and willing to receive it! We make ourselves ready by studying, meditating on, and applying God’s Word in our lives. Then, and only then, can we pray to the Father for wisdom. This is not a miraculous endowment of such, but rather a pleading for the reaping of the results for which the man of God has already done the work. And I wholeheartedly believe that God will give much wisdom to those who are truly trying to obtain it — Don’t you? (See the following verses.)

The term “liberally” may turn a few heads, given the connotation usually ascribed to liberalness today, but it need not do so. The term, used Biblically, simply refers to the idea of the bountifulness of God’s giving. He is willing to give much, and doesn’t hold back on His giving. God never runs out of wisdom, and neither do we have to, if we would just study, meditate, and apply the Word, and then pray!

Verses 6-7: “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. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” I get the impression that God doesn’t take too kindly to people who pray to Him with doubt in their hearts. Right? Such wishy-washy “faith” is the opposite of Biblical faith. Biblical faith is a **belief /trust** (man’s part) in God to follow through with His promises (His part); accordingly, Biblical faith also includes **obedience** in prospect of the rewards involved with such (also man’s part).

If man does not have such faith in God, then he better not expect to reap any benefits from God, including said wisdom. When one thinks about it, **MAN’S** faithfulness is dependent on (among other things) correctly understanding **GOD’S** faithfulness! (Take a look at Lam. 3:23).

Verse 8: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” This part of the passage concludes with the idea that such a man is spiritually unstable, so much so that the text says “in ALL his ways,” emphasis mine.

Of this unstable man, Robert Taylor, Jr. says the following: “The double-minded person seeks to pay homage to two masters. Jesus denied this can be done. (Matt. 6:24.) The double-minded man is somewhat of a spiritual ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.’ He possesses religious schizophrenia — a person with split personalities or with two natures which are totally different. He is somewhat like the ancient Roman deity of Janus who was represented with two opposite faces. This has led to the coining of the adjective ‘Janus-faced.’ A person cannot face God with loyalty and face the world with allegiance simultaneously. A person cannot pray acceptably and be minus faith at the same time” (19). I could not have said it better myself if I tried!

Works Cited:

Taylor, Jr. Robert Taylor. *Studies in James and Jude*. Ripley, TN: Taylor Publications, 1987. Print.