



May 11, 2025  
*Real Wisdom for a Messy World*  
**GOT WISDOM?**  
James 1:5-8



1. **Opening Discussion:** (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. Have you ever been out to sea during a severe storm or perhaps standing on the seashore during a storm watching the pounding surf? Describe the experience. How did it make you feel?
- b. Sometimes brilliant people seem to lack the “common sense to come in out of the rain.” Have you ever known someone like that? Without naming or otherwise giving away an identity, describe the most amusing incident you’ve witnessed that resulted from someone not having enough common sense.
- c. When you were a child, did your mother or father ever have to command you, “Make up your mind!” when you oscillated between choices? Have you ever said it to anyone? If so, describe an amusing situation that led to the inability to stick with a decision.

2. **Prayer:**

- a. **Adoration** – Pray Psalm 95 or another passage of Scripture that enables you to focus on praising God for who He is in all His majesty and glory, the only One worthy of praise.
- b. **Confession** – Spend time in silence, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any sins you need to confess. Keep a paper and pencil handy in case He reminds you of one that requires you to ask forgiveness of someone. Close by reading 1 John 1:9
- c. **Thanksgiving** – In the spirit of Ephesians 5:20, thank God for answered prayers, His blessings and gifts, and the opportunities He provides to serve. Make a point to thank Him for at least one thing that you’ve never given thanks for before.
- d. **Supplications**
  - i. Pray for the activities of His Church
    1. Locally: LRBC, its ministries and outreach activities; for our pastors, staff, and volunteers; for the other churches in PWC that faithfully share the Gospel.
    2. Around the world: for missionaries and pastors serving in other cultures; for the persecuted Church in countries that are actively hostile to the Gospel; for unreached people groups which have little or no access to the Gospel; that God will raise up works to go and serve Him, perhaps even young people from LRBC. .
  - ii. Pray for the spiritual and physical needs of
    1. At least one person who needs to accept Christ as Savior.
    2. Friends, family, and yourself
    3. Some of the items on LRBC’s weekly *Praises & Prayer Requests* list.

4. Our national, state, and local leaders – especially for the salvation of those who have not accepted Christ as Savior.

### 3. Sermon Key Points for James 1:5-8

- a. If You Need Wisdom, Especially During Trials, Ask God
  - i. Real wisdom equips you to live life for God's glory
  - ii. Whenever you notice you need more wisdom, just ask God
  - iii. God gives wisdom through His Spirit and His Word
- b. If You're Going to Ask God for Wisdom, Mean It!
  - i. Don't ask for wisdom in a foolish way!
  - ii. Make sure you actually want what God has to say!

### 4. Bible Study:

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after the sermon, make time to consider:
  - i. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
  - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
  - iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
  - iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
  - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. **Monday:**
  - i. This week's scripture passage, James 1:5-8, is short. Although the daily devotional will not repeat the instruction, start each day by slowly and meditatively reading the four verses.
  - ii. Today, read the passage from several different versions if possible. After reading and meditating on the passage, take a few minutes and write your own paraphrase which captures what the Scripture is saying to you (try to do this without referring back to the text – just capture your thoughts and feelings). Then list all the positive reassurances (blessings) you see in the verses and the challenges they present to you.
- c. **Tuesday:**
  - i. While James is sometimes called the “Proverbs of the New Testament” he is not writing a series of standalone statements (like we see in the Book of Proverbs) but a coherent letter expounding truth to the reader. Read James 1:2-8.
    1. How does James connect this week's Scripture passage back to verses 2-4 with the first words of verse 5?
    2. How does the first part of verse 6 also point us back to verses 2-4?

3. Does it seem that in some sense James is almost talking in circles when he says “lacking in nothing” but “lacks wisdom” and “testing of your faith” but “ask in faith”? What do these connections tell us about the nature of the “wisdom” James is writing about? Why would the request we are commanded to make of God in verse 5 be essential to fulfilling the command of verse 2?
- ii. We usually think of “trials” as painful and undesirable. But is that always the case? Read 2 Chronicles 1:1 and 7-12.
  1. From verse 1 and what you know about King Solomon, does it seem that he was facing trials in the way we would define the word? What does the last part of verse 10 suggest was Solomon’s “trial”?
  2. While we will all face painful situations (trials) in our lives at some points, how does being a Christian in America likely put us in situations more like Solomon at times (consider Mark 10:17-23)?
  3. What does this comparison suggest about how we should pray for wisdom even (or perhaps especially) when we are not going through spiritual, mental, or physical trials?

*d. Wednesday:*

- i. After considering the focal passage, read Mark 9:17-27 and Matthew 14:25-32.
- ii. Although James assures us that God will give wisdom, what does he present as a condition (or requirement) when asking?
  1. Is it possible to ask “in faith” but still doubt? How would you describe the difference between “faith” and “doubt”? What is the difference between “faith” and “belief”?
  2. How did the father of the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9 demonstrate faith and belief? Who would have known of his doubt/unbelief? Where did he turn for help to overcome the doubt he had?
  3. How did Peter demonstrate faith and belief in Matthew 14? What was the outward evidence of his doubt? What was the inward evidence of that doubt that only God would see? How do you think our fear is evidence of doubt when we ask God for wisdom?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. While James promises us that God will provide wisdom, he does not tell us explicitly how God will do that. What do these passages tell us are at least three ways He uses to answer our prayers for wisdom:
  1. 1 Corinthians 12:8, Ephesians 1:17, and Colossians 1:9
  2. Proverbs 1:1-2, Psalm 19:7 & 119:130, and 2 Timothy 3:15-16
  3. Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 3:12-13 & 10:24-25, Ephesians 5:15-19

- ii. Which of the three is most important? Which requires you to be actively involved? Which do you need to focus on more in your own life?
- iii. Read James 1:6-7 again carefully. Does James tell us God will not answer our request for wisdom if we have doubt? What does he say? Why is this good news? In what sense is it bad news?
- iv. James ends this passage in verse 8 by naming two characteristics of the person (assumably a Christian person) who doubts: “double-minded” and “unstable”. What does each term mean to you?
  - 1. What do these scriptures add to your understanding of “double-minded”: Matthew 6:24, 1 John 2:15-16, James 4:4, Psalm 12:1-2?
  - 2. What do these passages teach about the dangers of being “unstable”: 2 Peter 2:14 & 3:16 and Ephesians 4:14
- f. **Friday:**
  - i. James tells us to pray for specific wisdom necessary to face trials. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul teaches us a lot about the wisdom God provides. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 and 2:6-16.
    - 1. What is the fundamental (absolutely mandatory) requirement if we are going to understand the wisdom from God?
    - 2. How do Paul’s teachings help as we pray for and apply God’s wisdom in the face of trials (see especially 1:25)?
  - ii. According to Colossians 1:24, how does Paul equate the purpose of wisdom with the reason James gives us to pray for it?
- g. **Saturday:**
  - i. One of the great sources of teaching about wisdom is the Book of Proverbs. As you are coming to the end of this study, read these Proverbs and meditate on how they should influence your life: 1:7, 2:6,3:21, 4:5-7, 9:10-12, 15:33, 21:30, 24:3, 28:26, and 29:18.
  - ii. Close by reading James 1:2-8.

## 5. **Application:**

- a. Shortly after accepting Christ, Augustine says he prayed, “O Lord, grant me purity, but not yet”. Does such a prayer too often typify our life as Christians in America today? Are there areas in your personal, business, social, or spiritual life where you are attempting to hold on to what the world offers while still loving and serving God? If so, this is an indication of double-mindedness and needs to be confessed and repented of.
- b. Trials we face while living a Christian life when things seem to be going well, although perhaps not as obvious, require God’s wisdom just as much as do those we experience in bad times. This is especially true since in good times we tend to rely upon our own strength, not God’s. Are there areas where living “the good life” is keeping you from experiencing all that God has for you?