

Liberating Faith Studies

Summer Quarter – 2020

MANY* faces of **WISDOM*

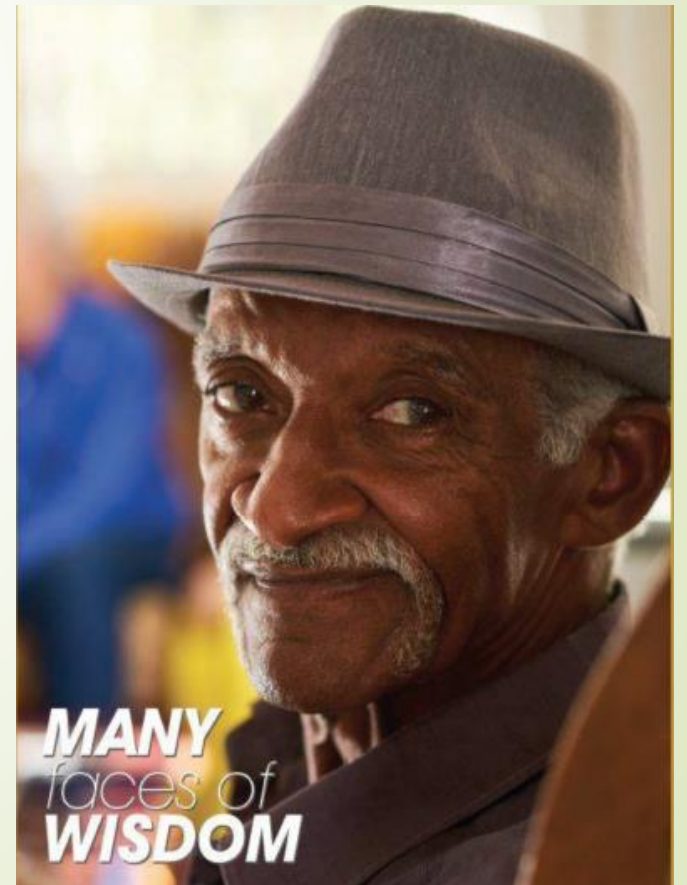


The focus is the many faces of God's wisdom
& God as sovereign, liberating, and all wise

Many Faces of Wisdom

Sabbath School

August 1, 2020



Summer Quarter 2020

➔ **Unit 3:** Faith and Wisdom in James – Explores the New Testament letter attributed to James

August 1: Faith and Wisdom, James 1:1-11

August 8: Hearing and Doing the Word, James 1:19-27

August 15: Faith Without Works is Dead, James 2:14-26

August 22: Taming the Tongue, James 3:1-12

August 29: Two Kinds of Wisdom, James 3:13-18; 5:7-12



Faith and Wisdom

Lesson Scriptures: James 1:1-11

Key Verse:

5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

James 1:5 NLT

Background and Setting

- James, the brother of Jesus, was a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:12). He was a “pillar” of that church along with Peter and John (Gal. 2:9). He was also known as James the Just because of his devotion to righteousness.
- James is dated to have been written around A.D. 44-49, making it the earliest written book in the NT canon.
- The recipients of this letter were Jewish believers who had been dispersed, possibly as a result of Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 7), but more likely due to the persecution under Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12).
- James, with its devotion to direct statements on wise living is reminiscent of the book of Proverbs. It has practical emphasis on godly behavior.



Background and Setting

- James complements Paul's emphasis on justification by faith with his emphasis on spiritual fruitfulness demonstrating true faith.
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James 1:1-11

Greetings from James

¹This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings!

Faith and Endurance

- ² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.
- ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.
- ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

James 1:1-11: Faith and Wisdom

- 5** If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.
- 6** But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.
- 7** Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.
- 8** Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.
- 9** Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them.
- 10** And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field.
- 11** The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

Wisdom, James 1:5

- By “wisdom” James is talking not only about knowledge but about the ability to make wise decisions in difficult circumstances. Whenever we need wisdom, we can pray to God, and he will generously supply what we need.
- The wisdom that we need has three distinct characteristics:
 - (1) *It is practical.* The wisdom from God relates to life even during the most trying times. It is not a wisdom isolated from suffering and trials. This wisdom is the tool by which trials are overcome.
 - (2) *It is divine.* God’s wisdom goes beyond common sense. Common sense does not lead us to choose joy in the midst of trials. This wisdom begins with respect for God, leads to living by God’s direction, and results in the ability to tell right from wrong. James describes this wisdom at length in chapter 3.
 - (3) *It is Christlike.* Asking for wisdom is ultimately asking to be like Christ. Christ is identified as the “wisdom of God,” 1 Corinthians 1:24; 2:1-7).

Jesus is the manifestation of God's wisdom

²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1 Corinthians 1:24**

Paul's Message of Wisdom

¹ When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. ² For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. ⁴ And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. ⁵ I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

⁶ Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. ⁷ No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. **1 Corinthians 2:1-7**



Trails and Temptation

James 1:12-18

¹² God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵ These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

¹⁶ So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. ¹⁸ He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.



Hearing and Doing the Word

Lesson Scriptures: James 1:19-27

Key Verse:

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. **James 1:22 NLT**

James 1:19-27

Listening and doing

- 19** Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.
- 20** Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.
- 21** So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.
- 22** But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.
- 23** For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.
- 24** You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

James 1:19-27

Listening and doing

25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

27 Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

1:22-25 footnote: It is important to listen to what God's Word says, but it is much more important to obey it and to *do* what it says. We can measure the effectiveness of our Bible study time by the effect it has on our behavior and attitudes. Do you put into action what you have studied?

Application Study Bible, New Living Translation, 2nd Ed., Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval.

2 Timothy 2:15

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. **New Living Translation (NLT)**

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

21st Century King James Version (KJ21)

Because God will examine what kind of worker we have been for him, we should build our lives on his Word and build his Word into our lives. It alone tells us how to live for him and serve him. Believers who ignore the Bible will certainly be ashamed at the judgement. Consistent and diligent study of God's Word is vital; otherwise we will be lulled into neglecting God and our true purpose for living.

Footnote, Application Study Bible, New Living Translation, 2nd Ed., Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois



Next week:

Faith Without Works Is Dead

James 2:14-26

- Review the connection between wisdom and faith
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