

JAMES

A Faith That Works

Study 2

Wisdom: The power to face trials

James 1:5-12

James 1:5-8

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

1) Objective question. Select all that apply. According to the lecture, what is the meaning of spiritual wisdom?

- A. Understanding to act accordingly in trials and tribulations
- B. Intellectual knowledge
- C. General wisdom
- D. Specific wisdom to deal with suffering
- E. The ability to physically see God
- F. The ability to view life from God’s perspective
- G. Wisdom to find a way out of our trials and tribulations

2) Objective question. Select all that apply. According to the lecture, what are the ways that suffering can be dealt with using conventional/secular/earthly wisdom?

- A. Medication
- B. Coping techniques
- C. Acceptance
- D. You are not your pain
- E. Mindfulness
- F. Regulating emotions
- G. Distress tolerance
- H. Interpersonal effectiveness
- I. Cognitive behavioural therapy

3) Discussion question.

Spiritual wisdom helps us in our sufferings in two ways:

- Modulate the magnitude of our sufferings
 - Helps us to overcome the temptation to regress in our faith
- a) How does spiritual wisdom help us to put the magnitude of our suffering in perspective?
- b) How does spiritual wisdom ensure we do not regress in our faith?

4) Comprehension question. According to the lecture, what is the double-mindedness spoken by James referring to?

Refer to James 4:8.

A double-minded person is one who does **not** intend to **draw near to God** and has **divided intentions**.

That person may have a foot in both worlds – he/she is half-trusting in God and the world.

5) Objective question. What is the condition for receiving God's wisdom for trials/tribulations?

A. Ask in faith

B. Believe that God will remove the trial / temptation

C. Doubt God

D. Believe that God is the issue

E. Be not double-minded in trusting in God

F. Be not double-minded in believing the outcome will be better

6) Comprehension question. One of the common misconceptions about not being double-minded is that we must be single-minded (convicted) about a certain outcome and not doubt it.

- a) How is this different from the proper interpretation of the double-mindedness James is speaking about?

Uncertainty of the outcome is not being double-minded. Double-mindedness has not so much to do with the outcome, but more to do with trusting God.

Our prayer for wisdom comes out of our single minded desire to see Him and His will during crisis.

b) Give an example (from the Bible) of being double-minded in trusting God.

Consider Abraham and Sarah – how they took matters into their own hands and had a child through Hagar (Genesis 16:1-3). If they were single-minded in trusting God, they would not have resorted to such means to have a child.

Another example: Lot – Genesis 13:11-13 & 2 Peter 2:7

James 1:9-12

“Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

7) Comprehension question. We need wisdom in dealing with wealth. James 1:9 exhorts the poor to “rejoice in that he is exalted”. What does this mean? Refer to James 2:5.

The poor in this world are dependent on God and are therefore, spiritually rich towards God. They are humble enough to see God’s face in trials.

Refer to Proverbs 30:8-9.

Quick Verse Reference

James 2:5

“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”

Proverbs 30:8-9

“Remove falsehood and lies far from me;

Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;

Lest I be full and deny You,
And say, “Who is the Lord?”
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.”

8) Comprehension question. James 1:9 states that the rich will be “made low” or humiliated. In what way will the rich be humbled?

James was focusing on the **attitude** towards riches, rather than people who are rich.

The rich can be easily tempted to trust in their wealth rather than in God. Due to the fleeting (temporal) nature of earthly riches, the rich who depend on and find their security in wealth will never be satisfied.

Those who possess riches should depend on the Lord, instead of depending on their riches and not pursue more wealth.

9) Comprehension question. Why is spiritual maturity so important? (Refer to James 1:12)

Takeaway

- The wisdom that James teaches is the **understanding to act accordingly** in trials and tribulations and view life from **God’s perspective**.
- We will receive God’s wisdom to face trials if we **ask in faith** and **be not double-minded** in trusting the Lord.
- We should be **single-minded** in our desire to see God and His will during a crisis.
- We need wisdom to **fully depend on the Lord** and not be affected by the lack of wealth or the imminent loss of it.

Case Study

Case 1 – Wisdom in Trials

Richard was a very wealthy businessman who has been working in the finance industry for many years. He has been a Christian since his youth and attends the Fifth Baptist Church with his family.

He took great pride in his financial stability and was always eager to show off his assets to anyone who would listen.

Unfortunately, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, his business made substantial losses and he ended up selling his house and cars as he could no longer afford them. He was forced to withdraw his children from international school and they were placed in public schooling instead.

He struggled very much, not just financially, but also emotionally. He wondered why God could put him in such a trial and allowed him to suffer such losses.

1) Discussion question. If you are Richard, how would you feel about your situation? (There is no right or wrong answer.)

2) Discussion question. If you are Richard, what is your natural reaction? (There is no right or wrong answer.)

3) Discussion question. Based on what we have been studying in James 1:2-5, what does Richard need most at this time?

Richard needs spiritual wisdom to understand his sufferings from God's perspective. That his trials are moulding him into a more Christlike character. (Romans 8:28-29)

4) Discussion question. In what way is God moulding Richard to be more in the image of His Son?

To be fully dependent on the Lord alone and not find security in his wealth.

Lack of wealth or the imminent loss of it is, like many other things, is a form of testing, a testing that has value to the believer because it helps to establish, to give "proof", that he/she is one who loves God.

5) Discussion question. What should be Richard's prayer at this time?

Pray to the Lord for wisdom to see what really matters in life.