

Series: How to Live as a Christian – Part 2

# Ask in Faith!

James 1:5-8 ESV

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – 2013

Sunday, April 21 at 8:00 &amp; 10:45; Monday, April 22 at 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, James did “not write to teach the way of salvation. Rather... to instruct Christians in the obedient way of life God desires from his children who possess his free gift of eternal life through faith in Christ... James’ letter exposes how impure and untrusting our prayers often are...and...lead[s] us to pray to God for more wisdom and strength to serve him better.”<sup>1</sup>

In vv. 2-4, James told us how to react to our trials—*with joy!* But why should our trials cause us to rejoice? *Because God uses our trials to strengthen our faith!* Is that how you see your trials? If not, *you need to ask God for wisdom!*

1. **Need Wisdom – Ask God:** <sup>5</sup> [lit. **And, But** – the conjunction, the word that connects verses 4 and 5, has been left out of the ESV translation] **If any of you<sup>2</sup> lacks wisdom [need God’s help], let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach [criticism], and it will be given him.** // God is not like the unbeliever who thinks he is an owner, when, in fact, he is only a manager – *even a*

<sup>1</sup> *Meditations*, Northwestern Publishing House, September 30, 2012, page 38.

<sup>2</sup> Greek: **τις** – someone, a certain one, anyone; **James uses that Greek word 12 times** (1:5, 23, 26; 2:14, 16, 18; 3:2, 13; 4:12; 5:13, 14, 19) **to identify a person in need of repentance. In this section it’s the one who is not joyful about his trials.**

*wicked manager.* God is different; He is truly generous to us; *then His forgiven children try to imitate Him!*

- a. **What is wisdom?** The “**ability to reach and implement proper decisions when facing challenges.**” (LSB, 2135) Now, notice ♦where wisdom begins and ♦what shows that it is mature:
    - i. <sup>NAS</sup> **Psalm 111:10** “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
    - ii. A good understanding have all those who do His commandments...”
  - b. **Did Jesus encourage us to ask for what we need?** Yes! He said:
    - i. <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 7:7** “Ask, and it shall be given to you...<sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives...”
    - ii. <sup>NIV</sup> **Mark 11:24** “...whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”
2. **Ask God – Without Doubting:** <sup>6</sup> **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.** // Such a wave moves but accomplishes nothing; some people pray but accomplish nothing – *because they ask without faith!*
    - a. To “ask in faith” includes the following ingredients:

- i. Believing God is Almighty—*He can grant our request!*
- ii. Believing God is Holy—*He must keep His promises!*
- iii. Believing God loves us—*He will give us whatever is best!*

b. <sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 21:21** ... Jesus [said] “...if you have faith and do not doubt... even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen.” *May God grant us such faith!*

3. **Doubters – Are Like People with Two Heads:** **7** For that person [the one who doubts] must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded [two-headed] man, unstable in all his ways. //

- a. In other words, he is trying to be loyal to both *the sinful world* and *God* at the same time, *but such is impossible* (think about the “N” verse).
- b. The LORD calls all double-minded people to repent: <sup>NAS</sup> **James 4:8** “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” In other words, → stop following the ways of the sinful world; then → be loyal only to God!

- Describe people who need to ask for wisdom:
  - Christians who accept their trials with joy.
  - Christians who cannot understand their trials.
- Will doubters who pray receive what they need? Y N
- What is the remedy for two-headed people?
  - Eat twice as much.
  - Repent – stop trying to do the impossible; then rely alone on God’s power, purity, and love!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

**Conclusion:** Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

- Did James write to teach us how to be saved? Y N