

## Wisdom in the Midst of Trials

James 1:5-8

Intro: Trials (James 1:2-4) form the laboratory for growth in wisdom (James 1:5-8).

- I. What is wisdom?
  - A. Difference between knowledge, understanding, wisdom and prudence. All four are needed:
    1. Knowledge
    2. Understanding
    3. Wisdom
    4. Prudence
  - B. Definitions of wisdom: “the art of learning how to succeed in life [and] the exercise of sound judgment either in avoiding evils or attempting good.” (David Brown) “Wisdom is INSIGHT into the underlying causes and significance or consequence of things, which INSIGHT enables one to apply to the best end the knowledge which he has.” (unknown) “Wisdom is seeing things the way God sees them.” (David DePra) “...the God-given insight into our human circumstances and situations that enables man to see God’s will...” (John Blanchard)
- II. Who qualifies to get wisdom? – those who lack it (v. 5a)
- III. How do you get wisdom? – ask God (v. 5b)
  - A. Admit your need for wisdom
  - B. Long for wisdom
  - C. Ask for wisdom
  - D. Gain more knowledge and understanding by reading the Bible (James has given this book, after all).
  - E. Anticipate the gift of wisdom
    1. By thanking God for the wisdom
    2. By exercising prudence and making the decision that best glorifies God.
- IV. Does God always come through? – yes (v. 5c)
  - A. He is a giving God
  - B. He is a generous God
  - C. He is a gracious God
  - D. He is a God who does what He promises
- V. Is there a condition? – yes: faith.
- VI. How Do We Refuse Wisdom? (vv. 6-8)
  - A. By denying we lack wisdom (v. 5)
  - B. By failing to pray (v. 5)
  - C. By thinking of God as ungenerous, biased, holding out on us, ungracious and unreliable (v. 5)
  - D. By doubting
    1. What is doubt? - Illustration
    2. How is doubt toxic?
      - a) Doubt makes us fear
      - b) Doubt makes us unstable
      - c) Doubt keeps us from the miraculous
      - d) Doubt fails to please God