

**I. Introduction and review: If you could ask God for one thing what would you ask?**

**II. Ask God for wisdom. v. 5**

**A. What is wisdom? 3:17 Pr. 1:1 2:1ff**

1. Wisdom is not mere knowledge.
2. Biblical wisdom is skill for living. Pr. 1:2-7 9:10 Ps. 111:10
3. Our culture has forsaken wisdom and embraced folly. Pr. 14:12
4. Those who are without God are devoid of wisdom. I Co. 2:14 Ps. 14:1

**B. You must admit that you lack wisdom. Mt. 5:3,6**

1. It is your proud self-sufficiency which keeps you from God. 4:6-10 John 9:40
2. By nature we are foolish. Eph. 2:1-3 I Co. 2:14
3. Trials expose our great need for wisdom, leading us to cry out to God. Lu. 15:16f
4. The gospel message is that you must admit your total lack of what God requires so that you can receive God's gift. Phil. 3:9

**C. Ask God to give you wisdom. 4:2-3**

1. God alone is the source of wisdom. Pr. 2:6 Rom. 11:33 Job. 32:8
2. He invites you to come to Him. Prov. 1:18ff 9:1ff
3. This is a request which is always according to His will. I Jo. 5:14 Eph. 3:18-19
4. Keep asking. Luke 18:1ff
5. This particularly applies when you are facing a great trial.
6. The wisdom to be sought is not just for one trial, but for all of life.
7. Seek wisdom as God's great gift. Dan. 2:20 Prov. 2:1ff 1:20ff
8. The wisdom we seek is embodied in a Person -- Christ. I Co. 1:30 Col. 2:3

**D. God gladly gives wisdom to those who seek Him.**

1. James echos Jesus' teaching. Mt. 7:7-11 Luke 11:9-13 John 14:13-14
2. A right view of God is essential! Gen. 3:1ff
3. Our God is a giving God. 1:17 Ps. 145:15-16,19 Mt. 5:45 Jo. 3:16 Acts 17:25
4. Our God gives generously. II Co. 8:2 9:11 Ro. 8:31ff Eph. 3:20-21 I Ki. 3:9ff Gen. 28:20 32:10 Mt. 18:21ff 11:28 Luke 15:21ff Isa. 55:1-2
5. He gives without reproach/upbraiding/scolding. Pr. 23:6-7 Ps. 103:13 Is. 55:6-9
6. His giving is governed by His gracious nature, not our worthiness.
7. This is an absolute promise of God. Pr. 1:20ff John 7:37 Ps. 81:10

**E. How does God impart His wisdom? 1:18 Rom. 10:17 Ps. 1:2 Prov. 1:5**

1. Do not expect God to impart the skill of wisdom to you by zapping you.
2. Nor is wisdom merely a feeling. Pr. 14:12 28
3. God uses His Word to make you wise. 1:18 Ro. 10:17 Ps. 1:2
4. You grow in wisdom as you understand God's Word and then put it into practice. v. 22 Mt. 7:24ff

**III. You must ask (pray) in faith. v. 6-8**

**A. Why do we sometimes not receive what we desire from God?**

1. You do not have because you do not ask. 4:2
2. Or you have been asking with wrong motives. 4:3
3. Or what you have asked is not according to God's will. I Jo. 5:14
4. Or you did not ask in faith (a divided heart). v. 6b-8

- B. What does it mean to ask in faith? Heb. 11:6 Mt. 21:22 Mark 11:24**
1. Again, James emphasizes faith! v 3 2:1,5,15,17,18,20,22,24,26 5:15
  2. Faith trusts God. Rom. 4:21 Mt. 9:28 8:2 Mark 2:3-4
  3. Faith values and seeks what He promises. Pr. 2:1ff 3:13-14 8:10-11 16:16
  4. We have confidence in prayer because of the mediation of Christ. Eph. 3:12 Heb. 4:17 Mt. 27:51
  5. Faith submits to God's will. 1:2-4 4:13-17 Gen. 50:20 Rom. 8:28
- C. What kind of doubt is James condemning? v. 6**
1. Is one guilty of doubt if he submits the outcome of a trial to God's will? Mt. 26:39
  2. Does this mean that any struggle with your faith invalidates your prayer?
  3. God is patient and gracious to those whose faith is weak. Mark 9:24 8:26 Acts 12:1ff Ps. 103:13 John 20:24ff Mt. 11:1ff Jo. 7:5
  4. Unbelief doubts God and fails to value the wisdom He offers. Mal. 3:14 Mk. 6:5-6
  5. Our lack of asking (prayer) shows our lack of faith.
- D. God hates double-mindedness. v. 8 4:8,4 Ps. 119:113**
1. The texts literally reads *double-souled* (or double-hearted). *Mr. Facing-both-ways*
  2. The double-minded, while claiming to trust God, also relies upon himself or other (worldly) men. Pr. 3:5-6 28:26 Ps. 1:1 Jer. 17:5-6
  3. He tries to have it both ways. 4:4 Rev. 3:16 Mt. 6:24
  4. Double-mindedness is not merely an intellectual issue, but a moral problem. 4:4-8 Deut. 6:5 Josh. 24:15 I Ki. 18:21 II Ki. 17:33 Rev. 3
- E. The double-minded doubter suffers the consequences of his folly. v. 6b-8 Ps. 12:1ff**
1. He is unstable in all his ways . v. 6b,8b Eph. 4:14 Jer. 17:5-6 Ps. 1:4-5 Is. 57:20
  2. He should not expect God to answer him. v. 7
  3. He will ultimately face judgment because he rejected God. Pr. 1:24ff Mt. 7:26-27
- F. God blesses those who have undivided loyalty and commitment to Him with wisdom and stability. Ps. 1:3 Jer. 17:7-8 Deut. 6:5 Prov. 3:5-6 Heb. 6:10 Mt. 7:24-25**

#### IV. Concluding applications.

- A. Admit your need and seek wisdom from God with a single mind. Pr. 2:1ff
- B. How does this passage point to Christ? I Co. 1:30-31 Col. 2:3 Mt. 7:7ff
- C. I am burdened for some here. I Ki. 18:21 Ps. 119:2

#### Discussion questions

1. What is wisdom?
2. Who needs wisdom? Why?
3. How is wisdom obtained?
4. How is our need for wisdom similar to our need for the gospel?
5. Why are our thoughts about God's nature crucial, if we are to gain wisdom?
6. What does it mean to ask in faith?
7. What kind of doubt is James condemning?
8. In what areas of life do you struggle with double-mindedness?
9. Why do we sometimes not receive what we seek from God?
10. How does this passage point to Christ?