

**Sermon or Lesson: James 1:5-8** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

THEME: Acquiring Wisdom From God

INTRO: What do you do when you need wise advice about some matter? Do you go to the Internet, or to popular authors' books, or to a relative, or to your spouse, or to an expert in that field? Do you ever stop and ask God for wisdom concerning the matter? Do you search the Scriptures to find relevant principles from God?

Let's look at what God has to say about acquiring wisdom from Him.

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READ: James 1:5-8

v.5 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why ask God for wisdom? And, should we bypass getting wisdom from God and instead go to other sources for wisdom?]

SECTION POINT: When we encounter situations or face trials of many kinds in life in which we need wisdom (v.2), we "should ask God" for it, because:

- - He tells us we "should ask".
  - - He offers to give wisdom "generously".
  - He gives generously "without finding fault", for perhaps such things as:
    - - - - past failures to heed wisdom from God;
    - - - - unworthiness to receive wisdom based on merit;
    - - - - present failure to remember past disclosed wisdom.
  - - By implication, His wisdom is supreme over all human-generated wisdom.
  - - By implication, His wisdom is worthy to be considered first, over other sources.
  - - By implication, His wisdom has the potential to be backed by His power (v.7 "will receive").
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v.6 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why would God withhold dispensing wisdom to someone who doubts?]

SECTION POINT: When asking God for wisdom, there is the catch that He will withhold dispensing wisdom to someone who "doubts" and does not "believe".

"doubting" = Strong's #1252 "doubting; to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) to oppose"

God withholds dispensing wisdom because:

- - The person is "blown and tossed" or swayed by whatever advice is currently being given to him/her, thereby giving each advice-giver equal or more credibility than God.
- - By extension, the person staggers back and forth between belief and unbelief.
- - By extension, the person possesses a fundamental lack of trust of God and/or rebellion to Him.

- - By implication, failure to adhere to God's wisdom disparages God's character and sovereignty.

[Lesson Question: What can be sources that generate doubt or failure to respond wisely?]

Some common sources that generate doubt or failure to respond wisely could be:

- - other people's opinion(s);
  - - lack of clear thinking; e.g. emotions can cloud our thinking;
  - - deficient abilities to analyze the problem accurately;
  - - insufficient information or skewed perspective that hinders analyzing the problem accurately;
  - - immaturity;
  - - lack of experience;
  - - pride;
  - - unwillingness to admit deficiencies.
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## v.7 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why enlarge the withholding to include "anything"?]

SECTION POINT: For the person who asks for wisdom from God but doubts, God expands the withholding to include that the person "will not receive anything from the Lord".

This could be because:

- - God strongly opposes the unbelief and possibly worldliness of such a person.
  - - That person apparently has no reasonable excuse for not exclusively and wholeheartedly adhering to God's wisdom.
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## v.8 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why would the situation where a person who wavers back and forth between faith and doubt when asking God for wisdom translate into or be indicative of that person being "unstable in all he does"?]

SECTION POINT: God pronounces such a doubting person as being "double-minded" and as being "unstable in all he does".

"double-minded" = Strong's #1374 "two-souled; two-spirited, i.e. vacillating (in opinion or purpose)"

"unstable" = Strong's #0182 "undependable; inconstant"; *AHD* = "1. changing or varying, especially often and without discernible pattern or reason; 2. fickle; faithless"

- - By implication, this kind of thinking and belief is unacceptable and useless to God.
- - Apparently, a person's spiritual instability produces adverse effects and results on other non-spiritual areas of his/her thinking (and perhaps vice versa), such as his/her

psychological well-being, his/her emotional stability, his/her mental-processing capabilities, his/her reasoning capabilities, his/her problem-solving skills, and etc.  
- - From the nature of God's pronouncements here, God places the responsibility for this "unstable" and "double-mindedness" solely on the person himself/herself - that he/she is making this choice, choosing to think in this way.

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BIG IDEA: God is ready and willing to give wisdom generously to all, with two conditions: 1. you have to ask; and 2. you have to have faith that He is responding to your request and giving you wisdom, without doubting Him.

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#### APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you value wisdom enough to ask God for it?
  - - Do you accurately self-assess yourself to realize that you do not have enough wisdom?
  - - Do you fathom that there is a huge difference between man's wisdom and God's wisdom?
  - - Do you prioritize acquiring God's wisdom first and foremost over acquiring man's wisdom?
  - - Do you search the Scriptures to find relevant principles from God?
  
  - - Put it on your prayer list to every day ask God for wisdom, as you are encouraged and directed to do in verse 5. Do not doubt. Believe God will give it generously because He declares He will.
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#### Works Cited:

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