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Are You In Need Of Wisdom?

JAMES 1:5-8

Introduction

1. Tonight, I would like begin by sharing a poem with you.
2. It was written by Corrie ten Boom, a WWII German concentration camp survivor.
3. She, along with her family saved an estimated 800 Jewish people and resistance workers from the Nazis.
4. After being betrayed by an informant, Corrie, her sister, Betsie, and her elderly father, Casper, were arrested and imprisoned.
5. She, alone, survived their captivity.

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6. This poem is titled, "Life Is But A Weaving"

*My life is but a weaving,
Between my God and me;
I cannot choose the colors.
He weaveth steadily.*

*Oft' times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper
And I the under side.*

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*Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,*

*Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why,*

*The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver,
In the pattern He has planned.*

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*He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.*

— Corrie ten Boom

7. This old poem expresses the truth that, in this life, we never fully understand the blending of joys and sorrows in our lives because we see only the underside of the tapestry.
8. It is only at our death, when the loom is finally still, and we stand before God, that He will turn the canvas over and allow us to see what He has done.
9. While God is in the process of His weaving, we must not think that we cannot understand anything of what He is doing.
10. Neither must we think that this mixture of joys and trials in our lives is beyond our comprehension.
11. As we see from James' opening remarks in his letter, our trials develop endurance which has as its ultimate goal our maturity and completion so that we should be "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (v. 4b).
12. The problem is that when we are in the midst of these trials, it is difficult for us to understand what is going on or how it will benefit us.
13. For this reason, James connects the two sections of Scripture (1:2-4 and 1:5-8) together in order to share with those of us who are suffering how we may obtain wisdom and move victoriously through our trials.

14. The life of James' own half-brother (Jesus) was one "of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).
15. If anyone should know, He should.

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I. Wisdom For The Asking

A. THIS WISDOM IS NOT KNOWLEDGE

1. Wisdom is far more than the accumulation of information.
2. While mankind has learned how to travel faster than the speed of sound, we still need wisdom because we keep traveling in the wrong direction.
3. We have also amassed a tremendous amount of information about the world, but we still do not live any better in the world.¹

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B. SO, WHAT IS THIS WISDOM?

1. Understanding for living.
2. The *wisdom* which God supplies for living surpasses all earthly wisdom.
3. It is practical wisdom, both for the here and now, and for the eternal.
4. The Greek grammarian, A. T. Roberston, called it "the practical use of knowledge."
5. F. J. A. Hort described it as "that endowment of heart and mind which is needed for right conduct in life."
6. According to Ralph Martin, James' readers would have understood wisdom to be "practical righteousness in everyday living."

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C. WHERE DO WE FIND SUCH WISDOM?

1. It was Job, who long ago, asked the question, "where can wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? (Job 28:12)

¹Lehman Strauss, *James, You Brother* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1972), p. 19.

2. As he discussed its whereabouts, he said . . .
 - a. “Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, nor can silver be weighed as its price” (v. 15)
 - b. “The price of wisdom is above rubies” (v. 18)
3. He went on to say, “God understands its way, and He knows its place. For He looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.” (Job 28:23,24)
4. He finally concluded by saying, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom” (Job 28:28a)
5. This is a recurring theme in the Old Testament
 - a. The psalmist, in Psalm 111:10, wrote “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.” (Psalm 111:10)
 - b. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10)
6. According to the apostle Paul, this wisdom, for us as Christians, is connected to Christ who “became to us wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

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1. Paul said of God, “He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:25b).
2. Jesus told Nicodemus that God, “gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
3. “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)
4. So. If God gives us all these things, is it not reasonable that He wants us

to have wisdom as well?

[You and I will become wise if we will seek the wisdom which God offers to us. We need to learn to ask. But this wisdom isn't just for anyone. James goes on to tell us that . . .]

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II. Wisdom Is For The Believing

A. A PREREQUISITE FOR WISDOM — FAITH

1. Faith and doubt cannot co-exist side by side; they are polar opposites.
2. This is why the wise king of Israel known as Solomon wrote so long ago,

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5–6, NASB95)

3. So it is, that faith manifests itself in stability, steadiness in life's storms (cf. Matthew 14:31)

“Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

4. The person who lacks faith bounces back and forth, blown around by . . .
 - a. the winds of adversity
 - b. the winds of false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;” (Ephesians 4:14, NASB95)

5. Faith rests assured that God is in control and that He will use these various trials to bring about strength in our lives.

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B. THE “TWO-SOULED” MAN

1. James describes this man as “a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways”

(James 1:8)

2. Literally, he is a “two-souled” man.
3. This man which James is describing is a Christian, someone who is an “heir of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7)
4. But because of his doubting, unstable, wavering life, he will receive no wisdom to help him handle his troubles.

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5. Faith is so very important in our lives; the writer of the letter to the Hebrew Christians once wrote, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)
6. We must believe in the all powerful, holy God of Scripture — that He is more than able to give to His own.
7. What James is telling us here is that if we find ourselves in trials and we ask for wisdom, truly believing, God will give it to us!
8. But, is God demanding that our faith be perfect? No!
 - a. Abraham would never have been called “father of the faithful” because he doubted.
 - b. Likewise, Moses’ faith was not perfect.
 - c. Jesus honored the struggling faith of a father whose son was possessed by an evil spirit.
 - 1) When he reached out to Jesus to help his son, he said, “If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” (Mark 9:22b).
 2. Jesus’ response to this father was, “If You can? All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark (9:23).
 3. Mark tells us “Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)

Conclusion

1. Are you struggling with trials in your life?
2. Are you trying to understand how these trials will make you mature and complete?
3. Do you need wisdom from God?
4. If so, *ask* God for wisdom, *believing*, and you will receive it.
5. Long ago, Solomon wrote these words:

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Wisdom has built her house,
She has hewn out her seven pillars;
She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine;
She has also set her table;
She has sent out her maidens, she calls
From the tops of the heights of the city:

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‘Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!’
To him who lacks understanding she says,
‘Come, eat of my food
And drink of the wine I have mixed.
‘Forsake your folly and live,
And proceed in the way of understanding.”
(Proverbs 9:1-6)

6. Will you heed wisdom’s call?