

INTRODUCTION.

AS WE NOTED LAST TIME, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ James suggested ~ that testing ~ is intended to produce ~ a wholeness of character ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that lacks nothing ~ in the array of virtues ~ that define Godly character.

▶▶ Of course, ~ for testing to produce the intended result, ~ believers must respond to it with ~ ¶¶

▷▷ confidence in God ~ and determination to endure

IN 1: ~ 5-8, ~ JAMES DISCUSSES A KEY VIRTUE ~ IN THIS RANGE OF QUALITIES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that characterizes Godly character.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ wisdom.

▶▶ James is pointing out ~ that this ~ is a key, ~ or, ~ perhaps the key ~ attribute ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that Christians ~ must not lack ~ as we move ~ toward spiritual maturity.

▶▶ Jesus touches on the importance of possessing wisdom ~ in [Matt. 10:16](#).

▷▷ Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents ~ and innocent as doves. ¶¶ 1/10

▶▶ Solomon as well ~ drives home the importance ~ of having wisdom.

▷▷ Prov. 4:5-9, ~ Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.

▶▶ Perhaps we see ~ in just these two passages ~ why James singled this virtue out.

LET'S OUTLINE THIS PARAGRAPH, ~ JAMES 1:5-8.

▶▶ In this paragraph, ~ James does the following.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ he realistically recognizes ~ the believer's need for wisdom (v. 5a).

▷▷ If any of you lacks wisdom.

▶▶ Next, ~ he ~ points out ~ how ~ the believer must get ~ the needed wisdom (v. 5b).

▷▷ Let him ask God.

▶▶ He then states ~ what kind of giver God is. (v. 5c),

▷▷ Who gives generously to all without reproach,

▶▶ Next, ~ James assures us ~ God will give us this wisdom that we need. (v. 5d).

▷▷ And it will be given him. ↴ 2/10

▶▶ But then James immediately notes ~ a condition we must meet in order ~ for wisdom to be given to us.

▷▷ The attitude for effective praying ~ must be present, ~ *verse 6a*.

↳↳ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting. ⇔⇔ I.e., ~ given if this condition is met.

▶▶ Elaborates about the doubter, ~ 6b-8. ⇔⇔ <sup>6b</sup> for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

LET'S BEGIN TO ~ BREAK THIS DOWN. ⇔⇔ 5a-c today.

▶▶ <sup>5a</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, <sup>5b</sup> let him ask God, <sup>5c</sup> who gives generously to all without reproach.

IN VERSE 5a, ~ JAMES REALISTICALLY RECOGNIZES ~ the believer's need ~ for wisdom.

THE TYPE OF GREEK CONDITIONAL STATEMENT FOUND HERE, ~ "IF ANY" ~ ¶¶

▶▶ does not imply doubt ~ concerning the reality of the need.

▷▷ Rather ~ it assumes ~ the reality of the need ~ and views it ~ as a standing fact.

▷▷ It's as if James said, ~ Since, ~ or seeing, ~ that you lack wisdom.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ If any of you ~ indicates ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that this consciousness of a wisdom shortage ~ must come ~ as an individual recognition. ¶¶ 3/10

▷▷ James gives us ~ no suggestion ~ that there are individual exceptions ~ to this need.

▷▷ The degree ~ of the need may vary, ~~ ↴↴

↵↵ but all believers ~ have a need ~ for this wisdom ~ that James is talking about.

JAMES IS NOT TALKING ABOUT ~ JUST ANY KIND OF WISDOM HERE.

▶▶ He's definitely not talking about earthly wisdom.

▶▶ In fact, ~ we're warned against depending on human understanding.

▷▷ Prov. 3:5, ~~ Trust in the Lord ~ with all your heart, ~ and do not lean ~ on your own understanding.

▶▶ Why? ~~ Suggest at least 3 reasons.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ finite.

↵↵ Job 38-41 . . . .

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ imperfect so understanding is faulty.

↵↵ Job's counselors . . . .

↵↵ Disciples and man born blind . . . .

↵↵ Prov. 14:12 and 16:25. ⇔⇔ There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. ↴↴ 4/10

▷▷ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ our sinful nature ~ interferes with thinking processes, ~ Jer. 17:9 (NIV).

↳↳ The heart is deceitful above all things ~ and beyond cure. ~ Who can understand it?

▶▶ That doesn't instill a whole lot of confidence ~ in our wisdom ~ now does it?

▷▷ Rather, ~ it points out a large capacity within us ~ for self-deception, ~ doesn't it?

### JAMES IS TALKING ABOUT ~ SPIRITUAL/BIBLICAL ~ WISDOM.

▶▶ Spiritual wisdom ~ means more ~ than intellectual knowledge.

▷▷ It is less ~ "knowing that" ~ than ~ "knowing how."

▶▶ Biblical wisdom ~ is the understanding that enables believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to view history and their lives ~ from God's perspective.

▶▶ Additionally, ~ spiritual wisdom ~ is the moral discernment ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that enables the believer ~ to meet life and its trials ~ ¶¶

↳↳ with decisions and actions ~ consistent with God's will.

▶▶ What's more, ~ it is the ability ~ to discern ~ right from wrong ~ and good from evil.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ it is the power ~ that enables a person ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to do and say ~ the right thing ~ at the right time. ¶¶ 5/10

▶▶ And, ~ biblical wisdom is the understanding ~ that enables a believer ~ 77

▷▷ to avoid the paths of wickedness ~ and to live a life of righteousness.

▶▶ Overlap . . . .

▶▶ All of this ~ points ~ to the importance of this wisdom ~ and ~ to why we need it.

IN VERSE 5b, ~ POINTS OUT ~ HOW ~ THE BELIEVER MUST GET ~ the needed wisdom.

LET HIM ASK GOD.

▶▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> person imperative . . . . ⇔⇔ If any of you lacks wisdom, ~ you must ~ ask God.

▶▶ The 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sing. vb. ~ marks it ~ as the duty ~ of each ~ individual believer.

▶▶ Ongoing action.

▷▷ You, ~ each believer, ~ must ~ continually ~ ask God.

↪↪ I.e., ~ it is a standing duty to be performed ~ whenever ~ there is a conscious need for wisdom.

EACH BELIEVER ~ MUST ~ ASK GOD ~ FOR THIS WISDOM YOU NEED.

▶▶ Any failure to ask ~ implies ~ that the believer ~ is blind to his/her need.

▶▶ But ~ he who has a constant longing for wisdom ~ will persistently ~ pray for it. 11 6/10

NOTICE HERE ~ JAMES DOES NOT SAY, ~ "FOR THIS WISDOM, ~ GO AND ASK . . . ."

▶▶No, ~ biblical wisdom ~ can be gained ~ only ~ by asking our heavenly Father for it.

▷▷This is why ~ we must ask him for it.

▶▶As James says later in chapter 1, ~ God is ~ ¶¶

▷▷the Father of the heavenly lights, ~ from whom comes ~ every good and perfect gift.

▶▶The entire twenty-eighth chapter of Job ~ is devoted ~ to this theme.

▷▷Job asks, ~ *But where shall wisdom be found? ~ And where is the place of understanding?*

▷▷After reviewing the failure ~ of all sorts of sources, ~ he comes in the end ~ ¶¶

↳↳to affirm ~ the exclusive claims of God.

→→Job asserts, ~ *God understands the way to it ~ and he alone ~ knows where it dwells* (NIV).

▷▷And he finishes by saying, ~ *Behold, ~ the fear of the Lord, ~ that is wisdom, ~ and to turn away from evil ~ is understanding.*

↳↳Fear of the Lord ~ does not mean afraid of.

→→Rather, ~ it means ~ to recognize God's character ~ ¶¶

↳↳and respond by ~ revering, ~ trusting, ~ worshiping, ~ obeying, ~ and ~ serving ~ Him. ¶¶ 7/10

IN VERSE 5c, ~ JAMES TELLS US ~ WHAT KIND OF GIVER GOD IS.

[God] ~ gives ~ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ generously ~ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ to all ~ and 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ without reproach. ⇔⇔ Unpack.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ GOD GIVES GENEROUSLY.

▶▶ The form of the Greek verb for "gives" ~ points out two things about God.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ it stresses that ~ giving ~ is the ~ inherent nature ~ of God.

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ it sets forth ~ God's generous nature as ~ continually ~ giving.

▷▷ He has revealed Himself ~ as a God ~ who is ~ continually and generously ~ giving to humans.

▶▶ His giving includes ~ everything ~ that is good.

▷▷ If you then, ~ who are evil, ~ know how to give good gifts to your children, ~ how much more ~ will your Father who is in heaven ~ give good things to those who ask him!

▷▷ For the Lord God ~ is a sun and shield; ~ the Lord bestows ~ favor and honor. ~ No good thing ~ does he withhold ~ from those who walk uprightly {Ps. 84:11}.

▶▶ It is this view of the nature of God ~ that encourages the believer ~ to come boldly to God ~ with their requests.

▷▷ In Rom. 8:32, ~ Paul writes, ~ He who did not spare his own Son ~ but gave him up for us all, ~ how will he not also with him ~ graciously give us all things?

↳↳ "Graciously" here ~ means ~ to give or grant graciously and generously, ~ with the implication of good will ~ on the part of the giver. ⇔⇔ Throne of grace. ↴ 8/10



(5c) 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ JAMES SAYS ~ GOD GIVES ~ TO ALL.

▶▶ "To all" ~ restricted ~ as to scope ~ by context. ⇔⇔ believers . . . .

▶▶ "To all" here ~ is restricted ~ as to scope ~ in two other ways as well.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup> ~ it does not mean ~ all people, ~ saved and unsaved.

↳↳ The Lord does not ~ hear or honor ~ the requests of unbelievers.

→→ Unless, ~ of course, ~ it's a prayer for salvation.

↳↳ Prov. 15:8 (NIV), ~ The Lord detests ~ the sacrifice of the wicked, ~ but the prayer of the upright ~ pleases him.

↳↳ So, ~ believers are in view.

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ to all ~ is further restricted ~ to those believers ~ who ask . . . .

(5c) AND 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ JAMES SAYS ~ GOD GIVES ~ WITHOUT REPROACH.

▶▶ The grammar of the Greek text indicates ~ that God ~ permanently abstains ~ from such a practice.

▷▷ We never ~ have to worry ~ that this will happen, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ no matter how many times we go to him for help.

→→ We'll always ~ be warmly welcomed ~ at his throne. ¶¶ 9/10

▶▶ God gives without reproach, ~ James declares.

▷▷ Our heavenly Father does not ~ respond to our petition ~~ and then ~ heap insults upon us ~ for asking.

▷▷ He does not ~ offensively recall ~ the benefits he's already given us ~~ or ~ rebuke us ~ if we ask for more.

▷▷ He does not ~ give ~ in a way ~ that humiliates the receiver.

▷▷ He does not ~ scold us ~ if we've inadequately used ~ his former gifts.

▷▷ And he does not ~ rebuke us ~ for our repeated lack of wisdom.

▷▷ The Lord's generosity ~ is measured by what He designs ~ and not ~ by what we deserve. ⇒⇒ **We actually don't deserve anything from him.**

▶▶ All of this means ~ we can be honest ~ with our heavenly Father in our prayers.

▷▷ And we can pour out ~ our deepest feelings to him ~ without fear.

▷▷ Our heavenly Father ~ accepts us.

▷▷ And ~ he understands ~ our weaknesses.

▷▷ So we can come to him, ~ not just for wisdom, ~ but for ~ whatever ~ we need.

▷▷ So we must never hesitate ~ to boldly come ~ to the throne of grace.