

INTRODUCTION.

CURRENTLY - JAMES 1:5-8.

▶▶ In this paragraph, ~ James discusses a key, ~ or, ~ perhaps the key ~ attribute ~ ¶¶

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

→→ And i.e., ~ wisdom.

IN ORDER TO KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN VIEW, ~ LET'S ONCE AGAIN OUTLINE THE ¶.

▶▶ 1st, ~ James notes ~ the believer's need for spiritual wisdom in [verse 5a](#).

▶▶ In [verse 5b](#), ~ he ~ points out that we must continually ask God for it.

▷▷ And in doing so, ~ he shows us that God alone ~ is the source ~ of spiritual wisdom.

▷▷ Remember Job's questions.

↪↪ But where shall wisdom be found? ~ And where is the place of understanding?

▷▷ And his conclusion.

↪↪ God understands the way to it ~ and he alone ~ knows where it dwells. ¶¶ 1/10

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

▷▷ He gives ~ generously, ~ to all believers who ask, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ and without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging response.

▶▶ Next, in [verse 5d](#), ~ James promises ~ that God ~ will not fail to respond ~ to the request for wisdom.

▶▶ 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., ~ wisdom given ~ if the attitude ~ for effective praying ~ is present.

▶▶ Then finally, ~ he elaborates on the doubter, ~ [6b-8](#).

▷▷^{6b} For the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

LET'S TAKE UP VERSES 5d-6a TODAY.

▶▶^{5d} and it ~ [i.e., ~ wisdom] ~ will be given him. ^{6a} But let him ask in faith, with no doubting

IN VERSE 5d, ~ JAMES PROMISES ~ THAT GOD ~ WILL NOT FAIL TO RESPOND ~ to the request for wisdom. ¶¶ 2/10

AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

▶▶ This positive assurance ~ encourages ~ prayer for wisdom ~~ and, ~ prayer in general.

▶▶ The form of the verb ~ places God on record ~ that He will respond favorably ~ ¶¶

▷▷ when we turn to Him ~ in our need.

"AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU" ~ IS MOST LIKELY AN INTENTIONAL ECHO ~ ¶¶

▶▶ of Jesus' statement, ~ Matt. 7:7a ~~ Ask ~ and it will be given to you.

▶▶ Jesus goes on in this section of the Sermon on the Mount ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to ground God's response to our prayer ~ in his character.

▶▶ He says ~ human fathers give good things to their children.

▶▶ How much more, ~ Jesus reasons, ~ will "your Father in heaven ~ give good gifts to those who ask him!"

▶▶ James follows the same pattern.

▷▷ God gives us wisdom when we ask, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ because ~ he gives generously, ~ to all believers who ask, ~ ¶¶

→→ and without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging response. ¶¶ 3/10

BUT NOTICE ~ WHAT JAMES DID NOT STATE.

▶▶ When the answer would be given, ~ only ~ that it would be. ⇨⇨ **The promise is clear.**

▷▷ God will give the answer ~ in His own way ~ and ~ at the time He chooses.

↪↪ When we pray ~ we must ~ be sensitive and patient.

NOW, ~ IN THINKING ABOUT OR DISCUSSING ~ ANSWERED PRAYER, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we need to keep the following in mind.

▶▶ Often ~ our prayers are not answered ~ as originally desired.

▷▷ One of the reasons this is so ~ is because ~ we do not share God's perspective ~ ¶¶

↪↪ in knowing what is ultimately ~ a good gift for us.

▷▷ We are especially tempted ~ to think ~ of the values ~ of this world, ~¶¶

↪↪ rather ~ than spiritual values.

▷▷ If we begin to look at prayer ~ through the grid ~ of spiritual values ~ ¶¶

↪↪ we would be much less frustrated in our prayer life.

JAMES ASSURES US HERE ~ IN VERSE 5d ~ ¶¶

▶▶ God will give us wisdom ~ when we pray for it. ¶¶ 4/10

OF COURSE, ~ ONE OF THE WAYS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that God answers our prayer for wisdom ~ is through His word.

▶▶ In Ps. 19:7-11 ⇔⇔ Ps. 119:97-100, 104, 130**

**HOWEVER, ~ THIS ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYER ~ DOES NOT MEAN ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that God ~ is some kind of a dispensing machine ~ ¶¶

▷▷ into which ~ we put a prayer ~ and out comes ~ whatever we select.

▶▶ The promise of answered prayer ~ makes its spiritual demands ~ upon the one asking.

▷▷ James points ~ to the necessary attitude ~ for effective praying.

VERSE 6a ~ BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, WITH NO DOUBTING.

▶▶ 3rd pers. impv ⇔⇔ But he ~ must ~ ask in faith ~ without doubting.

▷▷ No other way to be effective in our prayers.

▶▶ There are 2 other facts ~ we can glean from the form of the Greek vb. for ~ he must ask.

▷▷ 1st, ~ James sets forth ~ a standing demand on God's part ~ if prayer is to be answered.

↪↪ Every time we pray, ~ it must be ~ in faith w/ no doubting. ¶¶ 5/10

▷▷ And 2nd, ~ It indicates that ~ each believer ~ individually ~ ¶¶

↳↳ must meet the condition ~ to get his/her prayer answered.

→→ No exceptions ~ are made.

HERE IS THE MESSAGE THAT JAMES IS GETTING ACROSS.

▶▶ Believers, ~ each one of you, ~ every time you pray ~ you must ask in faith, ~ with no doubting.

▶▶ And the application ~ is much wider ~ than asking for wisdom.

▷▷ Whenever ~ and for whatever ~ believers pray, ~ we must ask in faith, ~ with no doubting.

BELIEVERS, ~ EACH ONE OF YOU, ~ EVERY TIME YOU PRAY ~ YOU ~ ¶¶

1st, ~ MUST ASK IN FAITH, ~ and 2nd, ~ WITH NO DOUBTING.

FIRST, ~ WHENEVER ~ AND FOR WHATEVER ~ BELIEVERS PRAY, ~ we must ask in faith.

FAITH HERE ~ IS NOT ~ A GENERAL TERM ~ FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

▶▶ Neither ~ does it refer here ~ to the body of doctrinal truth ~ to which we adhere.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

RATHER, ~ IN THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF VERSES 5-8 ~ FAITH, ~ OR BELIEF, ~ means ~ "confidence in prayer." ¶¶ 6/10

▶▶It means the petitioner's faith, ~ his belief and trust, ~ 77

▷▷that God will heed his prayer, ~ and ~ grant it ~ or ~ only in his superior wisdom ~ deny it.

↪↪That would cover ~ all prayer requests.

▶▶In the immediate context, ~ it is referring ~ to the unwavering trust ~ 77

▷▷that God will give the petitioner ~ wisdom.

▶▶Behind this, ~ in a general sense ~ is the unwavering confidence ~ that ~ God is ~ who he says he is.

▷▷And that ~ he is generous ~ 77

↪↪and that ~ he gives ~ without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging ~ response.

HEB. 11:6 (NIV) SUMS IT UP QUITE WELL.

▶▶(NIV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, ~ 77

▷▷because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

▶▶Faith includes belief ~ in God's existence ~ 77

▷▷and especially ~ in God's trustworthiness ~ to keep his promise ~ to reward his followers. 77 7/10

JAMES, ~ OF COURSE, ~ REFLECTS JESUS' TEACHING ~ IN MATT. 21:21-22 (CSB).

▶▶ Note Jesus' response ~ to the disciples' amazement ~ at the withering of the fig tree.

▶▶ CSB ~ Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

THIS TEXT IS A FAVORITE ~ WITH THOSE FALSE TEACHERS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ who claim ~ that God has promised ~ "health and wealth" ~ to every Christian.

▷▷ If only his or her faith is strong enough.

▶▶ But ~ neither Jesus nor James ~ intends to give Christians ~ a blank check ~ ¶¶

▷▷ on which we can write ~ whatever we want ~ and expect God to back it up.

▶▶ The "whatever you ask for" ~ is clearly restricted ~ by Scripture elsewhere.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 5:14-15 (NIV), ~ This is the confidence we have ~ in approaching God: ~ that if we ask anything ~ according to his will, ~ he hears us. ~ And if we know that he hears us ~ whatever we ask [i.e., ~ in his will] ~ we know ~ that we have what ~ we asked of him.

↪↪ Our requests ~ must fall ~ within the standard of God's will.

↪↪ God will not answer prayers ~ that violate ~ His character or His will ~ ¶¶

→→ for the one praying or for those who are the objects of our prayers. ¶¶ 8/10

↪↪ When praying according to God's will, we are assured that he hears us.

→→ The idea of the Greek word for "hears" ~ is not merely that He listens.

↪↪ But ~ that He listens ~ favorably.

▷▷ Jn. 16:23-24. ⇨⇨ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

↪↪ Requests asked in Jesus' name ~ are requests ~ ¶¶

→→ that the believer knows Jesus would be pleased to answer, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ requests that are in accordance with the Father's will.

↪↪ Any such request will be given.

BACK TO JAMES AND VERSE 6a.

NEXT, ~ WHENEVER ~ and for whatever ~ believers pray, ~ we must ~ ask with no doubting.

THE DOUBTER ~ DOES NOT HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE ~ that God will pay attention ~ to his or her prayer.

▶▶ The form of the Greek verb ~ gives the picture ~ of a mind so filled with uncertainty and indecision ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that it cannot ~ make any choice between the alternatives ~ ¶¶

↪↪ with which it is faced. ¶¶ 9/10

▷▷ I.e., ~ whether or not to believe ~ that God will be moved ~ or ~ that God is able ~ to grant the request being made.

▶▶ The doubting believer ~ doesn't possess an unwavering confidence ~ that ~ God is ~ who he says he is.

▷▷ They don't have ~ an unwavering trust ~ that he is generous ~ ~ 77

↳↳ or an unwavering belief ~ that God gives ~ without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging ~ response.

THE DOUBTER ~ IS WAVERING BETWEEN OPINIONS.

▶▶ "Is God able and willing? ⇔⇔ Maybe God's not able and willing. ⇔⇔ Maybe he is." ⇔⇔
Can I really rely on him?"

▶▶ Subsequently ~ the doubter ~ calls God's character and promises ~ into question.

▷▷ And that ~ is a very dangerous place to be in.

▷▷ Because it opens the door to the world, ~ the enemy, ~ and our sin nature.

↳↳ Who are more than happy ~ to come in ~ & get us to side against God.

QUICK NOTE: ~ NOT OCCASIONAL DOUBTING ⇔⇔ A chronic doubter.

CONCLUSION.

MY . . . , ~ GOD IS ~ WHO HE SAYS HE IS. ⇔⇔ He is ~ generous.

▶▶ Does give ~ without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging ~ response. 10/10