



Lesson 9 August 1st, 2020

## Faith and Wisdom

Study Scripture – James 1:1-11

Background Scripture – James 1

### Key Verse:

*“If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of god, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to you.”*

**James 1:5**

### INTRODUCTION

The times in which we live is full of distortions, fantasies, and falsehoods. Truth, transparency and honesty are not something that is prized. We often hear about virtual identities and experiences instead of flesh and blood identities and experiences. It is often pointed out that the entertainment industry creates more and more elaborate fantasies which displace the real world while those that are strategists proud boastfully how they can distort the truth.

The world spoken of in the Book we will now study is certainly not as technologically advanced as our world, but sadly human nature then was the same as it is now. The world then rejected the truth and was quick to persecute those that were seeking the truth.

Scripture has a great deal to say about the world that has as its god materialism, money, possessions, and power. In this world, we are taught that the economic system will ensure its promises that if we make enough money, get the right goods, or somehow get the right experiences, our life will be much better. So we try to find our satisfaction and good feelings about ourselves through our possessions and our experiences, and from what we have achieved by gaining the things of this world.

This corrupting influence of the world works to take our eyes off the things that really matter and put them on the short-lived and short-lasting things of this earth.

Mankind has always been told that human experience is full of pain and difficulty, struggle and disappointment, frustration grief and sorrow. Hence the appeal of the myth of the good life and the way life ought to be.

But our Study today tells us that we should gain God's perspective on how we look at life and on

**“the issue of possessions. We know that as followers of Christ we are supposed to be different.** We have been called out of the way of the world to look at life differently, to see spiritual reality. We are called to look at things the way God looks at things. We must as the

people in the early church struggled believe that there is an all- powerful and loving God who allows suffering and difficulties in our lives in order to purify us. God wants us to gain His perspective on the affairs of life.

So James has written a book which is practical, earthly, and straightforward. He wants us to look at the practical issues of life through the eyes of faith.

James tells us what we would encounter. There will be many and various trials. The problem is that most of us think that our troubles are worse than other peoples' problems until we meet someone who really has terrible problems and then we admit sometimes that we are glad that those troubles that those other people have are not our troubles.

The stress from James is that what we need to get through life is **wisdom**. He tells us how to get **wisdom**. We get it when we ask for it, and the key to asking for it is faith.

One writer tells us that

**Wisdom is the skill of living in a godly way, seeing life from God's perspective, discerning what God is doing. Interestingly enough, the source of that wisdom is God. It's not seminary or hard work. Many things in life help us get perspective, like conversations with others, and good books. God can use those, but ultimately the wisdom to discern what he is doing is a gift from him.**

Another writer adds: **A person with wisdom can make solid decisions.**

The Book of James seems to have been written to followers of Christ who were scattered all over the world from Jerusalem and places in Judea, facing the first blows of persecution against the early Church. They were therefore in exile suffering for the cause of Christ. But some believe that James was well aware that this Book or letter would be also applicable to the needs of Gentiles even though there were not too many Gentiles in the Christian church at the time when he was writing. But let us remember that there were proselytes that were attracted to Christianity from the first days of the preaching of the Apostles.

We know from history that in the early church there were wealthy people as well as poor people but the vast majorities of believers in the early church were from the lower classes not the upper classes. Many of them were slaves or ex-slaves. James had to bring a word from God to those who were in very humble circumstances as well as to those in the higher strata of society. He therefore had to ask believers no matter what their position in life was to make sure they had a certain perspective on their position.

It is very important for us to look at the definition of words such as "**ask**", "**believe**", "**doubt**", "**doubleminded**", "**praying**". and "**faith**".

This section we are studying therefore raises the "problem of unanswered prayer", for it is clear that people who are in distress, running from persecution, suffering, grappling with the harsh



pressures of life and persecution, and suffering poverty, would be praying to God for help. Our Study will look at that issue.

We accordingly cannot be surprised that the Book of James is one of the books of the Bible that initially faced delay in acceptance by the early church into the canon of Scripture. This Book along with Hebrews and one of the Epistles of John was considered to be among the disputed books, but many of the early church fathers, so-called, did quote from it and regarded it as Scripture. These Books contain tough doctrines and believers will often bristle at their teaching finding them very disturbing.

Many scholars regard this book as the earliest book of the entire New Testament written before A.D. 50 and the Jerusalem Council and before any of Paul's epistles.

Some have tended to regard James and Paul as teaching and holding contradictory positions, because James wrote about and stressed works in chapter 2:24 after a discussion that believers had no difficulty or qualms in practicing the serious sin of partiality and despising the poor. He wrote:

*"Ye see then how that by works of man is justified and not by faith alone".*

At the same time after a powerful discussion that it was the grace of God alone which saved men, Paul wrote in Romans 3:28,

*"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law".*

Though a close examination of the writings of both men reveals that they were complementary to each other rather than contradictory, some have propagated the idea that the book of James was not a powerful book to which one should pay close attention. This position is not sustainable, for it ignores the fact that Paul was dealing with the inner faith of a man's heart, a state which God sees and knows, while James was discussing the outward fruits of faith as men see them.

In fact, Jesus in Matthew 7: 16-21 had taught that one could distinguish between the true and false only by examining a man's fruit. There should be extreme caution in rejecting books of Scripture which deal with practical holiness before men. These books cannot be regarded lightly or rejected.

It is clear in Scripture that the people of the world need to see the love of God, the purity of life brought about by God, and the power of God in the lives of the people of God. Satan and his demons will do anything to destroy the holy walk of every believer before God and man. Satan will do anything in his power to change, subdue, modify, or destroy such a witness.

James writes in a simple and concise way, so that none of us can say that we do not understand what he's saying. Because of his simple, straightforward and convincing style we might be uncomfortable with what he says, but he hits the nail right on the head.

Practical holiness is an extremely important matter, and there was no conflict between James and Paul.



Remember therefore that we are looking at “*faith*” as properly understood, and “*wisdom*” as properly defined. There can be no real conflict between faith of the inner man which has been transformed by the Holy Spirit and the fruit that that person manifests.

That is of course the problem that the church has always faced. People want to talk the talk, but do not really want to walk the talk.

The book is considered to be written by James, the brother of Jesus Christ, a man who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God until after Jesus was resurrected. He did eventually begin to grow in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and he became a leader of the church in Jerusalem. (See Acts 15:13-22).

James was well acquainted with Scripture and stressed the proper behavior required of a servant of Jesus Christ. For him it was not sufficient to simply say ‘I’ believe. Our action should reflect our faith.

An examination of the book of James and the Sermon on the Mount shows remarkable similarities in emphasis. His discussion also rests quite heavily on the book of Proverbs and it is helpful, if we read Proverbs 10:19, 11:12-13, 13:3, and 17:28, as well as Ecclesiastes 5:2-3 with this Lesson. In the sections on anger we should pay attention to Proverbs 16:32, Proverbs 29:22 and Ecclesiastes 7:9.

James was obviously versed in Scripture and much of his exhortations to follow the word of God reiterates Exodus 13:3, Numbers 15:39, and Deuteronomy 6:10-12, among other Scriptures. As well, he repeated much of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah cautions to Israel.

## THE TEXT

Verse 1. In order to set the tone for what he was writing, James begins by describing himself in the very first verse of the chapter as a slave, a bondservant and one who was in permanent servitude to another. This was a very degrading position but James was not ashamed. When James said he was a servant he used the word *duolos* in Greek which actually means “slave”.

Note that this lesson is addressed to people of God, who consider themselves to be bondservants of God. Once this position is understood the exhortation of James that the believer be *doers of the word and not hearers only* is most logical.

He also made it clear that Jesus was his “Lord”, a word used by Hellenistic Jews as a name for God. It was this name that the Roman Emperors used in order to tell people of their deity. But James used it to stress that he considered Jesus as God. He thus spoke of himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is instructive to clearly understand James’ self-identification. If we are to regard ourselves as servants of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, our new position means that we have been taken out



of 'darkness', from slavery to Satan and sin, and transferred by the redemptive process into becoming 'a bond servant of Christ'. That servant has been purchased by Jesus Christ from the 'slave market of sin' to become the possession of Jesus; here clearly ranked with God as a co-equal. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 7:23).

Clearly the servant of God must necessarily be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James as well as Jesus his mother and other siblings had thought Jesus was crazy and in Mark 3:21 had tried to restrain him physically. John 7:9 says plainly that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him.

But he was changed when he had seen the risen Christ. 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that Jesus had appeared to Peter the denier, Paul the persecutor, and James the unbeliever, and they were all healed and changed spiritually.

There are several men named James mentioned in the New Testament but tradition says that the one who wrote the book was **James the Just, the** half-brother of Jesus and the brother of **Jude**. He was the James who led the Church in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15:13. Josephus called him James the Just. We are told

**"One of his nicknames was camel knees-he spent so much time in prayer on his knees that they were misshapen and calloused like a camel's. He called for serious discipleship on the part of his readers and held himself to the same standard."**

Verse 2. Before he even begins to exhort believers to be *doers of the word*, James proceeds to address the dispersed people of God. He addressed the 12 tribes scattered among the nation using a phrase which reminds us of Israel. But it is to be noted that he is talking about all Christians now, not just Jewish believers, for the Church is the scattered people of God just as Israel was, for we are scattered among non-believers and people who do not yet know the Lord Jesus Christ.

James jumps in to explain that there was a need for patient endurance in trials, for trials were inevitable. The child of God should expect to pass through many and various trials, admittedly a difficult teaching. But this is the way that God has chosen to produce the 'fruits' that He desires.

He does not refer to the creation of man or the fall of man. He does not refer to the Cross of Jesus or His resurrection or His return to glory. He does not talk about the New heaven and a New earth.

He simply relentlessly presses in front of us the crucial question whether or not our faith is evident in our lives.

The word "temptations" used in the old King James version is generally now translated as "trials" a word which means affliction, persecutions. This word is preferred because it does not imply demonic work. The word does not suggest that anything wrong has been done. These



are varied and manifold (many) tests believers undergo. They are not a sign of God's displeasure. 1 Peter 4:12 tells us that we should not consider these things strange. These tests produce patience, a virtue which helps in developing Christian character. God's goal is to develop perfection, that is, completeness with nothing lacking.

Trials are said to be inevitable and when we fall into these trials they should be the occasion for "joy" not resignation or discouragement. Trials have a valuable use and purpose. So for James as one writer says, **"Suffering is not an elective in life's curriculum: it is a required course"**.

The Apostle Peter says exactly the same thing in 1 Peter 4:12:  
**"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you"**

Faith is tested through trials, it is not produced by trials, but trials reveal what faith we do have. Faith according to Romans 10:17 *"...comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"*.

We tend to be discouraged when we are hit and blindsided by the unexpected reasons for suffering and so we cry out Why me? Why now? Why this?

But the reason that suffering is inevitable for Christians. It is because we are identified with Christ. The dispersed believers that James addresses now were suffering because they believed that Jesus was their Messiah. They were chased because of their religious faith and so they were religious refugees.

There will be different ways that people suffer as Christians. Some will be harassed, some demoted in the workplace, some fired from their jobs because they refused to do things that were not Christ honouring; some suffer from illnesses that don't seem to have an end, some suffer the pain and difficulty in failing marriages, some suffer anxiety from unemployment and uncertainty about being able to make ends meet, and some suffer because of the unexpected death of somebody they loved and depended on to survive. Some love someone that does not love them and some suffer from depression that they cannot get rid of. So the trials are very and many.

Verse 3. The key thing therefore is to **know**. **Knowing** is a very important word. As one writer reminds us:

**"It means experiential knowledge. When we understand and internalize spiritual reality, then we can respond to pain without discouragement. I'm not just talking about having a good, well thought out theology of suffering. What we need is God's perspective, and we are never going to have that without a relationship of loving intimacy with him, one that engenders trust in him"**.

When we know what is happening around us and we know God's purpose for the suffering this produces endurance.



Verse 4. By patient endurance we will move to completeness. During this time of testing all one needs is wisdom from God. Wisdom is as one writer states: **“a fixed, righteous order to which the wise man submits his life”**.

Understanding the necessity that we have to go through difficult times, for that will be spiritually productive, maturing and perfecting us, developing those character traits that God wants in us, will make things a little easier. When we understand that suffering is like refining fire, purifying us, preparing us for something great, taking out impurities out of us we should not simply be distressed by the fiery trials but should rejoice greatly so that we would be found as 1 Peter 1:6-7 states in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Therefore it is important that you never get an image of God in your mind as the kind of God rubbing His hands in glee ready to slap you with thunderbolts as He wonders if you would ever get purified. **Know** that your purification is an absolute certainty. God knows that you have all kinds of fleshly dependencies and sinful elements in your life and so since He knows that, He uses suffering to purge these dependencies and elements so that you will increasingly have pure faith. One writer describes what we go through and why:

**“In this process he (God) needs to separate God- confidence, or pure faith, from self-confidence and confidence in the things that we hang on to on our own terms to make life work for us. Perhaps it's confidence in material wealth, retirement plans, savings accounts, or investments. Perhaps it's confidence in some human relationships that give us worth and value and identity. Perhaps it's our own intellect. You get paid good money to be really smart in this valley. Planning, preparation, our backgrounds, or education, manipulation of other people when God turns up the heat, all those ugly dependencies come floating to the surface, and then God can skim them off the top. We can see them for what they are and repent of them”**.

Verse 5-6. James urges believers to understand God's view of life by studying His revelation, and ask God not only for knowledge, but for wisdom. Wisdom shows a person how to use knowledge. God gives this divine wisdom liberally and would never reproach anyone who asks Him for wisdom.

Note that Scripture's concept of wisdom is different from the idea of wisdom in the modern world. The world thinks that if you are well-educated, read a lot of books, know a lot of things you are wise. The world thinks highly of what they call a “resource person”. But Scripture tells us that wisdom is not really that kind of intellectual quality for it tells us that the most uneducated person can be wise. An uneducated person can have the skill of living life successfully and even when life's events are out of control and quite a mess and there is massive suffering going on, that person is able to align the truth of God into their lives and live life in a godly way.



God is willing and able to give us that kind of wisdom for He is that kind of God. He is a giving God and that is His nature. God is full of compassion and mercy. He wants to give us wisdom and the power to make difficult choices as we suffer. He wants to give us peace and to reduce the chaos and out of control things happening around us. So we are told we must ask God with full confidence for He is delighted to give wisdom to us.

Requests to God however must be made in faith, with no doubting God's ability or desire to give us His wisdom. One writer explains the problem of those who ask without faith as follows: **“Such a person's problems are not only subjective, feeling circumstances are directing him or her rather than God, but they will also be objective. He or she really is at the mercy of circumstances and events beyond our control. This type of inconsistent person resists God's work in his or her life. Rather than simply perfecting maturity in the person through his trials, God now also has to discipline (educate) him regarding his attitude toward his trials.”**

The *double minded* person has a divided allegiance and therefore is fickle, unsteady, staggering around like a drunken man. In the eyes of God this is not a good situation for that person.

To **believe** therefore means trusting God completely. It is knowing that God's perspective is the right one. We **ask** knowing that God will never think that we are idiots and will rebuke us for taking so long to come to Him.

When we **doubt** it means we are hesitating and second-guessing God, figuring out that maybe God's way is not the perfect way and we can make some modifications which would make things work out better. It really means you are questioning whether following God is really worth it. You think that your own ingenuity will make things better. So we are **double minded**. We don't really believe in God's goodness and we are not willing to do what God shows us to do.

If that is the case then the question is whether we really want to get wisdom from God. We might not really want to know God's answer to our entanglements. We therefore will end in confusion. One writer says that the **double minded is** literally “two- souled”. One soul is on the Earth, while the other one wishes heaven. He will not give up Earth but he does not want to let heaven go.

It is important to note that this is not the same as the position of that man in Mark 9:24 who said to Jesus: **Lord I believe; help my unbelief**”. He declared his belief but his faith was weak and he knew it so he appeal to Jesus for help. This was not therefore a **double minded man**.

We know that we are not completely free from doubt and we have all kinds of apprehensions. But this word really is a strong one meaning that if we are double-minded we really are not believing in God's goodness and not really willing to do what God shows us to do.



Verses 7-8. That two- souled person therefore cannot expect to obtain anything from God for he is unstable in all his ways and attitudes and behaviours. He really is on a journey away from God.

The warning therefore is that if we don't have the wisdom we need to help us in the time of suffering it is really because we do not abandon our self to the hands of God and pray committing to do whatever God wills for us. We are hedging our bets when we pray.

Verses 9-11. Both rich and poor should rejoice when they are passing through trials, for trials mean that the person is being lifted up by God, and being separated from the temporal. There is a blessing to those who endure temptations, for it is worth *the crown of life* which comes with success.

James therefore addresses the poor telling them to take pride in their “high position”. This is a rather strange statement for these are people who are poor living at a subsistence level and who will have to worry from one day to the next where their next meal is coming from. But James is alerting us to the fact that even a poor person can be totally materialistic in how they focus and how they look at life. When they do not have what they think they should have they want more. They are absorbed into getting what they don't have.

That is why when some people who are very poor manage to get out of their circumstances by traveling or getting a particular job they didn't expect to ever get and they begin to make a lot of money they begin to behave in some very strange ultra-materialistic ways. They focus on their material success and will never contribute to their former buddies but will blame those that they have left behind for their supposed lack of hard work and wisdom. That is the danger that James is scaring people away from. This is bad attitude which comes from a heart which does not appreciate their position in Christ.

So James is telling the poor that they must look at their position differently. They should not concentrate on what they don't have but consider that they have been placed in the life that they have in Christ and therefore have a high standing before God. This does not mean that they must not work hard and plan properly. If they ask God for wisdom God will give them the wisdom that they need to deal with the difficulties of life. He therefore warns the poor against asking improperly, doubting, and having little patience.

But James also has a word to the rich, ***But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position.***

One writer explains what this really means when he looks at the original language:

**“There’s a play on words here. The word for “low position” is really humiliation. It comes from the same root word as “humble circumstances”. The brother of humble circumstances is lifted high, and the brother who is high is humbled. The perspective that God wants for those who have been blessed materially is to take pride in their humiliation. What he means by that is that they are to understand that what they need to glory in is not their material**



**achievements-such things offer them nothing in the way of eternal good-but the fact that they are humbled before the cross like everyone else, men and women in need of a Saviour. No matter how much they earn or achieve, no matter how much power they acquire in this world, it gains them no influence in God's kingdom. But when they acknowledge the bankruptcy of their spirit, their absolute and total need of Christ's forgiveness, and their dependence on the loving grace and mercy of God the Father, at that moment they achieve true greatness”.**

In verse 11 therefore James shows us what possessions really are. The beautiful appearance of things will fade. The heat will wither the plant and the blossoms will fall. Beauty will be destroyed over time. Similarly the rich man will fade away though he strives to work hard in his business.

Wealth and power will give many toys and trappings but when we strive for that kind of glory and we wish we had more we will find that they are all empty. There is no lasting value to them. Even when we are working hard whatever we achieve will be fading away. We cannot take it with us and many times we can't even keep it when we are here on earth.

So James teaches us that our possessions, the things of this world have no real value in God's eternal kingdom. They are temporal. We might need them to live for we need food and clothing and a place to live but we can easily get caught up in the race to get more. But there is a danger in that. James warns us of that danger for he tells us of the picture of the scorching sun drying up the plants and the blossoms and they all finally blow away no matter how beautiful they looked.

Material possessions and what we achieve are temporary. They are temporary and the joy that they give us will only be temporary joy. What they buy for us is only temporary. That is what life is like when we rely on those things in this world to bring us fulfillment and security. It is all vanity. The only way out is to ask God to supply your needs and not worry about your life as much as we do as we work.

James teaches us that God will never entice us to evil. God is not to be blamed when our fleshly desires and the encouragement of the Devil entice us and we fall. Corrupt desires will always lead to sin and death. We should never like Esau consider the birthright to be of little value and go in the wrong direction. We should not blame God for our mistakes, for the real cause of our problem is our lust.

Satan tries to convince us that our corrupt desires will result in life and goodness. He is a liar whose real intent is to steal, kill and destroy, (see John 10).

With these teachings clearly stated, James now turns believers away from the deception of sin, and shows that God is the author of everything that is good. This realization will lead us to always 'doing' despite the circumstances, and not just 'hearing'.



He has told us that:

- There is good that comes from trials
- We can have comfort in trials because of who God is.
- Things do not happen haphazardly to Christians. God is the one who brings adversity into the lives of His people. There is meaning and purpose to anything that happens to believers.
- God is in control. He is sovereign.
- We can trust Him in trials for He uses trials to mature us and make us more like our Saviour.
- We should resist the doubts that the enemy throws in our minds when we are going through trials.
- Ask God for wisdom and keep on asking Him in faith.
- God is generous and will give us the wisdom that we need.
- If we yield to temptation, we sin, and cannot blame God.
- We do not sorrow as those who do not have hope.

## CONCLUSION

Most Christians are often disturbed by the possibility that God does not seem to always answer prayer. The general belief is that God answers prayer not in the way we want nor the way we thought He should, but He certainly answers in His own good way, in the way that is best for the believer. But there is more to it than that.

Scriptures tell us that there is such a thing as unscriptural prayer and God has not promised to answer requests that involve things contrary to His word. But we are told in 1 John 5:14 that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

We are also told that our prayers can be hindered by various types of sins and in Psalm 66:18 we are warned that if we regard wickedness in our hearts the Lord will not hear. Isaiah 59:1-2 supports that position.

We therefore have to be careful that we do not ask from wrong motives. But it is important to note that in addition James in his epistle warns us that the root of all sin is unbelief. This can create problems when we pray for He will hear but He will not answer them. One writer cautions us:

**“We must never think that our prayers are levers by which we can move God to do things that we want him to do, as if this is a kind of way for us to get our own will. Now, that is not really the proper approach to prayer”.**

What Scripture tells us is that there is scriptural prayer and from God's point of view it is prayer that is in His will. It is to be prayer in the name of Jesus Christ for if it is in His will it obviously is in His name. We come to God in prayer recognizing that we are coming by virtue of God's Son for we have access to the Father in Him. We come to the Father under the authority of Jesus



Christ for we know that we do not have anything to commend ourselves to God except the fact that we are in Christ.

We are therefore told in many Scriptures that we are to pray in faith. See Mark 11:22. We are also told that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

The difficulty for us human beings is that sometimes we do not know completely what is contrary to God's will and we pray for some things that are really uncalled for. We pray however.

But we also know that there is the Divine will, there is the Sovereignty of the Creator and the Dependence of the creature. So we pray in filial submission in the spirit for that is essential to prayer given that we recognize all these things. Some things we know we can pray for such as prayer for our daily bread.

But let us remember that Ephesians 1:17 also encourages us as James does to pray to the Father that He will give us a spirit of wisdom and of the revelation of the knowledge of Him.

So as limited creatures we are advised that knowing that we're limited by ignorance, warped by prejudices and our passions it is essential that we pray for wisdom so that we will generally always pray in the will of God.

We also pray with wisdom which gives us patience knowing as one writer says:

**In addition to that, you remember that our lives have to be interwoven into the lives of all the people who have ever lived up to this point and have to be fused into the lives of all of those who are still to come; and God has worked out one gigantic program involving all of the details of all of these countless millions of lives, well, be careful in interpreting the answer that God surely gives to your scriptural prayer prayed in a scriptural manner because you cannot understand all that God is doing.**

**His promise says, all these countless units make their single record under a sleepless providence, which watches over them with individual care. Yet, with a comprehensive wisdom must they be swept into the circle of one stupendous plan in which the history of all must embrace the story of each.**

**And in this vast enter blending of destinies, God shall read only that this one eternal undivided thought. Now then, so when the answer comes be careful how you respond. Second, God must postpone the answer in order to discipline you. In other words, it may well be that God, since we are here, we who are Christians are here for discipline; it may well be that he does not answer our prayer at this time because he wishes us to engage in a little bit of disciplinary activity directed by him. After all, our lives are ordered here to fit the life to come. If you were not here for a purpose, why would God have you here? He would take you immediately to be with him. That is, undoubtedly, why some are converted and die early in life”.**

**God may deny our prayers because his denial may be the means of securing the answer that we really wished in the future but which we are too ignorant to understand. In other words,**



**the benefit that we may desire is in his will, but it may come in God's own way and in God's own time.**

So let us as we grow in maturity be very careful. Even Job, when he challenged God to explain what was happening to him and God began to answer him he told God to stop. It was all too complicated for him to understand.

The work that God is doing is vast and complicated. Mere creatures cannot understand this. Even the angels are looking at trying to understand God's plan of salvation. So we must be humble. Once we have knelt at the foot of the Cross we must trust God and ask Him for wisdom, never swerving off the narrow road. We must accept that until we see God face to face, we will not be able to understand why He allowed some things to happen.

James is teaching us to trust God to supply all our needs. He is teaching us about contentment in all circumstances. To do that we need the wisdom of God and that begins with the fear of the LORD.

This of course leads us to understand that we must show compassion for there will be others that do not have the material possessions that we have and we need to show pity on that person and show him or her the love of God. We must bear the fruit of mercy and compassion. We must help the vulnerable and the weak. We must be like God.

Jesus asked a question that must resonate in our minds:  
***Why do you call me Lord, and do not do what I say?"***

We pray that we will hear the words of James and will honour Jesus both **with** our words and our actions.

We all have to come to the Cross. The Cross tells us who we are really. It tells us what our value is. He tells us of the price that had to be paid to save us for we are all were enemies of God. We all are regarded by God as equal in His sight. We all are guaranteed to be taken into His kingdom, His eternal kingdom when we do not trust in our own understanding but ask Him in unswerving faith for true wisdom.

