

Title: Uncommon Virtues – Wisdom From Above

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James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

If any of you lacks wisdom...

Sounds to me that James seems to be suggesting you cannot afford to live or do without wisdom. Takes humility to recognise that you lack wisdom. It takes brokenness to admit that your level of wisdom is not where it should be.

let him ask of God...

The good thing is that it is God who grants us wisdom, not man, not wisdom that stems from our intellect, not intellectual knowledge or philosophical speculation or not even wisdom from our experience. There is a kind of wisdom that only God gives. A sustaining wisdom, a wisdom that foresees what our natural eyes cannot see, a wisdom that our natural instincts cannot pick up. A wisdom that is from the throne-room of God. A wisdom that is God-inspired. A wisdom that is of, by and rooted in the Spirit of God. A wisdom that carries the heart of God. A wisdom with depth.

who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him...

He is an abundant, over-the-top, heavenly father who provides even more than may be required (for example, see the excess of fishes and loaves miraculously provided to the five thousand in Matthew 14:20).

And when you ask, He gives to all, not some, not only to those with a high IQ, EQ or with A grade, cum laude type of intellect. We are all covered in this. When He does so, He does so liberally, that is, generously, not grudgingly, not condescendingly. He gives it to us without reminding us of our unworthiness.

and it will be given to him...

Guaranteed, not a maybe. No conditions imposed. God will grant us wisdom if we ask for it, period!!! But it doesn't end there.

But let him ask in faith with no doubting...

Wisdom begins by seeing God's perspective, which is a true perspective, through the lens of faith.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways...

God does not grant requests to double-minded people. When you ask you have to be certain that God is willing, prepared and able to grant your request.

Mark 11:24

24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Hebrews 11:6

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV is a verse from the New Testament of the Bible. It reads: "But 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 diligently seek Him."

Questions:

- Do you lack wisdom? Or maybe you feel that you don't have enough? Are you prepared to ask God to grant you wisdom?
- Are your requests to God, faith-filled? Are they done in faith?

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

KEY ATTRIBUTES OF WISDOM OF ABOVE

- 1. V13 Who is wise and understanding among you. Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom...**

Wisdom shows by good conduct, it reflects in one's life and cannot be hidden. Wise and understanding people do their works in the meekness of wisdom. Gentleness, but not a passive gentleness growing out of weakness or resignation. It is an active attitude of deliberate acceptance.

- 2. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.**

Earthly: Driven by humanistic worldviews. Governed by worldly principles. Has no God whatsoever in it. No reference to the ways of God. It upholds the philosophies of man. Only has this life earthly in view.

Sensual: Having main objective as gratification of the passions. Gratifies the flesh, the lusts of the flesh. Satisfies one's feelings.

Demonic: Inspired by demons and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence. It actually exalts the devil and his ways.

These are the opposite of the meekness of wisdom mentioned in James 3:13. Anyone who shows bitter envy and self-seeking should not deceive anyone, especially themselves – about how wise they are. They show a wisdom that is earthly, sensual,

and demonic. Their wisdom is more characteristic of the world, the flesh, and the devil than of God. Such 'wisdom' evaluates everything by worldly standards and makes personal gain life's highest goal.

3. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there...

This is the fruit of human, earthly wisdom. The wisdom of the world, the flesh, and the devil may be able to accomplish things, but always with the ultimate fruit of confusion and every evil thing.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure..., then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy...

The character of this wisdom is wonderful. It is full of love and a giving heart, consistent with the holiness of God.

God's wisdom also has fruit. James here defined exactly what he meant by the meekness of wisdom in James 3:13.

...first pure: "The reference is not to sexual purity but to the absence of any sinful attitude or motive. Clean, uncontaminated, unadulterated.

...then peaceable: Seeks to achieve peace. Is not interested in fighting or causing dissensions.

...gentle: 'Sweet reasonableness' - it is the ability to extend to others the kindly consideration we would wish to receive ourselves."

...willing to yield: "Not stubborn nor obstinate. Easy to persuade, not in the sense of being pliable and weak, but in the sense of not being stubborn and of being willing to listen to reason and to appeal... true wisdom is not rigid but is willing to listen and skilled in knowing when wisely to yield.

...full of mercy: It does not judge others strictly on the basis of the law but will extend a generous hand full of mercy. This wisdom knows that the same measure of mercy we grant to others is the same measure God will use with us (Matthew 7:2).

...good fruits: This wisdom can be seen by the fruit it produces. It isn't just the inner power to think and talk about things the right way; it is full of... good fruits.

...without partiality: Does not take sides.

...without hypocrisy: Without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask. Seeking nothing but God's glory and using no other means to attain it than those of His own prescribing.

...Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace... This fruit is like a seed that will bear fruit as it is sown by those who make peace.

"The fruit of righteousness; either the fruit we bring forth, which is righteousness itself, Luke 3:8, 9; Romans 6:22; Philippians 1:11; or the fruit we reap, which is the reward of righteousness, viz. eternal life."

THE BENEFITS OF WALKING IN HEAVENLY WISDOM

1. Wisdom comes with instruction. It comes with the acquisition of knowledge.

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

Proverbs 1: 2 To know wisdom and instruction,

One may have knowledge without wisdom. Knowledge is the collection of facts; wisdom is the right use of what we know for daily living. Knowledge can tell one how financial systems work; wisdom manages a budget properly. The pursuit of wisdom is not a popular ideal.

When our knowledge is divinely inspired, we are able to solve complex matters.

2. Wisdom brings understanding.

Proverbs 1:3 To perceive the words of understanding,

Ephesians 1: 17-18

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

Wisdom does something to the eyes of your understanding.

3. Wisdom is a spirit. When you walk in wisdom it means you carry something about the Spirit of the Lord.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding.

The very essence of God is within you. Which means you have the capacity to think like God, be like Him. **Acts 17:28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'**

Wisdom and understanding are not to be interpreted as mystical. "Wisdom" concerns practical, workable principles, "revelation" refers to clear perception and applicable understanding.

4. Wisdom causes one to carefully consider their steps.

(Issue where I was misconstrued)

Proverbs 14:15.

The simple believes every word. But the prudent considers well his steps.

Proverbs: 1:4

To give prudence to the simple.

Where one is gullible or naïve, wisdom adds depth, weight and stature.

5. Wisdom brings discretion.

Proverbs 1:4...to the young man knowledge and discretion...

Proverbs 2:11a. Discretion will preserve you.

Careful on doing/speaking so as not to cause offence/ nor do you reveal confidential information.

6. When you become wise, you'll desire more learning.

Proverbs 1:5a. A wise man will hear and increase learning.

Wisdom brings the understanding and humility that I am not where I should be. I need more learning, revelation, understanding, discretion.

7. Wisdom diminishes our level of folly.

Proverbs 1:5b. And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel...

Very often when we don't walk in wisdom we become impulsive. We don't think through our actions and decisions. We become increasingly foolish

8. Wisdom causes us to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding...

This fear of the LORD is not a cowering, begging fear. It is the proper reverence that the created owes to the Creator and that the redeemed owes to the Redeemer. It is the proper respect and honoring of God. God should be regarded with respect, reverence, and awe. This proper attitude of the created toward the Creator is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom cannot advance further until this starting point is established.

9. Heavenly wisdom is difficult to resist.

Acts 6:10 -

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

Sophia – practical wisdom, prudence, skill, comprehensive insight, a right application of knowledge, insight into the true nature of things.

Stephen was so full of wisdom that even the Pharisees, Scribes and all manner of theologians of the day could not resist his depth of wisdom.

10. Wisdom is a treasure hidden in God.

Colossians 2:1-3

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their heart may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

When we are wise, we tap into one of the treasures that is hidden in God. This means we access a divine resource for our daily lives that is within God.

11. God adds wisdom to our gifting.

Exodus 36:1-2

“And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.” 2 Then Moses

called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, everyone whose heart [b]was stirred, to come and do the work.

Conclusion

James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.