

James

*~Authentic Faith At Work~*

# James 1:1-4

- 1 “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.”
- 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
- 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
- 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

# James 1:5-8

- 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
- 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.
- 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
- 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

# James 1:5-8

- One word stands out as the the theme of the verses that we are studying tonight. What is it?

# WISDOM

- When you think of Bible verses that speak of our need for wisdom, how many of you think of this passage?

# James 1:5-8

- Are these verses just speaking about our general need for wisdom in life?
- Why, and how does James jump from speaking about a right response to trials (vs. 2-4) to speaking about our need for wisdom?
- As we look at the context, is there a connection between the two themes, and what is it?
- Which word is repeated in 4b and 5a?

**LACKING (Vs. 4), and LACKS (Vs. 5)**

# James 1:5-8

What's the connection?

*This is where God  
wants to take us*

“...that you  
may be perfect  
and complete,  
lacking in  
nothing.”

**ARE WE  
THERE  
YET?**

“But if any of  
you lacks  
wisdom...”

*Until I am perfect, complete, and lacking nothing,  
I need wisdom to know how to handle my trial!*

# Wisdom

- Is wisdom the same thing as knowledge?
- Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit.  
Wisdom is knowing not to put a tomato in a fruit salad.
- Knowledge is understanding gained by observation or study. Knowledge is information, facts, intelligence, etc.
- Wisdom is the discernment to know how to handle the practical matters of life.

# Wisdom

Marriage

Finances/  
Retirement

Parenting

Health

Job/Work

Future Decisions

Family Situation





# Wisdom

- Biblical wisdom is the practical application of Bible principles to real life situations.

*“Why do we need wisdom when we are going through trials? Why not ask for strength, or grace, or even deliverance? For this reason: we need wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature.”*

*- Wiersbe*

# Wisdom

5. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
  - “if” – Presupposes the fact to be true.
  - “But if any of you lacks wisdom, and you all do...”
  - We must recognize our lack of wisdom so that we turn to the Lord’s resources instead of our own resources in our trials.

# How do we get wisdom?

5. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
  - God is the source of this wisdom, and I must ask Him for it if I am going to have it.
  - “let him ask” – present imperative.
  - Present - Ask, and keep on asking (Matt. 7:7).
  - Imperative - This is a command from God.

# How do we get wisdom?

5. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
  - This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible!
  - In your time of difficulty, as you need wisdom and turn to God to ask Him for it, you will receive the wisdom that you need.
  - One of the purposes of our trials is to drive us to prayer. Trials are one of the best places to learn the discipline of prayer.

# Who is this God?

- Perhaps we are not asking God for wisdom because we have a wrong picture of God in our minds.
  - Look at the picture of God that James draws for us here for us in vs. 5.
5. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

# Who is this God?

- God is a giving God! (Again in vs. 17).
  - He does not withhold from us what we need.
- God is a generous God!
  - He gives abundantly out of His abundant resources.
- God doesn't have favorites!
  - He gives to all who ask.
- God's gifts don't come with a lecture!
  - They are given without reproach.

# sow what

- If you face a trial in life, and you go through that trial without wisdom, whose fault is it?

# How are we to ask for wisdom?





# How are we to ask for wisdom?

- 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.
- 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
- 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

# How are we to ask for wisdom?

- 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.” - Ralph Gwinn
  - There is a necessary attitude required if we are going to receive the thing that we ask for.
- 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting,...

# How are we to ask for wisdom?

- To ask in faith is to ask with an attitude of full, unquestioning commitment to, and dependence upon God.
- *“I know that what God gives me will be what is best for me. His character is always good, and His purposes for me are always good.”*

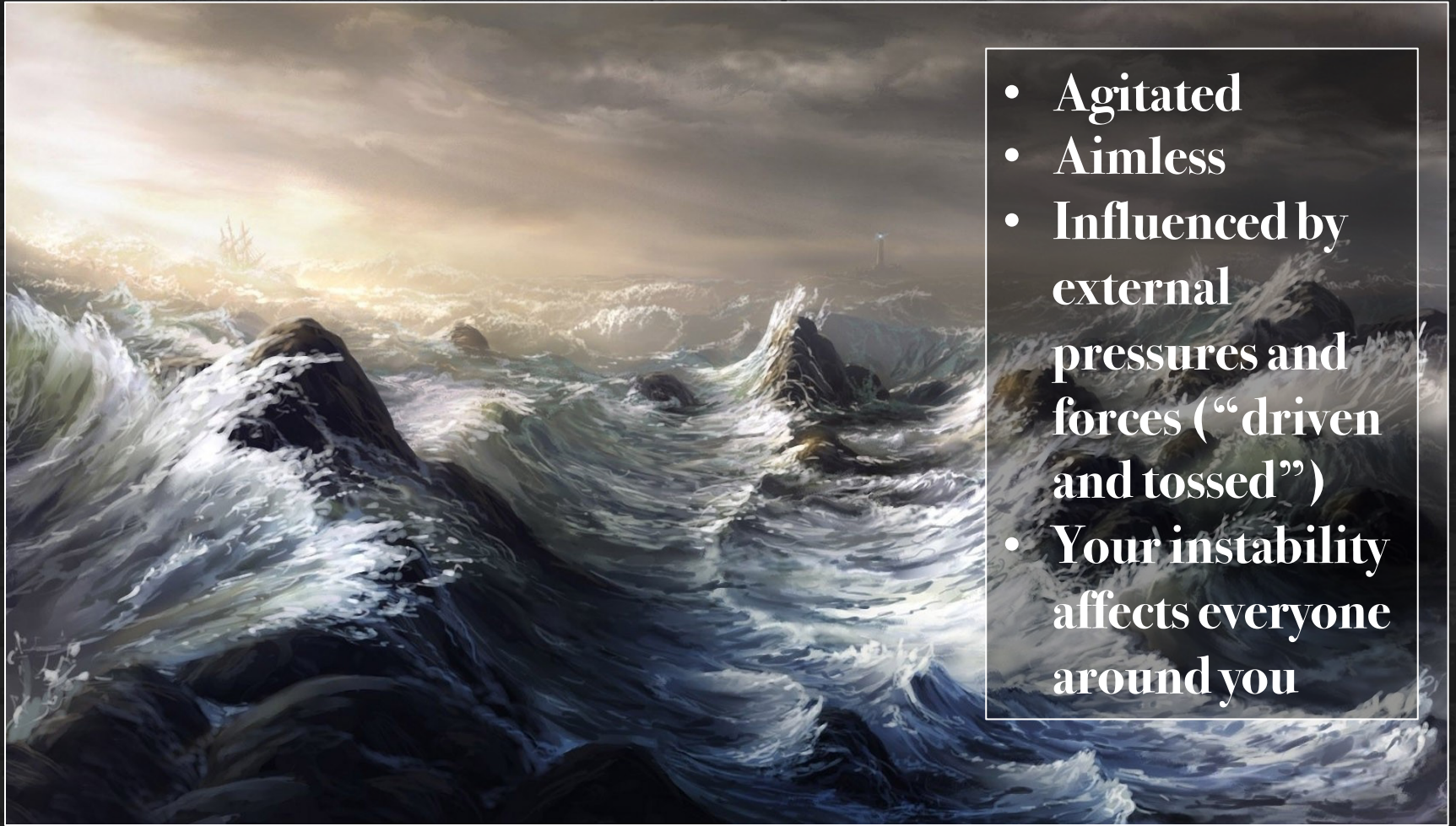
# How are we to ask for wisdom?

- “Without any doubting” – Inner division, indecision and uncertainty. Doubting is wavering between two competing inner desires: self-interests, and God’s interests.
- Do I really want what God wants? God is sincere about giving me wisdom, but I’m not always sincere about wanting his wisdom.
- This doubt is a reluctance to commit yourself and your situation wholly to God’s care.

# How are we to ask for wisdom?

- 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
- The prayer of faith which believes God and entrusts myself entirely to Him is necessary for genuine salvation (Eph. 2:8), but James reminds us here that the same prayer of faith is necessary for living the Christian life as well.
  - The divided doubter can be sure that he will receive nothing from the Lord.

# What does the divided doubter look like?



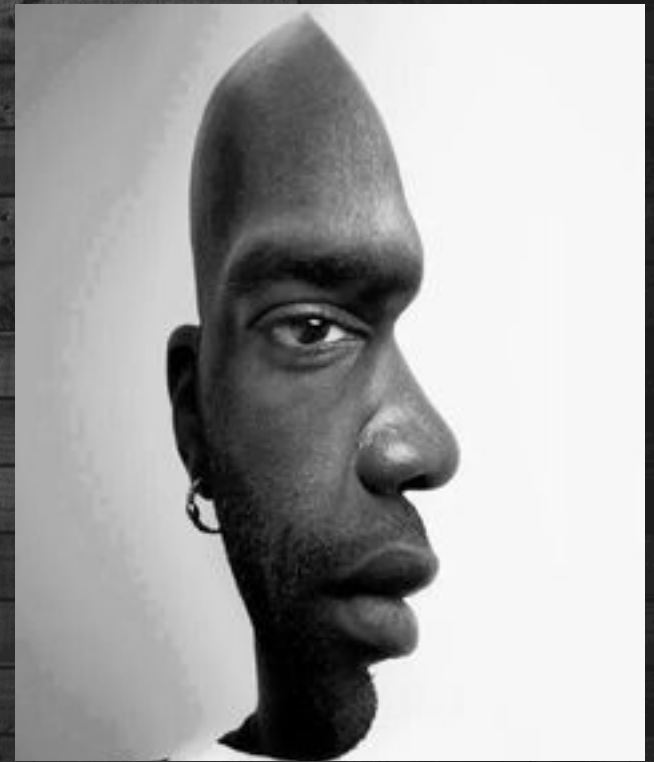
- Agitated
- Aimless
- Influenced by external pressures and forces (“driven and tossed”)
- Your instability affects everyone around you

# What does the divided doubter look like?

- 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
- “Double-minded” means literally two-souled and it has the idea of having two minds or souls going in opposite directions.
  - John Bunyan called him “Mr. Facing Both Ways” in *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

# What does the divided doubter look like?

- He has two distinct personalities. One personality is turned Godward, while the other is turned toward the world.
- “He is a walking civil war in which trust and distrust of God wage a continual battle against each other.” - Barclay





# What does the divided doubter look like?



# Conclusion

- God is good and generous to give the wisdom that I lack if I will simply ask in faith.
- The trials of life can reveal my wrong view of God or my divided, doubting heart.
- I know that God is wise, trustworthy, and good because of the cross.