

1. Learning How to Receive Godly Wisdom

One of the things we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand is how to apply the law of liberty in their lives. In the last series of topics, we saw how Paul helped the new Gentile Christians, in Galatia, understand how to apply the law of liberty in their lives. Today, we will be starting a new group of topics from the book of James. We will see how James helped Jews, who had grown up with the law, learn how to apply the law of liberty to their lives. As a part of this series of topics, we will see how to help our physical and spiritual children learn to develop very practical Christianity in their lives.

James 1:1 says, “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.” In this greeting, we see that the book of James was written by James. This James was the half-brother of Christ and the James who had become the leader of the church at Jerusalem by Acts 15. As the leader of the church at Jerusalem, James had a great concern for the Jewish Christians who lived in other parts of the world. James wrote this letter to help them learn to apply the law of liberty. As a result, the law of liberty is mentioned in each of the first two chapters of the book.

Christians everywhere face trials and testing. That is why it is important to prepare our children for trials. James 1:2-3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” The word that is translated “count” means *to lead or to think*. It has the thought of influencing your thinking. Here, we see that we are to think with joy when we fall into various trials. We see this attitude in the apostles, in Acts 5:41, where we read, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Here, we see that the apostles were filled with joy for the privilege of suffering for Christ.

We will continue to experience trials and testing as we go through life. The key is how we respond to those trials. Here, we see that God has a goal for our lives when He allows trials to come into our lives. We see that those trials produce patience in our lives. Romans 5:3-5 says, “And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Here, we see that tribulation produces several positive results in our lives. These include perseverance, godly character, and hope. As the Lord goes with us through these trials, it also causes us to grow in our understanding of the great love the Lord has for us.

As we help our children understand that the reason God allows trials in their lives is to help them grow to spiritual maturity, it helps them to learn to respond with joy instead of complaining. There will be times when our children do not understand the purpose of some trials. As a result, James 1:5 says, “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.” The Lord wants us to understand so that we can learn from every experience we have in life. Here, we see what we want to help our children do, when they do not understand.

The Lord tells us what a person is to do when he or she lacks wisdom. The word that is translated “wisdom” is used here to refer to the practical knowledge that is needed to live our lives to bring glory to God. It does not refer to worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom is described in James 3:14-15, where we read, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.” Instead, this is referring to godly wisdom like that described in James 3:17, where we read, “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.” We see that God is the source of all godly wisdom.

That is why we are told to ask God when we lack wisdom. We want to help our children understand the importance of receiving their wisdom from the Lord. We also see the way that the Lord gives wisdom. We want to help our children understand that when we ask God for wisdom, He promises to give us wisdom liberally or generously. Proverbs 1:5 says, “A wise *man* will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.” Here, we see that God wants to increase both our learning and our understanding.

Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.” We want to help our children realize that true wisdom and understanding must come from the Lord. God says that those who ask for wisdom will be given understanding by the Lord. There is only one condition that is required in order to receive wisdom from the Lord. James 1:6 says, “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.” Here, we see that a person must ask in faith to receive wisdom from the Lord.

The reason why we must ask in faith is explained in 1 Corinthians 2. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 says, “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” Here, we see that godly wisdom cannot be received through human understanding. Instead, godly wisdom must be revealed by the Holy Spirit. This is due to the fact that God has prepared godly wisdom for those who love Him.

In 1 Corinthians 2:12, we read, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” Here, we see that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to help Christians know the things that have been freely given to us by God. Of course, that includes godly wisdom. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Godly wisdom is foolishness to the world, because only those who have the Holy Spirit are able to understand divine truth.

This passage also shows us that God wants our children to understand godly wisdom so that they will be able to speak godly wisdom. 1 Corinthians 2:13 says, “These things we also speak, not in

words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The Holy Spirit teaches us to explain the Word of God with the Word of God. He shows us how to compare spiritual things with spiritual. As we help our children learn to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that they are able to use the Word of God to explain the Word, the Holy Spirit will use the wisdom they gain to develop and expand their ministry to others.

We see that people who are not Christians cannot receive the wisdom of God. However, these verses also remind us that even a Christian must ask for wisdom in faith. James 1:6-8 says, "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. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Here, we see that a Christian with doubt is compared to a wave of sea that is tossed and driven by the wind. A similar comparison is made in Ephesians 4:14, where we read, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting." The context, in Ephesians 4:11-16, is talking about Christians. This verse talks about those who failed to grow properly and have remained as spiritual young children.

Hebrews 5:11-14 also describes spiritual young children who failed to grow properly. Those verses say, "Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand how to help Christians who have failed to grow properly.

Here, we see that some people, who have been Christians long enough that they should be able to teach others, have become dull of hearing and need someone to become a spiritual parent to them and feed them the milk of the Word so they can grow and mature. Here, we see why we want to help our children learn how to receive godly wisdom. First, we do not want them to remain as spiritual young children. Second, we want to help them learn how to help spiritual young children learn to receive godly wisdom. This will only happen as our physical and spiritual children grow and mature so that they are able to understand and apply the Word of God because they have grown to the point where their senses are able to discern both good and evil.

As our physical and spiritual children mature, so they can help others learn to understand how trials help them assist weaker Christians in their spiritual growth, we are also filled with joy. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to receive godly wisdom and then share with others how to receive godly wisdom.