

02 James 1 – Part 2 - A Double-Minded Man is Unstable in All His Ways

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.

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.

⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. (James 1:9-11, NASB).

Let us pray.

This morning we're going to do a bit of review of things we've gone over the last two Wednesday nights. The book of James was written by James, the younger brother of Jesus, to Jews throughout the Roman empire. These were Jewish Christians who were facing great persecution. Remember when we studied the Book of Acts, we heard account after account of how Paul would bring the gospel into a town. He would present it first to Jews and then to the Gentiles in that town. Most of the time he would end up leaving the towns under severe persecution. Those Jews who became Christians were hated by the other Jews and by the civil authorities in those towns.

Being a Christian was a very dangerous thing. In Acts 12 we're told that James the Apostle (not the James writing this book) was murdered by King Herod. These believers were undergoing horrific trials and testing, and James, the author of this book, was writing them to help them understand how to handle these trials in their lives.

James starts off greeting these Christian brothers and sisters who are going through so much difficulty. Remember this James is the half-brother of Jesus. He grew up in the home of Mary and Joseph with Jesus being his older half-brother. While growing up, James did not recognize Jesus as Messiah. He believed in Jesus only after Jesus had been crucified, buried, and

resurrected. Interestingly, he introduces himself as a “bond-servant” of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

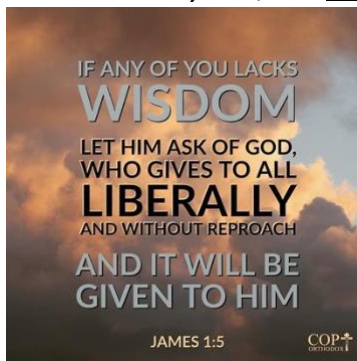
Sibling rivalry and competition between brothers is common. It must have been difficult for James to grow up with an older brother who was sinless in every way. Can you imagine Mary saying something like, “James, why can’t you be like Jesus. He’s perfect in every way.”

Yet as he starts this beautiful book, he presents himself in an humble way. He describes himself as a “bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus the Anointed One (Christos).” He could have tried to gain credence by describing the home he was from, but instead he describes himself as a mere bondservant, one who loves a master so much that he chooses to serve him for all of his days. In writing, James tells us that as believers we WILL encounter various trials in our lives and that these trials and tests of faith that we go through will produce spiritual muscles (perseverance). Perseverance is the ability to keep on keeping on, without giving up. These same trials just referenced give us not only spiritual strength, but also spiritual stamina to keep going. In doing this, we are told that we will become the exact, perfect (here meaning complete and not sinless) person that God desires for us to be. In the spiritual realm, we will not be missing ANYTHING that we need (lacking in nothing).

Trials enter into all of our lives. When we are put under the test, do we hold on to the Lord or do we waiver. So often in our lives we ask the question, “why,” many times. Why cancer? Why death? Why suffering? Two weeks ago, on Wednesday night, I gave 6 steps with which to handle trials. Unfortunately, some of our greatest growth happens during that refining process of suffering. God is faithful to take us through those trials and tribulations. Many teach us to take authority over sufferings, but the Bible says something different:

²⁸*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28, NASB).*

³*And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:3-5, NASB).*



Wisdom v. Knowledge – knowing what to do with what you know

James then tells us that part of the key to enduring suffering is to have wisdom. We’re talking about godly wisdom. Knowledge is the things that you know. Wisdom is the understanding of how to apply that acquired knowledge. I am fond of making the example that knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is knowing not to put a tomato into a fruit salad. Wisdom begins with a relationship; a relationship with God. The Bible tells us:

¹⁰*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, (Proverbs 9:10a, NASB).*

⁶*For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:6, NASB).*

My relationship with God begins with awe of Him. That is the beginning of living a life of wisdom. Rising early and seeking His face is a part of the beginning of being a very wise person. Out of His “mouth” (His Word) come knowledge and understanding.

We need only to ask God for wisdom in how to make righteous, godly decisions to follow Him. We need to be able to discern the will of God in our actions. God is there to give it to us. We all need wisdom in dealing with others. If you are single, you need wisdom in knowing who to date. Wisdom tells you that even if a guy or a girl is good looking and seems perfect in every way, you need to look for that person who has a hunger for the Lord and for spiritual things. We all need wisdom in our financial affairs. Those of us who are married, need wisdom in dealing with our spouses. We all need wisdom in dealing with others.

This scripture gives a promise of wisdom, but it comes with a condition. We have to ask God for it. So many times we seek wisdom in every other place except God. We must give our heart, our minds, and our issues to the Lord. Don’t back burner God. We ask all our friends for advice. We ask the pastor. We go to a seminar. We’ll do ANYTHING but humble ourselves and go to the Lord with our questions, concerns, and need for direction. Don’t make this mistake. He gives freely.

Asking in Faith without Doubting God is not stingy. He does not hold back the wisdom that we need. James 1:5 says He’s not going to ridicule us for what we’re asking. We should not be doubting and trying to second guess God, *“for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6b, NASB)*

What a great picture that is. If you’ve ever been out in the surf, you know how waves are. They are up and down. They move back and forth. The wind blows on them and you see the spray come off of them. The difficulties of life blow against us in the same way. Being like a wave that is blown by the wind is about as far from being “solid” as anything could be. James is saying “DON’T BOUNCE ALL AROUND LIKE A WAVE.” Don’t be wishy-washy in your approach to hardship. When we understand the character of God and the promises of God, we are able to ask without being like that wave that’s all over the place. Several of the truths that will keep the sand from shifting under our feet are these:

1. **You are His child.** Realize and understand your relationship with God. Do loving parents hate and mistreat their children? We are children of God. ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12, KJV).*
2. **God’s character is good.** ¹⁷ *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, nor turning shadow. (James 1:17, WEB).* God is good. God is love. *“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?” (John 1:12, NIV).*

Resolve today to believe that God is a loving Father. Resolve today that you’re going to believe that His character is good. Stand solid on the understanding that if you ask Him for a fish, He is

not going to give you a snake. You can talk to Him with confidence in your relationship with Him, and with a solid assurance that He is good.

Don't be Double-Minded (a person with two minds but using the wrong mind): "Mind of Christ" or the "Carnal Mind?"

⁸ [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides]. (James 1:8, AMPC).



This word (**δίψυχος, ον - dipsuchos**) literally means “double-souled.” It speaks of a person that “straddles the fence” or that has one foot in the world and the other foot in the kingdom of God. A person that is double-minded is wishy-washy, or back and forth. They are indecisive. This passage warns us to be RESOLUTE in having the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Remember, even after you came to Jesus, the old sin nature remained within you. That is what we called “the flesh” when we studied spiritual warfare. Also, when we came to Christ, we were filled with the Holy Spirit. Hence, there within your soul, is this old sin nature as well as the Holy Spirit.

That flesh is also called the carnal mind, and it is at enmity with God. It cannot (unable) to receive the things of God (Romans 8:7). The Lord must be in the equation in the battle for your mind. Let your mind be made up about those things we just talked about. You are His child and He intends good for you. When your mind is not made up, you are operating under a cloud of uncertainty and doubt. You keep trying to outguess God and wanting the things that YOU WANT instead of the things that He has provided. One minute you are thinking this, and the next minute you are thinking that. That is being double-minded. It's believing one minute that He hears you and wants the best for you, while the next minute thinking He can't hear you and doesn't know you have certain needs that you feel are desperate. Notice that I said, YOU FEEL THESE NEEDS ARE DESPERATE. To be “single-minded,” our minds must rest in the certainty that God is in control. Stop being driven by feelings and start being directed by fact. Our minds must have the certainty that God wants what is best for us. James comes right out and tells us that when a person is giving equal time to the carnal mind and the mind of Christ, they will be UNSTABLE IN ALL OF THEIR WAYS.

Characteristics of a Double-Minded Life

- 1) Says one thing and does another.
- 2) Indecisive most of the time (can't make calculated decisions).
- 3) Moves jobs and changes relationships often. Having no consistent character.
- 4) Bad stewards with money.
- 5) Talks about faith while living in doubt – shout on Sunday, pout on Monday.
- 6) Easily distracted from spiritual things. “There's a rabbit over there.”
- 7) Seeks man's approval and God's approval equally. Being chameleons trying to fit into any group they encounter.
- 8) Hates personal confrontation, but loves to talk about people behind their back. Sowing private discord.

- 9) Gets excited quickly while also fizzling out quickly. Starting well but not ending well.
- 10) Hearing this list and not seeing yourself somewhere (then you're double minded).

Social Positions Among Believers

Billy Graham, the great evangelist, often said, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross." This means that even the poorest of the poor has value because God loves him or her. When you come to Christ you are God's child. Remember what we read above: ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12, KJV).* The one who is rich should glory not in his or her status and wealth, but rather in the fact that in Christ his wealth is meaningless, and his position is no higher than any other. The Kingdom of God doesn't use the world's standards to attribute worth. There is a temptation to feel like you're really worth something if you have money and that you're not worth anything if you don't have money. That is the world's viewpoint and not God's viewpoint. We all have to deal with our sin equally at the foot of the cross. There is perfect equality at the foot of the cross. Rich or poor, educated or uneducated, the intelligent and the dull are all equal before God. When we come through these doors at Union Grove, we are all equal. I am no longer your employer, I am your brother. We are equal brothers and sisters in the family of God. We all have different functions, but none is higher or lower than the other.

Proverbs 22:2 (NIV) says: *"The rich and the poor have this in common. The Lord is the maker of them all."*

Wealth, looks, and all that seems so in bloom is SO QUICKLY changed. They are so quickly taken. We really don't understand how fleeting they are. Sandy and I have learned to put our faith in the Lord and His unchanging nature. We feel our bodies failing, our eyes dimming, and our hearing lessening. This encourages us to push on and push through and to communicate and convey all that we have learned in our lives about the truths of God's Word.

My friend, Scott Armstrong, often reminds me, "It'll all burn." What he means by that is don't become too invested in what is temporary here on earth. Yes, it is okay to be comfortable and enjoy nice things, but realize they'll never quite fill or satisfy like our flesh thinks that they will. What satisfies forever is knowing that you are God's child. He intends good for you. He wants you to live your life in the realm of faith and not fear. Don't be one of these people that shouts on Sunday and pouts on Monday. Embrace the life that He has given you, never feeling above or beneath the family of God that surrounds you. We're all in this together.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.