

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to Become Smart

James 1:5-8

1 God's word tells us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. ¹ ² But a lot of us have inferiority complexes. We don't think of ourselves highly enough. After all, God created each of us in His image and likeness.

So, have you ever done anything that made you feel real dumb?

I remember when I was a kid, my dad taught me a very important lesson. We were watching professional football on television and rooting for different teams.

Dad said, "Steve. Would you like to place a little bet on this game?"

I said, "Sure". The bet was a quarter.

The game came down to just a few minutes before the end. My team was winning by six points. During the last few seconds, dad said, "Would you like to raise the bet?" We bickered a bit until the sum was twenty

¹ Romans 12:3 - For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

dollars! I didn't have twenty dollars, but I was sure I would be the winner.

During the last few seconds dad's team scored a touchdown and the extra point; winning the game by one point!

I felt so empty inside. My sure win ended up a loss!

Dad rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Steve", he said, "You were not very smart. But I can't take your money." He, then, told me that the game was a replay from yesterday. He knew exactly what the outcome would be. I was played for a sucker!

Did I feel dumb? You bet. But I had learned a big lesson! ³

Fortunately, God provides a remedy for dumbness. We are told what to do about it right here. ⁴

James, chapter 1, verses 5 through 8, state, **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and**

not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. ⁵

Let's look at . . .

I. Ways to Get Smart

Ways to get smart. ⁶

There are **popular ways** to get smart. ⁷

Get an education. Go to college or a vocational school. ⁸

Learn by experience. Become an apprentice. Make mistakes and learn by them. ⁹

Associate with wise people; the “wisdom rubs off on you” philosophy. ¹⁰

Then, there's **God's way** to get smart. He has a couple of ways found in the Bible. ¹¹

The first way is to **study the word of God**. Second Timothy, chapter 3, verses 14 through 17, **But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.** ¹²

The second divine way, is simply, to **ask God** for wisdom! If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ² ¹³

Solomon asked God for it and became the smartest man who ever lived! ³ ¹⁴ Wisdom was given to Daniel

² James 1:5.

³ II Chronicles 1:6-12 - Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered God, "You have shown great kindness to David

when he asked for it. While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill — while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding . . .”⁴ 15

The Apostle Paul asked God to grant wisdom to the members of the church in Ephesus. For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus

my father and have made me king in his place. Now, LORD God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” God said to Solomon, “Since this is your heart’s desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have.”

⁴ Daniel 9:20-22.

Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation . . . ⁵

This scripture continues with the two important things about God and His children you need to remember concerning being smart. ¹⁶

The first is to . . .

II. Remember How the Giver Gives - v5

Remember how the Giver gives. ¹⁷

Again, verse 5 says, **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.**

He gives **generously!** Romans, chapter 8, verse 32, **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** ¹⁸

He gives **to all who asks!** James. chapter 4, verse 2, **You want something but don't get it. You kill and**

⁵ Ephesians 1:15-17.

covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 19

He gives **without any expectation of return!** 20

Some give and then, in various ways, keep reminding you of the gift. There's the subtle idea that you now owe him. The person who receives is expected to be the debtor to the one who gave. 21

Verse 5 again says, **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.** I like the King James translation of the phrase **without finding fault**; it is **God upbraideth not**. He does not keep reminding you of the gift! 22

He promises that **askers will receive!** Lord Jesus stated it this way, **Ask and it will be given to you**; **seek and you will find**; **knock and the door will be opened to you.** For **everyone who asks receives**; he who

seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.⁶ ²³

The second thing to understand is . . .

III. Remember How the Asker Asks - v6-8

Remember how the asker asks. ²⁴

Verses 6 through 8, **But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.**

Ask in faith. ²⁵

The word faith here ⁷ means trust, believe, don't doubt.

Notice a couple of examples of this. ²⁶

⁶ Matthew 7:7-8.

⁷ πιστεύω.

A Roman Centurion humbly asked Lord Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant, the Lord complied. Then, responding to the Centurion's faith He said, **I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.**⁸ ₂₇

Again, a Canaanite woman approached the Lord asking Him to heal her daughter from demon possession. In Matthew, chapter 15, verse 28, He responded with, **Woman, you have great faith!** ₂₈

Now, what does God think of you when you don't trust Him? ₂₉

In verse 6, you are like **a wave of the sea**. The size and strength of the wave is determined by weather factors other than itself. ₃₀

In verse 8, you are **double minded**. It's like having two brains in conflict. ₃₁

Also in verse 8, you are **unstable**. This word has the idea that you are a drunk stumbling down the street.

⁸ Matthew 8:10.

What would you think if you made a promise to your child, but he didn't trust you to fulfill it? ³²

So, trust in the Lord's willingness and His power to give you. This is illustrated in the event where Lord Jesus was approached by a man full of leprosy. Matthew, chapter 8, verses 1 through 3, record, **When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" **Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.** The Lord had the power and the willingness to make this man clean! ³³**

The next time you are feeling dumb, ³⁴ talk to the Lord about it! ³⁵

Then, start trusting!

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