

Loyal Heart MINISTRIES

www.loyalheartministries.com

Praying Through the Confusion – James 1:5-8

A Devotion for Families by *Dr. Jim Smyrl*

What did we learn yesterday about opposites in your times of trials?

Why can you consider it joy when going through difficult times?

Remember that God is faithful to produce His qualities in your life, as you trust Him in difficult times.

When is the last time you were confused?

How did you feel in your time of confusion?

What helped you out of your confusion?

Introducing the Text:

Read: James 1:5-8

God will help us when we do not know which way to go or what to think. Remember that James is still talking about people who are in a trial. The people James is describing are confused because their trials are keeping them from seeing which way to go or what to believe.

You will see, in verses 5-8, what God tells you to do when you are confused by your trials.

Asking for Help:

Remember, the text is describing people who are committed to obeying God as His servants. Ask God to show you the steps He wants you to take or what He wants you to believe in your trials.

Exposing the Text:

Servants Pray in Trials (vs. 5-8)

- a. What do lost people do for help when they are in trials?

Note: They often look for help in themselves, friends, and sometimes in false gods or forces of nature.

- b. What does verse 5 tell you, as a Christian servant, to do when you are confused by your trials?
 - i. “lacks”: point out that James is talking to the Jewish Christians who have been immersed in a trial. Note that they certainly would not have found an answer to their questions in any other place by God. They lacked wisdom.

Loyal Heart MINISTRIES

- ii. “wisdom”: How does a person receive a reputation for being wise? Wisdom is the Christ-like quality that enables a person to avoid making decisions that will lead them down a pathway of sin. In a trial, you want to follow God’s pathway, so that you do not create more problems than the trial itself brings.
 - iii. “ask”: Who does verse 5 tell you to ask? James tells these persecuted believers that the only One that can give them direction in their trial is the One who knows all things.
 - iv. “gives”: What does verse 5 promise, if you ask God for wisdom in your trials? You can trust God to do what He promises to do.
 - v. “without reproach”: Why might someone not want to ask God for help? Note that “without reproach” means God will not find fault with you when you confess that you do not know what to do and need His help. Rather, God will give you all you need to see the trial from a new perspective and make the right decisions in the trial.
- b. Ask: What condition does verse 6 place on your prayer for wisdom?
- i. “ask in faith”: Note: this is reminding the reader of the “servant” mentioned in verse 1. The prayer of faith is one that begins with the servant saying “yes” before he ever knows what God is going to require.
 - ii. Would you go to a prison and tell a criminal that you will do whatever he asks? No, Why not?
 - iii. You can go to God and commit to do whatever He asks because He is Holy and will never lead you in the wrong direction. So, to “ask in faith” is to first say, “God, I am asking what direction you want me to go in this trial, but I am first committing to go in whatever direction you tell me to go, before you ever give me wisdom to know which way to go.”
- c. Ask: How, in verses 6-8, does James describe a person who doubts that God will answer?
- i. “driven and tossed . . . unstable”: Note that this is what happens when you try to find the right direction by looking in places other than God’s Word. Seeking direction in your trials from any other source makes the trial worse. Looking for answers in your trial from anyone but God is like jumping out of a small thunderstorm and into a powerful hurricane.
 - ii. How, according to verses 5-8, is the servant of God the opposite of the person who doubts God?
 - iii. What negative promise is given to those who do not “ask in faith?”
 - iv. How is this different from the promise in verse 5?

Apply It

Pray: “God, I am saying yes to whatever you tell me to do. I trust that You will lead me in the perfect direction. Thank you for always being faithful.”