

FAITH AND WISDOM

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:1-11

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:1-11

*Key Verse: If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. James 1:5*

## James 1:1-11 (NRSV)

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

2 My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy,

3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance;

4 and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

6 But ask in faith, never

doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind;

7, 8 for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

9 Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up,

10 and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field.

11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

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## VOCABULARY

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- **Trial** – A painful experience that tests one’s ability to endure.
- **Joy** – Happiness, gladness, delight.
- **Endurance** – The ability to tolerate prolonged suffering or hardship.
- **Generous** – Willing to give money, help, or time freely.
- **Ungrudgingly** – Feeling or showing no reluctance or reservations.
- **Unstable** – Apt to change, uncertain.
- **Boast** – To praise or exalt oneself.

### INTRODUCTION

Scott loved working his part-time job. It permitted him to have extra money to buy what he desired. Scott also promised to give money for gas to his mother every week.

“Scott,” his mother said, “I need the money you promised to give me for gas. Your Aunt Mary is waiting for me to pick her up.”

“Mom...I don’t have the money.” Scott kept his eyes focused on the kitchen floor to avoid looking at his mother.

“How am I supposed to take your Aunt Mary to the doctor? She has to have her kidney treatments three times a week. Please tell me what happened.” Mom stared intently at Scott.

“After work, Jeff and Mark texted me to meet them for dinner. Since last time they paid when we went out to eat, I paid this time. I didn’t realize how much the food cost. Then I stopped and brought a new video game that cost me \$50.00.”

“Scott, your father and I depend on you to help us out sometimes. You are getting older and need to use better wisdom concerning your money. And now since I do not have gas for my car, your Aunt Mary probably will have to wait until Monday

to get her kidney treatment. This is going to cause her undue physical pain. I hope you understand my disappointment.”

*Why is wisdom needed when dealing with money? In today's lesson, we are discussing the need to ask God for wisdom through prayer to make proper decisions.*

### BIBLE STORY

James, the half-brother of Jesus, is the author of this book. He did not become a believer until after Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus appeared to James as well as the others in the upper room (Acts 1:3-14). James later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17, 15:13, 19; Galatians 2:1-12). In his book, James wanted to teach right Christian behavior.

James explains the purpose of trials in verses 1 through 4. The Jews who had converted to Christianity were suffering persecution and isolation from unbelieving Jews. James addressed those suffering as “brothers.” It was a way to identify them as a part of God's family of believers. James wanted to offer comfort to his fellow believers who were suffering. So he told them to “consider it nothing but joy” (v. 1:2). These are experiences that test or prove- by trial, calamity, or affliction- the certainty of our faith in Christ, and are designed to strengthen it. Tests develop perseverance enabling us to mature in our faith (vs. 1:3-4).

As we are going through trials, we need godly wisdom. Those who need wisdom can ask God for it (v. 1:5). God is the source and provider of wisdom. We have to believe God will not withhold wisdom but give it to us liberally. Our faith in God must be unwavering. If we continually doubt, it is impossible to receive anything from God (vs. 1:6-8).

Wealth, power, and status mean nothing to God. They can quickly and easily be lost. Believers who are ignored because they do not have wealth or high status in society, God will

raise them up (v. 1:9). True wealth can be found in a faithful relationship with God. Trusting God can make even difficult times easier. The deeper our spiritual life, the wiser we become. When we endure tests and respond with wisdom, we shall be rewarded. The “crown of life” is the reward of those who love the Lord and prove it by trials – even to death (v. 1:12).

**LIFE APPLICATION**

**W**e gain wisdom during trials because God gives us understanding of how to deal with trials. Using the acrostic below, write words that demonstrate we have wisdom during trials. Each word should be from the letters in TRIALS.

T \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
L \_\_\_\_\_  
S \_\_\_\_\_

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you – James 1:5. Write a prayer asking God for wisdom in specific areas of your life.

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### **SUMMARY**

**A**s believers in Christ, we can pray for help in making wise choices. Even when difficult times come, we can respond with wisdom from God. Suffering is a test of our faith. We grow in our faith and endurance through it. God does not want us to be double-minded. Either we fully trust God's wisdom, or not at all. And count it all joy that we suffer for our faith.

### **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

Prayer: Our loving and trustworthy God, thank you for this day. We ask you for wisdom to deal with the tests and trials of life. We fully trust in you. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "I Love the Lord; He Heard My Cries" (#313 - *AME Church Hymnal*)