

Wholeness

Weekly Biblical reflections for looking after our Wellbeing

Reflection 9: Living a Life of Wisdom

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

Wisdom, wouldn't we all like more of it? There are many times in the day I hope for some flash of wisdom, whether when making difficult decisions, searching for words of comfort for someone or just navigating day to day choices. However, what do we actually mean by wisdom? , We know it's different to having knowledge, or being intellectually clever. It has been said that a knowledge of one's own ignorance is the beginning of wisdom and that recognising our lack of wisdom is a prudent step towards understanding. The dictionary explains it as:

*the quality of having experience, knowledge, and
good judgement; the quality of being wise.*

We want for a lot of things in life, love, wealth, rest, safety, all great things to want, but maybe the greatest thing we can want in life is wisdom. Wisdom effects all of life; if we possess wisdom we can make good decisions about life, love, wealth, rest etc.

Unfortunately, wisdom in life doesn't always come easy, any Google search for gaining wisdom talks of time, trying things the hard way, trying new things; it doesn't come across as an instantaneous thing.

In the verse above James speaks of asking God for wisdom when we feel we lack it. It's important to understand the context of this verse. In previous verses James is talking about cultivating a deep trust in God when things get difficult he then moves on in our verse above

to talk about asking God for wisdom at a particularly moment, e.g. what's the best choice, how do we decide between to different options? He's saying that those who truly trust God will ask him for wisdom.

It may seem surprising that we can ask God for wisdom about the tasks of ordinary work—making decisions, assessing opportunities, trusting colleagues or customers, investing resources, and so on—but James tells us to “ask in faith, never doubting” that God will give us the wisdom we need.ⁱ

So how do we get this wisdom from God? Well God speaks to us though his Word, the Bible. The book most synonymous with wisdom is the book of proverbs, and there are some wonderful verses that teach us about wisdom. Tim Challis, blogger and author, writes this about Proverbs:

The book of Proverbs continually personifies wisdom, presenting her as a woman who stands on the streets and cries out for those who pass by to heed her call. Those who hear her cry out are given the choice to listen and respond or to turn their backs on her. She will call for only a certain amount of time before she gives up and forsakes those who forsake her. From this I see that wisdom is a choice. It is a choice that I face. I am responsible to respond to wisdom when I hear her call for me. Ultimately, the decision to choose wisdom over folly is mine.ⁱⁱ

We have a choice to trust God, and choose wisdom, and we can just ask for it. Sounds simple, but at times the situations we go through, the decisions we have to make can feel so overwhelming it's difficult to stop and ask God. At times like this I turn to a song from Ian Bruce McIntosh & Jenn Louise Johnson from Bethel Church, Redding USA. Below is a link to a version from Lincoln recorded during lockdown. Maybe if you are feeling overwhelmed today take a few moments out and listen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bu3U9BUAmkQ&list=RDQNCjehbhyK4&index=2>

Reflection Questions:

1. Where do you look for wisdom in your life?

2. Is the Bible or prayer a consideration when you need wisdom? Why/Why not?
3. Do you actively choose wisdom?

Prayer

Father, thank you that are wisdom and that you are not some distant being that does not want to share your wisdom with me. Help me when I feel overwhelmed or when I need wisdom to look to you and your Word. Amen

ⁱ <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/general-epistles/james-faith-works/depending-on-god-james-15-18>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.challies.com/articles/31-days-of-wisdom-reflections/>