

How to Live with Wisdom

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – October 25, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

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This fall we are exploring the Letter of James. James is full of practical advice and shows us “How to Live” as Christians. As a congregation we are following a reading plan through James and studying selected passages. Check out mylhumc.net/grow for more information.

James writes that it is not enough to know the right thing to do, we must actually do it. This brings up a question: How do we know what to do in any given circumstance? And secondly, how do we go about doing it? We discover WHAT we should do and HOW we should do it by asking for wisdom from God.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. - James 1:5 NLT

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom it is the ability to relate what you know to be true to the complex problems of life. Wisdom is knowledge applied so it has both intellectual and behavioral components. Wise people use their knowledge and experience to see the big picture and make good, sound decisions.

According to the Bible, all true wisdom is from God. Wisdom is obtained from God by asking for it.

The Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. - Proverbs 2:6 NLT

However, James instructs us that we must not come to God seeking His opinion as one among many, but with a single-minded willingness to obey and follow Him.

But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. - James 1:6-8 NLT

“Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the boat. There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God. God has charged Himself with full responsibility for our eternal welfare

and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to Him.” - A.W. Tozer

Identifying Two Kinds of Wisdom:

How do we know the difference between God’s wisdom and our own ideas? James gives us a comparison of God’s wisdom and the wisdom of the world in this passage:

If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. - James 3:13-18 NLT

What will you do about it?

⇒ Make a list that compares and contrasts the two types of wisdom and their results. Can you think of examples of each? What are some things that may be considered wise from an earthly perspective yet not wise from a heavenly point of view?

⇒ Have you received wisdom from the Lord? Did you act on it and if so, what happened? Conversely, have you ever done something that was considered wise in the world’s eyes and suffered adverse consequences as a result?

⇒ Are you facing a situation where you need wisdom from the Lord? Pray about it and ask Him for wisdom and discernment.

⇒ How else can you cultivate Godly wisdom this week? How can you also be a source of Godly wisdom for other people this week?

So be very careful how you live. Do not live like people who aren’t wise. Live like people who are wise. - Ephesians 5:15 NIRV