



Scripture: James 1:1-8

Main Idea: Wisdom is the knowledge and good judgment that God gives, and we receive. We receive God's wisdom through endurance in tough times.

Lesson: Hey students! Welcome to [youth group]. My name is _____ and I'm thrilled to see you. Today we are going to be discussing a character trait that we don't often associate with young people: wisdom! We gain wisdom through God and through experiences.

Share with the person next to you:

- **What has been the best part of your school year so far?**
- **What has been the most challenging part of the year so far?**
- **What is one new thing you are doing this year?**

[Teaching Note: You could pick one of these questions or put all three up on the screen. After they share with the person next to them, you might ask them each to share one thing they learned about the person next to them during this discussion time.]

Throughout the year, we all face highs and lows. As you get older, every new year and new experience is an opportunity to learn new things, try new things, make new friends, or even experience your faith in a new way. As you experience new things, you also experience the opportunity to gain new wisdom. As you get older each year, you can grow wiser as well!

As each of us learn and grow throughout the course of the year, let us also consider how we could gain new wisdom. As young people, wisdom may not be a topic you think of too often but even in middle and high school we can grow wiser!

[Teaching Note: The questions in **bold** are meant to be asked out loud to the group. For larger groups, it may work well to have them share with the person next to them. For smaller groups, you could ask to share with the whole group. All discussion questions can also be saved for the end.]

How would you define “wisdom?”

What is the difference between “Wisdom” and “intelligence?”

Wisdom is the quality of having knowledge, experience, good judgment, and insight. God calls us to gain wisdom and hold onto wisdom in our faith. Today's Scripture is all about wisdom and it comes from the book of James. James was both a disciple of Jesus and His half-brother. He was known for being very black and white with his theology and having very strong ideas about faith. Let's read about what James wrote about the situations that give us wisdom.

James 1:2-8 (CEB)

Greeting

1 From James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the twelve tribes who are scattered outside the land of Israel.

Greetings!

Stand firm

2 My brothers and sisters, think of the various tests you encounter as occasions for joy. 3 After all, you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 Let this endurance complete its work so that you may be fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing. 5 But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask. 6 Whoever asks shouldn't hesitate. They should ask in faith, without doubting. Whoever doubts is like the surf of the sea, tossed and turned by the wind. 7 People like that should never imagine that they will receive anything from the Lord. 8 They are double-minded, unstable in all their ways

What did you find interesting in this passage?

James began this passage by stating that trials and challenges in your life are actually what produce good qualities such as endurance and wisdom. In verse two, James even called it a JOY to go through a test or tough time.

While this may sound counterintuitive, James was really looking at the spiritual fruit that is produced out of trials and tribulations. Trials and challenges in our lives are inevitable. Instead of letting challenges consume us or hurt us, we can reframe our thinking and see them as an opportunity for growth. James reminded us in this passage that when we lean on our faith and face a trial head on, we *will* learn from it. When we have the endurance to make it through a tough time, we will gain wisdom and maturity.

James was a teacher with a Jewish background, and he therefore thought of wisdom as a very practical element to life. Wisdom is not abstract or philosophical, it is an essential trait for everyday living. James also had a reputation for being very bold and strong-willed. This passage conveys a tone of confidence, and God is truly deserving of our confidence. Verse five reminds us that we can have assurance that if we ask for God's wisdom, we will surely receive it.

What are some ways to gain more confidence in God's wisdom?

James also emphasizes in verse five how we should remember to ask God for wisdom. If you ask God for wisdom in prayer, you can be confident that God will instill in you the wisdom you need. God is constantly present in your life and God is reliable to be called upon when you go through trials and tribulations.

Reflect on a time that you went through a challenge or trial. How did you invite God into it? How could you have invited God into it?

[Teaching Note: This is a moment when a personal story could add to the discussion.]

We are called to welcome wisdom into our lives. Even when you are young, you can gain new wisdom. We are called to receive the wisdom that God gives. God lacks nothing and is always looking out for you. God will help all of us grow during what we go through.

In verses 6-8, James very boldly calls us to reflect upon ourselves. Are you someone who wants to be foolish and unstable? Or do you desire to be someone who is wise and full of endurance? We should seek stability so

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