

Seek and Live in God's Wisdom

James 1:1-5, 17; 3:13-17

For most of us, the possibilities for being in continual motion and subjected to continual input are endless. Much of what we do may be necessary, and much of it may be good. Yet the choices we make on a daily basis to do, and go, and be in front of our many screens may be hurting us and others. We may be driven to gain status or power. We may be anxious and seeking numbing distraction. We may be feeling that no matter how much we earn or consume, it is never enough. We may be believing that we can never say no when asked to be of some service.

Our endless working to achieve status or power, our overconsuming, our numbing distraction, and even our need to please and impress are all likely centered in selfish ambition and pride. They are not likely to be centered in the loving wisdom of God.

Knowing God's presence in the whirlwind of life comes in part from seeking and yielding to God's wisdom in the many choices we make. It comes from learning when to say yes and when to say no as we seek God's loving will in our lives.

GROUP DISCUSSION. How might unnecessary busyness add to a person's distress and anxiety?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Where do you sense that you are making unhealthy choices that create unnecessary busyness and add to your distress?

The text for this study invites us to ask for God's wisdom. It then goes on to help us to differentiate God's wisdom from our selfish tendencies. *Read James 1:1-5, 17.*

1. This Scripture begins by making a connection between life's challenges, perseverance and joy. How would you describe what the author is saying?

2. Have you experienced this connection? If so, explain.

3. How will God respond to us when we ask him for wisdom (v.5)?

4. What does this say about God's character?

5. James 1:6-8 describes what many of us have experienced. We may ask God for wisdom and then fail to trust that God will guide us. Another way the text describes this is that we don't receive the wisdom we asked for, even though God is giving it generously. We may fret about "getting it right" and fail to pay attention to the guidance we are sensing. Or we may decide to go our own way after seeking God's will and way. What experience have you had with this problem?

6. Imagine for a moment what it might be like to fully trust that God really does respond to your requests for wisdom. How might trusting this affect your capacity to receive God's wisdom?

Read James 3:13-17.

7. How does this Scripture describe the wisdom that comes from God?

8. How does it contrast God's wisdom with envy and selfish ambition?

9. What are some of the subtle and not so subtle ways that envy or selfish ambition can add stress and unnecessary busyness to our lives?

10. How might living in God's wisdom help a person experience God in the busyness of life?

11. What wisdom do you need to ask for at this time in your life?

12. What help do you need from God and others to trust that God will give generously "without finding fault" (Jas 1:5)?

Thank God for being a generous giver whose gift of wisdom is available to you in every situation you face in life.

Now or Later

In a time of quiet, ask God to show you where you have been making choices out of envy or selfish ambition. Ask God as well for God's humble, peace-loving wisdom to guide you. Invite God to deepen your trust in God, who promises to give you wisdom generously. Open your hands and heart as you thank God and receive God's gifts of wisdom for you at this time. Write about your time of prayer and meditation.

Daily prayer: Give me your wisdom today. May I come to trust that you give wisdom generously to all who ask, including me. Help me to receive and follow