

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets.

Scripture passages: James 1:5-8 and Exodus 13:17-14:31

Complications breed conflict and conflict breeds confusion. When confusion is the result, one is left with nothing but questions: Why did this happen? How did this happen? What do I do? How do I respond? What's next? During the conflicts of life, these questions need answers. But from where should these answers come? Is it prudent to seek answers from the world when there is conflict and confusion? What about books, or schooling? Will I find the answers to life's toughest questions there? What about my own personal intellect and knowledge base? Is that a stable source for answers when my world is caving in around me? Certainly not!

Wisdom is the answer when life is full of confusion, but not the wisdom from mere man – rather the wisdom from God. That's why James 1:5 tells us that if we lack wisdom, we should ask for it. James puts a caveat on the way we should ask though. He says our asking should be from a faith-filled and believing heart rather than a heart that is constantly changing like the waves of the sea. In the storms of life, a faith filled with belief in Jesus is a much wiser choice because you'll soon discover that what is *over* your head is *under* His feet. After all, Jesus walks on water – that's not a knowledge thing; it's a wisdom thing!

Focus question: What can stabilize an unstable mind and heart?

Group Discussion

- Discuss the difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom.
- What do the following verses tell you about wisdom from God? Psalm 119:18, Proverbs 2:1-7, 9:10, Matthew 11:27, Luke 24:45, John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
- In the midst of the storms of life, why is it important to ask for wisdom before anything else?
- How would you liken “circumstances” to the analogy of “the waves of the sea”? Why is this not a good way to live?
- Define faith (see Hebrews 11:1, 6). Read Daniel 3:16-18. How does the response from these three men show a single-minded commitment and confidence in God despite outward circumstances?
- James 1:6 says, “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting ...” The word *doubt* indicates confusion. It means *to separate*, *to withdraw* or *to oppose*. Doubting, therefore, shows a separation from or lack of dependency on God.

Give examples of areas of doubt in your life, and think about these questions:

- In light of who God is, what part of His character am I separating from Him when I choose to doubt?
- Am I trusting my own abilities in this situation more than God's unfailing character?
- If I am doubting God, who or what am I depending on in this situation? (Myself, knowledge of others, money, status)
- Discuss Exodus 13:17-14:31.
 - How did Moses display wisdom and an unwavering faith in God during this crisis?
 - In Exodus 14:10-12 the Israelites' faith became very unstable. What wisdom did Moses give them to help stabilize their faith? (See verses 13-14.)
 - How can you apply this wisdom to a situation you or someone you know may be facing today?
 - In verses 21-25 the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. Discuss ways they exercised their faith. Discuss ways God provided for their protection and needs through their Red Sea journey.
 - Share with your group a "Red Sea" moment God has taken you through. How did you seek the wisdom of God throughout your crisis? Did your faith waver during your journey? What wisdom did you apply in order to stabilize your faith during the process? Do you know any doubters? Will you ask God for an opportunity to use this testimony of belief to encourage a neighbor, co-worker, or friend this week?

Further Study (to be used in your personal Quiet Time)

The Wisdom of a Tested Faith:

The only faith that can be trusted is a faith that has been tested. Therefore, there is always wisdom and purpose in the way God chooses to refine our faith. Let these verses challenge the way you view complications this week.

- Deuteronomy 8:2-5, Psalm 66:10-12, Isaiah 48:10, Zechariah 13:9, Matthew 13:20-21, Romans 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Revelation 2:10

Two Tools for the Test:

- God's Word: *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ.* – Romans 10:17
- Prayer: *Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.* – 1 Chronicles 16:11

For additional resources, visit warrenlifenotes.com.