

Study Questions:

Opener: What principle from the sermon impacted you the most?

Opener: How do you go about determining God's will in decisions that you make?

[1:2-12] How can someone have joy amidst trials?

[1:2-12] Based on what we've heard in Proverbs and in James, how does God provide wisdom to those who ask?

[3:13-18] According to this passage, what does a wise person do and not do? Describe people that you know that you would consider men or women of Godly wisdom.

[3:13-18] What are some ways that you have battled bitterness in your life? How were you able to make it through those trials?

[4:13-17] What is God's perspective on our plans?

[James 1:2-4:17] How will this study affect your prayer life?

# James 1:2-12, 3:13-18, and 4:13-17: Living with Wisdom from God

## Member Guide



**Small Group Study** – Each week our small groups team works alongside Pastor J.D. to create a small group study which corresponds to his sermon that week. The study examines a related passage of scripture to the text he preaches through with the goal of challenging small groups to grow both in their confidence in studying the bible and in their application of the truths brought out in the sermon.

Context: James is an epistle that is fundamentally concerned with wise living, which makes it a great companion to Proverbs. James gives sage advice for living faithfully amidst all kinds of circumstances: during trials, in richness and in poverty, in sickness, and in suffering. Wise living amidst those circumstances, in James' view, includes: prayer (1:5, 5:13-15), perseverance (1:2-4, 5:7-11), putting God's Word into practice (1:22-25, 2:14-26), being impartial (2:1-9, 3:17), and controlling your speech (1:19, 1:26, 3:1-12). Like any good preacher, James takes pains to show the negative effects of living unwisely and the positive effects of living wisely, both in this life and the next. Here are some of the effects:

### Unwise Living

Instability (1:8)  
Sin and Death (1:15)  
Rotted Riches (5:1-5)

### Wise Living

Maturity, perfection (1:4)  
Crown of Life from God (1:12)  
God will draw near to you (4:8)

Theme: The theme of this week's discussion centers on wisdom from God amidst your circumstances. The first passage, James 1:2-12, talks about the positive effects that God can bring those who endure suffering. Not only can God bring polished character and a reward to the steadfast, but He will also give wisdom to those who ask in faith. This passage indicates that God can use trials to work His will into our lives.

The second passage, James 3:13-18, contrasts wise living, which will bring peace, with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. These latter traits are enemies to wisdom and have the opposite effect of peace. Being "peaceable" emerges as God's will for the community of faith.

Third, James 4:13-17, echoes the idea from Proverbs 16 that a person's plans will not come to fruition if it is not God's will. The teaching here in James is deeper than simply tacking "Lord willing" at the end of our statements about the future. Rather, James is conveying that a person ought to have a perspective on their own plans, that only by the will of God will they come to pass. This understanding can change our demeanor towards humility, give us a piece of God's perspective on our plans, and help us to make plans that are more in line with God's will.

Aim: The purpose of this study is that our members would come away with a better understanding of God's will for our lives:

- 1) It is God's will that we live wisely- this is a major theme of James' epistle.
- 2) God's will is that we should pray, and it is God's will that we receive the wisdom that we ask for!
- 3) God's will can sometimes include allowing you to be confronted with adversity. He will use those trials to accomplish His will! Let this give us courage and faith in all seasons of life.
- 4) God's will is that you not always get what you want in life, mainly because it will interfere with the perfecting work that He has decreed for your life.

What James does not promise is that we will get a clear understanding of all near-future events. What James does promise is that we will get wisdom while He works His will into our lives. The believer can live unwavering amidst any circumstance because He knows God is working on his behalf.