

Wisdom in times of affliction

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Date: 17 January 2016

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[0 : 00] James chapter 1, we read these verses 5 to 8. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Then giveth to all men liberally, and upbredeth not, and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. We read then in this first verse 5, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally.

Wisdom, direction, knowing what to decide, what to choose. That is something we all of us need at every stage in our lives. And it is good if we have the Lord to direct us and to help us.

I remember I was quite surprised some years ago, hearing a very senior and experienced Christian saying, in the context of conversation about guidance and praying for the Lord's help and so on, Is it right, he said, to ask and expect God to tell us what we should and shouldn't do?

[1 : 14] Is it right to expect us to get God to lead us and give us an answer and direction and so on? Initially, I remember being quite surprised at the question and thinking, Well, of course it must be right.

Of course we should be asking God what we should do and where we should turn and the direction we should go. But what he was getting at was that, Not just that perhaps we should prayerfully step out in faith, And, you know, that the Bible is clear enough for us, We know what we should and shouldn't do, And as long as our ways are committed to the Lord, Then we can just take the direction that we feel is right and so on.

And it is certainly true that for questions of right and wrong, The Bible is clear and far clearer than probably most of us are comfortable with, Or most of us would like to admit.

On almost all matters of principle or morality or right and wrong of any description, God has already spoken clearly in his word.

And if it is a question of right and wrong, We ought not to be asking the Lord, As though we hoped for a different answer from what his word already says.

[2 : 33] As I've probably cited as an illustration in the past, One of the fiercest routes I ever got from my father as a young boy Was when I asked him if I could do something or other, And he had said no.

And then later on, I went and asked my mum to see if I would get a different answer. And just my provenance, As I was asking her, My dad came into the room and then said, I'd already said to you, You couldn't do that.

And of course, Then that put mum in a difficult position. And she was going to say no anyway, But it certainly made things very awkward. And I got such an hour for trying to divide between mum and dad And trying to get a different answer from one than what I got from the other.

Now the Lord has already given us his answers on the vast majority of principles And of decisions in terms of what is right, what is wrong, what is his will, what is his teaching.

And if he has already given us clear instruction in his word, It is not legitimate for us then to say, Oh well Lord, what should I do about this? Because I really want to do this.

[3 : 41] And I don't really like what it says in your word. And I'd rather do something different. I'd rather do something else. We're not going to get anything from the Lord then. We don't have the right to ask then.

But we're talking here about wisdom. Not about obedience or disobedience to God's word. Wisdom is needed, for example, If there is more than one potential right thing to do.

If there's a right and a wrong, the Bible is clear. But what if there's more than one right thing to do? For example, let's say that you're at the various stage in your career, Or you're starting out and you

apply for various jobs or whatever, And you get more than one job offer.

What are you to do if you get two or three offers of jobs? Yeah, well just go for the one with the biggest salary. Or just go for the one with the best conditions. But no, that would be a situation where it is right to ask God's guidance and wisdom and direction As to where you should turn. What you should do. Because it's not wrong to take, Assuming there's nothing immoral or improper in any of the jobs concerned. It's not wrong to take this job over against that job.

[5 : 00] It's not wrong to accept this offer over against a different offer. But what the Lord would have you to do. What is the wise and the prudent thing?

What is the obedient, diligent thing to do? The Lord may have something to guide you with on that. That is not wrong. And I would suggest with full respect to the Christian gentleman concerned. That there are some occasions, Not when there's a right and a wrong, Or not when God's word has not spoken on something, But where there's potentially more than one right. We do need the guidance of God. What if, for example, An attractive young woman, see, Has more than one suitor for her hand in marriage.

Or young gentleman, for that matter. If there is more than one person Who is pulling her heart in two different directions, And each of them wants to marry you. Each of them makes an offer.

[5 : 55] You can't just necessarily say, Well, so-and-so asked first, so I better pick them. If your heart is being pulled in a different direction, And you're not sinning in either respect, Then you have to seek the Lord's guidance.

You have to bring it to the Lord. You have to ask for the wisdom. Because it's not a sin to do the one or the other. What if you're house hunting? And there are several within the bracket of your price range, And you want to know where the Lord would have you to live.

What the Lord would have you to do. What about when you're a younger person, You've got subject choices at school. And they always seem to demand that of you, You know, far earlier than you feel ready for.

But you don't know what direction your future or your career is going to take. Yet they want you to choose, Whether physics or maths or geography or history Or whatever, maths or whatever it might be.

And they want choices. It is not wrong to take these things to the Lord. And to seek what he would have us to do. Or to seek his guidance. Because there isn't a clear right and wrong.

[7 : 01] Or indeed, if you think in terms of ministry, I remember a colleague who, When he came out for the ministry, He received five calls from different congregations.

And he was at a loss to know what to do. So he asked different colleagues, As colleagues to gather with him. And to pray about it. As to what the Lord's will would be.

Now clearly, it's not a sin. It's not wrong to accept any one of these calls To the holy ministry for that particular gentleman. But he wanted to know where the Lord would have him to be.

And if you turn the coin around, If a congregation is vacant and is seeking A minister of their own, It's not wrong to ask this one or ask that one or ask the next one.

As you seek the Lord's guidance and wisdom on it. We are promised in these verses That the Lord give it liberally to all.

[7 : 55] That is to all different categories of people. Provide it, of course, That they ask. It's not just the case, Oh, the Lord gives it absolutely everybody regardless.

The clear context here is that Ask, and it shall be given. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened. Regardless of whether they're Jew or Gentile Or whatever the case may be.

Or whatever they're old or young or anything. If we ask the Lord, If any of you lack wisdom, Let him ask of God. That giveth to all men liberally, And upbraid of not.

And it shall be given him. But the particular context of this, Verse 5, On those that follow him, If we look at verses 2 to 4, The context.

My brethren, Count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations, Knowing this, That the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, That ye may be perfect, An entire wanting nothing.

[8 : 57] If any of you lack wisdom, Let him ask of God. The context is of trials, Sufferings, Testings, Afflictions. That's what James is writing about.

That's what much of this first chapter is about. Temptations, Pressures, Afflictions, Perhaps persecutions. When the Christians are having bad experiences, That they would rather not have.

Now James is unique, In that his letter is explicitly, Addressed to Jewish Christians, James, A servant of God, And of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes, Poetic name for the Israelites, Obviously, Which are scattered abroad.

Greeting. Now he's explicit. Peter might be addressing Jewish believers, When he talks in 1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 1, To the strangers scattered throughout, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, And Bithynia.

He might be addressing Jews, Who are dispersed, Throughout all these places, And areas. But, He doesn't specify, It's not explicit. And although the letter to the Hebrews, Is obviously written to Jewish, Oblique Hebrew Christians, The form of address, At the beginning, Is not explicit.

[10:18] Obviously, It has a lot of Jewish idioms, And thoughts, The temple, The tabernacle, The sacrifices, Which a Jew is more likely, To pick up on, Than a Gentile, But it's not explicit.

It just begins, God, Who at sundry times, In diverse places, Revealed himself, By prophets, And so on, Half of these last days, Revealed himself, By his son, Jesus Christ. But, Although, James, Is explicitly written, In the first instance, To Jewish believers, What he says, Is applicable to all, Whether Jew, Or Gentile.

And when it says, In verse 5, If any of you, My wisdom, The if, It's not really a question, You know, If this is the case, It's rather, You know, As Jacob said to the Lord, At Bethlehem, You know, If you will provide, You know, With food and raiment, And so on, Then you will be my God.

But it's more a case of, Since you are providing, Since this is the case, It's not so much a question, It's a statement, Of an undecivable fact, Like in Malachi, Chapter 1, Verse 6, Where we read, A son honoureth his father, And a servant his master, If then I be a father, God is saying, Where is my honour?

And if I be a master, Where is my fear? Saith the Lord, Of hosts unto you, O priest that despise my name. And you say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Now when God says, If I am a father, If I am a master, He's not saying, Well, Maybe I am, Maybe I am it.

[11:48] He's saying, Since I am, Where is my fear? Where is the honour, That is due to me? And this is the sense here, If any of you lack wisdom, It's not saying, Maybe you do, Maybe you don't, It's rather, Since any of you lack wisdom, Since we all, Lack wisdom, Let him ask of God.

It is not a question mark. It is almost like a rhetorical statement. It is so self-evident. We all stand in need of God's wisdom.

If then the context, Verses two to four, Is of trials and afflictions and sufferings, It is interesting that James does not cancel prayer so much For the removal of an affliction, Or a trial, Or a difficulty, So much as for wisdom, To make a right use of it.

I'll say that again. In the context, James does not cancel that we should pray for the affliction to be removed, But rather that we should seek the wisdom of God, As to make the best and right use of these afflictions and trials and testings.

As we have seen, Even in ordinary life, And the management of one's own affairs, And daily business, There's always going to arise situations where we need the wisdom and guidance of the Lord.

[13:19] Wisdom is needed in ordinary life, But to be wise in the midst of trying and afflicting times is an especial gift of God.

And so to him we must seek for it. The Lord, In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Has far more abundant supply from which to meet our needs than as any man or any other source.

And as already mentioned, We have this statement of fact, Of promise. It shall be given him. It says, It shall be given to all men liberally, The Lord seeks to give to.

Now, Romans chapter 12, Verse 8, Uses the same word in the original, But translates it differently. It says in Romans 12, Verse 8, Let him that giveth, Let him do it with simplicity.

But it's the same word that is translated here in James as liberally. It doesn't just mean with generosity, Although that is also implied in it. But rather it means, In the terms of simplicity, It means without being attended with anything extra, That would diminish the goodness of the gift.

[14:34] And we think, Well, That's awful complicated. What does that actually mean here? Well, If you think about it, It says, And upbraideth not. We know that if human beings are asked for help, Then they'll say, Yeah, Okay, Yeah, No other thing, You want me to help?

If you ask them for help another time, They say, Okay, Yeah, I'm alright, There you go, I'm alright, I'll help you with what I'm eating. You ask them a third time, I think, Are you not able to do this for yourself? You know, Well, Keita, I'll help you this time, But you know, Come on, You've got to get a movement.

You ask them again, Oh, Come on, This is going a bit far. When are you going to get your act together? We very quickly run out of sympathy.

Our compassion fatigue kicks in very quickly. And because we are the poorer somewhat for whatever we give to others, We quickly begin to lose patience and to resent being asked again and again and again.

And it is perfectly possible for somebody to, yes, give what is asked, But to hedge it about with so much kind of spiking that I might say, You realize this is the third time this month I'm giving an idea. [15:46] For goodness sake, Okay, Here you go, Here's what you need, But come on, I keep on here. When are you going to do anything for yourself here? And yes, They give, But it is hedged about with upbraiding and with that which, Having added to the gift, Eats out the benefit of it.

It takes away from it. It is not the simplicity that Paul is speaking about in Romans 12, At verse 8. Whoever is giving, Let him do it with simplicity, With liberality here as we have it in James.

If you ask for, You give it. And that's it. You don't make it more difficult or more awkward By adding little sort of barbs or spikes or reminders Of how often you've given in the past.

God isn't like that. That's what men are like. That's not what God is like. When we ask God for help, He's got such an abundance, Because he is not made the poor of them. He loves to have us come and get in touch with him.

He loves to be asked. He loves to hear from his children. He wants us to ask him for wisdom and guidance and help. It is an indication that we recognize the reality of the situation.

[17:01] We recognize what he has got and what we don't. And we are prepared to ask. And ask in faith, Nothing wavering. And he give it to all such.

Liberally. With simplicity. Without adding any little barbs or spikes That might detract from the good or the benefit of it.

Now, where the Lord gives, He always gives. In abundance. We remember, of course, a classic example. Where Solomon, speaking about wisdom, Asked the Lord for wisdom.

1 Kings 3. Verse 11. God said to him, Because thou hast asked this thing, And it's not asked for thyself long life, Neither hast asked riches for thyself, Nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, But it asked for thyself understanding, To discern judgment.

Behold, I have done according to thy words. Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, So that there was none like thee before thee, Neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

[18:02] And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, Both riches and honor, So that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

Solomon asked for wisdom, But he could have asked for all these other things. And the Lord gives him not only wisdom, But riches and honor and blessing and long life and victory over his enemies. He asks a little and God gives him abundance. Liberally. The prodigal comes to his father and asks that he might be a hired servant. And the father makes him a feast, Killing the fatted calf, The robe on his back, The ring on his finger, The shoes on his feet, The party, The dancing, The music, Everything.

He has made a celebrity by his father. Above and beyond anything he could have asked. Abraham asks the Lord for one son. And the Lord says to him, Your descendants will be as the stars in the sky for multitudes.

Now, remember that we might think, Yeah, okay, But Abraham doesn't actually live to see that, does he? So, I mean, that doesn't really count. But even in his lifetime, Remember that the Lord says, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

[19:18] He doesn't just give him Isaac. He's already by then given him Ishmael. Ishmael himself has, I can't remember whether it's six or twelve sons. I suspect it's the latter. Then they have children, And they have children, And so on.

And Abraham's descendants of Ishmael alone begin to multiply. Isaac then with his twins Esau and Jacob, They likewise multiply. Abraham marries again after the death of Sarah.

Keturah, his second wife, Bears of at least six sons, perhaps more. I can't remember without checking it out. But, you know, In his lifetime, His descendants have begun to multiply.

They're not as the stars of heaven just yet, But they will become so. Even in his lifetime, He sees the fulfillment of what God has promised him, Over and above what he has asked.

Jacob, when he is at Bethel, Asks the Lord, As we mentioned a wee while ago, For just food and raiment, To look after his basic necessities. And yet he himself testifies, When he comes back across the river, He says, I parted across this river with just my staff, And now look, I have become two bands.

[20 : 29] And by that he meant that whilst he was in exile, He has flocks and herds and multiplied, He had his two wives, Rachel and Leah, He had their children, He had the maidservants and their children, His family, His servants, His retainers, Had multiplied.

He was a rich man when he came back. And yet he had crossed that river With just his staff in his hand, And nothing but a stone for his pillow. And he had asked the Lord, Just for the basic necessities, And the Lord gave abundance.

Likewise, Saul went seeking Samuel, And he was asking him about lost donkeys. And when Samuel spoke to Saul, It wasn't about the donkeys. He said, Look, The donkeys, You were seeking it, They've been fine.

Leave that aside. We've got more important things to talk about. The kingdom itself. The crown of Israel. The first king of the Lord's people, Israel.

So all was to be that. He asked for the one little thing. And yes, He got it, But that's almost like too easy. Donkeys, Yes, Okay, They've been fine. Don't worry about it.

[21 : 32] Now we're talking kingdoms. Isaiah. And so it is with the Lord. We ask what is little, And we ask what is least. Often, Not because we don't want to seem greedy, There's that much perhaps, But also we think if we ask too much, God will think we're greedy, And he won't give it to us, Or else maybe God won't want to, Or else perhaps, Secretly we think, God actually, Probably can't do this, You know, We're asking, Yes, We're believing, But we don't actually think he can do it.

Now that is simply lack of faith. That is the wavering. That is the double-mindedness, That James is talking about here. It's like the Lord, And the nobleman, In 2 Kings, I think it is for Elisha, Is in Samaria, And he says, About this time, Tomorrow, In the midst of the famine, He says, You know, Meat will be sold for this, And corn will be sold for that, And he says, If the Lord should open windows in heaven, Could such a thing be?

In other words, How could even God, Do the likes of this? And yet it was fulfilled. Now when we doubt the Lord's ability, Or power, Or perhaps willingness to help, That is this wavering, That is spoken of here.

God desires to give, Liberally, He desires to bless, He is not like, Human beings, Whose compassion, Is quickly spent, And who quickly go cold, In their concern, For their feral men and women.

Jesus says, Ask and it shall be given, Seek and it shall find, Knock, And it shall be opened unto you. If we ask the Lord for wisdom, He giveth to all liberally, And upbraideth not, It shall be given him.

[23 : 21] And because it is there for the asking, If fools, Who say in their heart, There is no God, Or who will not approach the Lord, For pride's sake, Or because of their unbelief, If fools perish, In their foolishness, There is none to blame, But themselves, For wisdom could have been had, For the asking, The fear of the Lord, Is at the beginning of wisdom, The knowledge of the holy, Is understanding, Ask and it shall be given, But let him ask in faith, Nothing wavering, For he that wavereth, Is like a wave of the sea driven, With the wind unto us.

Now, What we've got there in this, Is verse 6, Let him ask in faith, We know what Hebrews says, Faith is the substance of things hoped for, The evidence of things not seen, We don't see God, But what we ask for him, We ask the living God, Who we cannot see, For things that have not yet been fulfilled, It is pure faith, But it's going to be faith, That holds fast to the belief, That the Lord will do it, That he can do it, That he desires to do it, Because it is honouring to him, He's not going to grant just carnal things, He's not going to grant just worldly desires, To gratify our own worldly ambitions, You know, In chapter 4, James says, You know, You lust and have not, Ye kill and desire to have, And cannot obtain, Ye fight and war, Yet ye have not, Because ye ask not, Ye ask and receive not, Because ye ask in this, That ye may consume it upon your lusts, In other words, If we're asking for that,

Which is to honour the Lord, And to enable us to live for him, To further his kingdom, He will honour that, He will honour such requests, If they are asked in faith, But we have to ask in faith, Nothing

wavering, See this, Wavering, It's like a wave of the sea, Tossed and driven with the wind, Now that's a reference to being battered, From the outside, And tossed, Is a reference to sort of, Destabilisation, In tossed from the inside, It's like, Ephesians chapter 4, We're reading verse 14, That we henceforth, Be no more children, Tossed to and fro, And carried about, With every wind of doctrine, By the slake of men, And cunning craftiness, Whereby the lion waits, To deceive, We can't afford to be like that, Tossed about with every wind, We're going to be rather like Abraham, Of whom we read in Romans 4, At verse 20, He staggered not, At the promise of God, Through unbelief, But was strong in faith,

Giving glory to God, Previous verse says, You know, Being not weak in faith, He considered not his own body, Now dead, When he was about a hundred years old, Neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, He staggered not, He wasn't wavering, He was not like a man, That wavereth, Is like a wave of the sea, Then tossed and driven to and fro, He staggered not, Same idea, Same description, Staggered not at the promise of God, Through unbelief, But was strong in faith, Giving glory to God, Because as it says, Let not that man think, That he shall receive anything of the Lord, If he's filled with doubt, Well maybe God will do, Maybe he won't, But I suppose, I can ask and hope, You know, If we doubt God's ability, We won't get anything, You know, Remember how when Jesus said to the blind men, That wanted to receive their sight, He said, Do you believe I'm able to do this?

And they said, Yes Lord, We do, He said, Be it according to your faith, And when the father came with his son, Who was possessed with the evil spirit, He says, If you can do anything, Help us, And the father said, Well if you can believe, All things are possible, And that's when he fell to his knees, And said, Lord I believe, Help thou my unbelief, I know my faith isn't as it should be, But help it to be, What it should be, He wasn't double minded, He truly wanted to believe, He truly wanted the Lord to help him, A double minded man is unstable, In all his ways, Now the word that we have, Translated here, Is double minded, It's a very unusual, Use of the Greek, It's only used, Again in James, In chapter 4 verse 8, It says, Draw an eye to God, He will draw an eye to you, Cleanse your hands, Ye sinners, And purify your hearts, Ye double minded, Now one translation of that means, Having two souls,

[27 : 58] Double soul, Double hearted, As though there is one for the Lord, And one for the rest of the world, You know, We bring out the one for God, And we want to impress him, But you know, There's also the other one, That we keep for everybody else, To say two face, Is, It's too shallow, It doesn't cut it, Double minded, Is the sense of having these two souls, As though there is one for this occasion, And one for that occasion, What is the real us?

You know, David cried out to the Lord, Unite my heart, Give me that single minded, Devotion to thee, Lord, That I may be united, In my heart for thee, Double minded, It's a picture of either, Hypocrisy, On the one hand, As having two different hearts, In two different situations, Or it's a sense of, Doubting the Lord, Saying, Well, I think he can't, No, I don't think he can't, Well, Maybe he could, No, No, I don't think he will, Toss the bat, Inside it, And one minute we think, Yes, Yes, I do believe in the Lord, No, No, No, I don't think I can, And this double mindedness, This means, That we can't, Receive from the Lord, Because we won't, Hold on to him, And trust in him, And wait upon him, This double mindedness, It's either hypocrisy, Delivered falsity, Or, It's this weakness, Which divides, Our love, Divides, Our attention,

To the Lord, Now, It's the contrast, That we have here, Is what for example, With the apostles, In Acts chapter 2, Where we read that, In verse 46, They, Continuing daily, With one accord, In the temple, And breaking bread, From house to house, They eat their meat, With gladness, And singleness, Of heart, Praising God, And having favour, With all the people, And the Lord, Added to the church, Daily, Such as should be saved, The Lord, Built them up, And added to them, Because, Of their singleness, Of heart, Devotion to him, They did eat their meat, With gladness, And singleness, Of heart, Remember what Jesus says, In Matthew 6, Verse 22, If I be single, Focused, Upon that one thing, Then the whole body, Is full of light, If a man is unstable, In all his ways, Then it is because, As he is in regard to God, So he will be with regard,

To work, To commitments, To business, To relationships, In every aspect of his life, All his ways, Are affected, And coloured, By the nature, And quality, Of his relationship, To the Lord, I'll say that again, All his ways, Are affected, And coloured, By the nature, And quality, Of his relationship, To the Lord, And if there is this, Foundational distrust, Of God's love, And good intentions, Then that will affect, Every area, Of his life, If he is not right, With God, Then he will not be right, As he should

be, In every other aspect, Of his life, It is like, A strong, Seeming wall, And all the cement, Has been dug out, Between the bricks, And you just push it, And something will fall out, When one falls out, Another one will come loose, And so on, It looks very strong, Until you push at it, And if all the cement, Is taken out, And there is no foundation, Then it is going to fall, It will affect, Every other area, Of our lives, A double minded man, Is unstable, In all his ways, If we cannot be singly focused, And reliant upon the truth, And faithfulness, And certainty of God, Then what can you actually rely on, What do you actually believe in, If you are not able to focus, Upon the certainty, And foundational security, Of the Lord himself, What do, You actually believe in, Where does, Such a person, Place their, Ultimate trust, Is it in themselves, Is it in their fellow men, And women, Is it in the world, Who or what do you regard, As your ultimate, Foundation, If not,

[32 : 27] The Lord, That is what these verses, Are asking, A double minded man, Is unstable in all his ways, He has to ask in faith, Or he won't receive, Anything, Now ironically, And this is an infanition here, Ironically, What sometimes causes us, To pull away, From the Lord, Are the very things, Which he is seeking to use, To draw us, To him, You see, We are, Hurt, And offended, When the Lord, Allows, Or perhaps, Causes, If I can say that reverently, Bad things to happen to us, If in the Lord's providence, Hardships, Or bad things, Or difficulties, Happened to us, We think, Well Lord, Why did you let that happen, How could you let, How could you even, Cause that to happen, We feel, They shouldn't have happened, To us, Because we were trying, To be good, And to serve, And love the Lord, We were trying to be, Faithful Christians, Why would this happen to us, You know, We can see,

Why it might happen, To people who, Defy the Lord, Or who are, Angry with the Lord, Or who are, We're trying to do our best, Lord, Why should this, Happen to us, We're trying to be faithful, Trying to be good, And we feel, As if the heathens, And unbelievers, Are laughing at us, Saying so much, For your God, Where is now your God, We seek to be good, We seek to be loyal, And faithful, So we think that such things, Should go well with us, But, As one commentator put it, They want for most, Who want for nothing, In other words, If everything is going, Swimmngly in our lives, And we've got plenty, In abundance, And we, And all in our life, We've got plenty of food, And drink, And shelter, And want, We don't, We don't actually, Really need the Lord, Do we?

And that's the very thing, The Lord warned his people about, In Deuteronomy, When you enter, Into the promised land, When you've got houses, You didn't build, And vineyards, You didn't plant, When you've got plenty of food, And drink, And you'll care, Lest you forget, The Lord, You're God, When everything is going, And we think, We think, We need the Lord, Less, And partly, For that reason, When those, Who do not see, Their meat, Are blessed, With such abundance, It is almost like, It is almost like, Cushioning, Insulation, To keep them, Further and further, Away from the Lord, So yes, Sometimes the devil, Is quite happy, For those who hate the Lord, To have abundance, Because it insulates them, Against the need, That might drive them, To the Lord, If you think about it, The Lord, Actually, Wants, Closer, Tighter,

More, Near, Dependence upon him, He wants to draw us, Nearer to himself, Remember what Jesus said, About the branch, That beareth fruit, What does he do, Does he pat it on the head, And say, Well done branch, I'm going to leave you in peace, No, Every branch, That beareth fruit, He purgeth it, That it might bring forth, More fruit, And when one is being faithful, To the Lord, When one is seeking, To love the Lord, And trying to walk with it, Yes, He may test, And try in that faith, He may exercise it, He may put it under strain, So that the soul is drawn, To flee, For more help to the Lord, He wants to fold them, Closer, He wants to draw them, Nearer, Into himself, The father would not, Have heard, In the prodigal son's story, He would not have heard, From the prodigal, If he had not, First begun, To be in what, Would such crowds,

Have flocked, Initially to Jesus, If there had not, First been, Such widespread, Incidents, Of afflictions, Of lameness, Blindness, Leprosy, Demon possession, It is because, These things, Were in such, Abundance, In Palestine, And in the holy land, In the first century, That there were crowds, Offing to Jesus, Because so many, Lame and blind, And demon possessed, And leprosy ridden people, They needed Jesus, And they knew, Their need, God, May sanctify, The worst, Of conditions, The worst, Of trials, And afflictions, And difficulties, And testings, And temptations, To bring us, To the best, Of remedies, Even to bring us, To himself, My brother, And it all joy, When ye fall, Into diverse temptations,

[37 : 17] Knowing this, That the trying, Of your faith, Worketh patience, But let patience, Have her perfect work, That ye may be, Perfect and entire, Wanting nothing, If you want to know, Either

purpose, Or cause, Or the right, And best use, Of this affliction, This trial, This temptation, You can't make it go away, You can't undo, What has been done, You cannot, Unmake the providence, That has happened, So what will you do, With it, How will you respond, To it, If any of you, Lack wisdom, Let him ask, Of God, That is what, These verses, Are about, The trials, Afflictions, Temptations, Difficulties, That will, Come your way, Jew, Gentile, Man, Woman, Old, Young, They will, Come your way, What will you do, About it, We need, The guidance of God, We need, The wisdom, Of God, We need,

That the worst, Of conditions, Be sanctified, To us, To bring us, To the best, Of remedies, Even to the Lord, Where should we turn, What should we do, How should we respond, If any of you, Lack wisdom, Let him ask, Of God, Let us pray.