

A Person of Faith

Did you face a trial this past week? Are you in the midst of one right now? And if so, HOW are you praying about it? ARE you praying about it? In the passage that we are looking at today, James affirms that prayer is needed in our trials, but he also says that there is a way in which we must pray. What James says here adds to our understanding of the type of person who prays well. Today, we continue our seven-week sermon series on the topic of intercession and how we can be the kind of people who pray well.

Opening Discussion: What is a trial you are facing or have faced recently?

Read James 1:2-8

1. What perspective does James encourage us to have regarding our trials? Why?
2. Why is wisdom something that we need in the midst of our trials?
3. What does this passage say about God (v. 5)?
4. James says that in praying for wisdom we should pray in faith without any doubting (v. 6). What does it mean to pray without any doubting? What does it not mean?
5. Read Matthew 9:28-29; Matthew 21:20-22 and Hebrews 11:6. What additional insights do these passages add to our understanding of prayer and faith?

In the early 1900's in *Necessity of Prayer*, E.M. Bounds wrote:

Faith deals with God, and is conscious of God. It deals with the Lord Jesus Christ and sees in him a savior; it deals with God's Word, and lays hold of the truth; it deals with the Spirit of God, and is energized and inspired by its holy fire. God is the great object of faith; for faith rests its whole weight on his Word. Faith is not an aimless act of the soul, but a looking to God and a resting upon his promises. Just as love and hope have always an objective so, also, has faith. Faith is not believing just *anything*; it is believing God, resting in him, trusting his Word.

6. With this description of faith, why is doubt then so detrimental to effective prayer?

7. Sometimes when it comes to prayer we do have doubts, right? We have doubts about God and His character or we have doubts about whether or not we are praying according to God's will. How should we deal with such doubts? Another way to ask this is, how can we see our faith increased?

8. What's the difference between "faith in faith" and "faith in God"? Can you give examples of both?

9. What do you sense is the main thing God is saying to you about prayer and faith?