

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, June 8, 2025, at 10:00 am at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: How to Make up Our Mind

Series: Developing a Faith That Works – Part 2

No one would argue that Albert Einstein was one of the most brilliant people of the last 100 years. He developed the theory of relativity, and many things in modern science have been built on that significant theory. Some years ago, I read a humorous story about Einstein's life... Every day, we face complex decisions. I believe the same kind of wisdom that the chauffeur displayed would be incredibly helpful when we don't know what to do, especially in the challenges of our spiritual journey.

Today, we're continuing our new sermon series based on the Book of James. Last Sunday, we looked at how we can have power over our problems. This Sunday, we'll explore how to make wise decisions. Remember, God wants us to grow up. He wants us to become mature and wise Christians. As we grow to become more like in Christ, we're called to make decisions that are pleasing to Him.

As I mentioned before, the Book of James is a very practical book. In my opinion, it offers some of the most daily insights into our faith journey in the New Testament, much like the Book of Proverbs does in the Old Testament. It serves as a spiritual manual for Christian living. From the very beginning of the letter to the very end, James provides divine advice on how to live out our faith. Whether we realize it or not, life is full of decisions. In fact, life is essentially a series of choices we make every day. The quality and direction of our life are largely determined by the decision we've made whether big or small.

There is a story of young businessman who once approached an older, more experienced businessman and asked for his wisdom... It's a simple but profound truth. Since we're all imperfect human beings, there's always a chance we'll make the wrong call. But God can use even our failures. He wants us to learn from our mistakes so we can make better decision the next time around. This morning, I want us to look closely at what James teaches us about "how to make up our mind." In this passage, James gives us three things: the problem we face in decision making, the prescription for how to handle it, and the promise that God gives to those who seek His wisdom.

First, the problem James identifies is indecision. James writes, "Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do" (James 1:8). The Greek word for "double-minded" literally means "two-spirited." It paints the picture of a heart being pulled in two different directions—divided in loyalty, divided in focus, divided in priorities.

Indecision makes us unstable in three important ways: First, indecision causes mental and emotional strain... Second, indecision creates emotional instability in our relationships... James says, "That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:7). Third, indecision blocks our prayers and hinders our relationship with God...

The Bible consistently calls us to make a clear decision. In the Old Testament, the prophet Elijah challenged the people of Israel with these words: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). At that time, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel had led the nation away from God. They encouraged the worship of Baal—a false god believed to bring prosperity, especially in agriculture. But the people still remembered the true God and His laws. So they tried to follow both. They tried to serve God and Baal. It didn't work. They were caught between two opinions, two loyalties, two gods, and Elijah called them to choose. Jesus echoed that same divine challenge in the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24). Jesus was calling the people to stop wavering—to make a firm, clear decision to follow God alone.

Here is the truth: double mindedness leads to a double life. It is when we try to do our will and God's will at the same time—even when we know they're in conflict. This kind of divided heart leads to instability. It keeps us from fully surrendering, fully trusting, and fully living the life God desires for us. Again, the problem is indecision.

Second, what is the solution? James tells us clearly: "Get wisdom." He writes, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). Then James gives us three practical steps for how to receive that wisdom.

Firstly, we need to admit our need for wisdom. James says, "If any of you lacks wisdom..." Let's be honest—we all lack wisdom at times. It is universal. We may have knowledge, but wisdom is something deeper. Wisdom is not just knowledge—it is knowledge applied in our lives. It is seeing life from God's point of view. It is making decisions the way God would make them. Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." Pride blocks wisdom. We cannot learn if we think we already know it all. So the starting point is humility...

Secondly, we need to ask for wisdom. James says it plainly: "You should ask God." That means we pray. So how do we get wisdom? Is it through popular podcasts? Reading best-selling books? Watching videos or researching online? Taking so-called "smart pills"? No! The Bible says true wisdom comes from God. "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

In our Old Testament reading today, God appeared to King Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you" (1 Kings 3:5). Now imagine for a moment: What if God asked you that same question. What would you ask for? If we are honest, many of us, including myself, might be tempted to ask for money. We think money can solve so many problems. But remember this: We can go anywhere in the world with money, except the Kingdom of God. We can buy many things with money—but not joy, not peace, not wisdom, and certainly not salvation. Yes, it is good and right to pray for things like a good job, a strong economy, affordable housing, good health, or a godly

marriage partner. And there is nothing wrong with praying for these things—they are important. But there is something even greater that we are invited to ask for: wisdom. Solomon understood that. He thought carefully before responding to God's invitation. He said, "Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king... Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong..." (1 Kings 3:7-9). God was pleased with what Solomon asked. God saw Solomon's heart. And not only He give Solomon wisdom—He gave him, riches, honor, and long life. Solomon became the wisest man who ever lived. He wrote over 3,000 proverbs and composed many songs. He became the wealthiest and respected king of his day. But all of that began with one humble request: God, give me wisdom."

As God's servant, I can say this honestly: I pray Solomon's prayer—asking God for wisdom—every single day... Today, I am deeply thankful to the Holy Spirit—our Wonderful Counsellor—who has so generously and graciously given us His wisdom. Because of that wisdom, we've been able to make the right choices, walk in unity, and continue working together as a Heavenly team for our God-given mission.

Thirdly, after admitting our need and asking God for wisdom, we need to anticipate it. In other words, we need to expect an answer in faith. James emphasizes not only the importance of praying, but also the attitude we bring when we pray: "If any of you lacks wisdom you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt" (James 1:5-6). If we want wisdom, we must ask the right person—God. Then, we must ask the right way—in faith, not doubting. The key to wisdom is prayer with faith.

Let me ask you: Have you ever prayed for something—but deep down, you didn't believe God would answer?... Do you remember the story of Peter walking on the water? Peter was a man who always wanted to be close to Jesus. One night, during a storm, the disciples were out in a boat, and Jesus came walking toward them on the water... But the moment he looked at the wind and waves, he became afraid and began to sink. Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). Here is the truth: The reason we often don't receive wisdom, or help, or peace, is because we are focused on the problem, not the Lord... If we keep our eyes on the storm, we'll sink. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, we'll walk through the storm. James says, "The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6). Even though we call ourselves believers, sometimes, we live like corks on the ocean, blown back and forth, victims of every circumstance.

Friends, what kind of storm are you going through right now? Let me tell you what the devil's ultimate goal is when he attacks God's children: He wants us to doubt, drift, and despair. He wants us to forget the faithfulness of God in our past, ignore His presence in our present, and lose hope in His promises for our future. But we as people of faith are supposed to declare: "I will keep my eyes on Jesus regardless of any challenges."

Let me share one more story. There was a little girl named Mary who lived in a town suffering from a long drought... Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." If we want to receive anything from God, we must believe in advance that He will provide it. That is faith. Thanking God after He answers is gratitude. Thanking God before He answers is faith. So, friends, let us be reminded once more of what God is saying to us today: Whatever challenge we are facing—we will make it if we keep believing in God.

Third, the promise is this: God will give it! One more time, let us listen to what James is saying to us: "If any of you lacks wisdom you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). Look closely at how God gives wisdom: Continually – "Ask God who gives..." Generously – God has more than enough wisdom for everyone—for you and me. Without finding fault – God gives cheerfully, not reluctantly... Aren't we glad that it is God's nature to give? And if we want to be more like Him, we need to become givers too—continually, generously, and cheerfully... Here is the key: God wants to give us wisdom. He is eager to give it. He is ready to give the best to His children—but we must ask.

Now, most of us don't carry the kind of responsibility King Solomon did. We are not kings or queens of nations. But each of us has God-given responsibilities in our families, in our work, in our church, in our communities. And we are called to make decisions that honor God, not just someday in the future—but right now. And let us be honest—sometimes we hit moments where we just don't know what to do. We feel stuck, overwhelmed, uncertain. Our natural instinct is to try to figure it out on our own. And yes, there is nothing wrong with using our minds and seeking advice. But as followers of Christ, our first response must always be to ask God. Why? Because He is the One we have invited to lead us. And a true Leader deserves to be consulted first.

So let me ask you: Where do you need wisdom today?... Whatever it is, bring it to God. But beyond all those choices, here is the most important one: Who is going to be number one in your life? Will it be you? Your job? Your money? Your plans? There is only one choice that brings true peace and stability: Letting God be number one. As Deuteronomy 6:5 reminds us: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." The most important decision we can ever make is to put God first...

Our daily challenge is to keep Jesus Christ on the throne of our hearts. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." So let's trust His leadership from beginning to end... When we love God with our whole heart and lean into His wisdom, He promises to guide us, direct us, and give us the wisdom we need. So today, friends, let's admit our need, ask God for wisdom, and anticipate the answer in faith. Let's believe—and receive—because God will give it.

**In this sermon I have used some material from the sermons of Rev. Rick Warren prepared for the series of sermons "Developing a Faith That Works."*