



the Wisdom of James

SUMMARY | From ancient times, the New Testament letter of James was attributed to James “the Lord’s brother” (Galatians 1:19). If so, we can be sure that, together with Jude (Jude 1:1), he didn’t grow up thinking of their older brother as the Savior of the world (John 7:5). Only after Jesus rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:7) would he think of himself as a servant of the exalted Lord (James 1:1; 2:1).

Interestingly, though, James doesn’t promote and distinguish himself as someone who grew up in the same house as Jesus. Instead, he treats his readers like members of the family and urges, “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way . . . If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking” (1:2, 5 NLT).

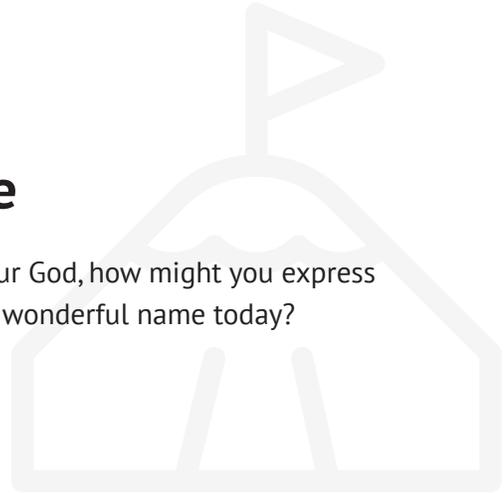
Later in the letter, we learn that James is speaking of a wisdom that offers a different way of responding to the insults and inequalities of life. After addressing problems surfacing among followers of Jesus, he writes, “Wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness” (James 3:16–18 NLT).

This Week’s Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of troubles you’ve had in the past that you can now say you are honestly thankful for?
2. How can both the poor and wealthy find joy despite their differing circumstances? (James 1:9–11).
3. In what sense do you think the joy and wisdom James is referring to are “pure”? What kind of contamination do pure joy and wisdom lack? (3:13–15).
4. How might a desire for peace grow out of realizing the kind of joy that is found in living under the influence of Christ without the pollution of envy, jealousy, and selfish ambition? (3:13–17).
5. As it took Jesus’ resurrection to convince James and Jude that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world, do you think such wisdom sounds attractive to someone who isn’t under the influence of Jesus? (1:1; 2:1).

Challenge

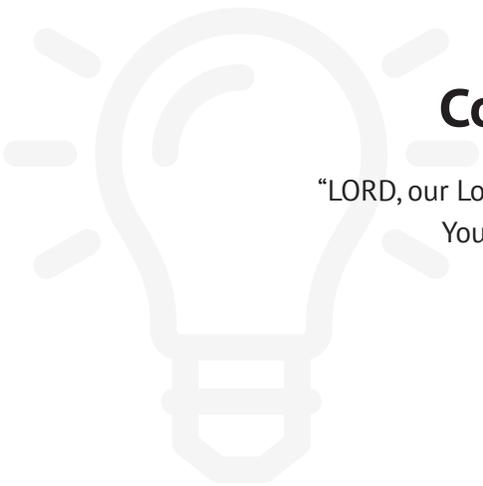
As we ponder the matchless, majestic name of our God, how might you express worship and praise to Him because of His wonderful name today?



Commit To Memory

“LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory in the heavens.”

Psalm 8:1



Prayer

Loving Lord, I praise You for who You are and for all You do.
I praise You for Your matchless name as the eternal God and for the name
of Your wonderful Son—the only name in heaven or earth by which we can
be saved! Amen.

