

“How to Make Up Your Mind”

Text: James 1:5-11

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

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Rev. Chris Gelini

This morning I want us to look at what James has to say on “How to Make up Your Mind”. Life is full of decisions and a series of choices every day. We have to evaluate, decide and draw conclusions.

- Frank Borham said, *“We make decisions and then our decisions make us.”* The quality of your life will be determined by the kind of decisions you make in your life. Some of them you regret; some of them you feel good about.
- A young businessman went to an executive one day and asked for his wisdom, *“What is the secret of business success?”* The man said, *“Wise decisions.”* *“How can I learn to make wise decisions?”* *“Experience.”* *“How do you get experience?”* *“Dumb decisions!”*

The fact is, because we are human we all have a great possibility for error. We wait too long; we pay too much; we say the wrong thing.

- Some of you are making difficult decisions this very week.
- Some of you don’t know it yet but you’ll have a major decision tomorrow.
- Life is full of choices.

James talks about how to make decisions. How do you make up your mind? He gives us the problem, then he gives us the prescription, then he gives us the promise from God.

Read James 1:5-11

Pray!

I. THE PROBLEM: INDECISION

A. vs. 8, ***“A double-minded person is unstable in all their ways.”***

1. The Greek for double-minded means “two-souled” – pulled apart in different directions, divided loyalties, divided priorities. We’ve all felt that way when you’re trying to do two things at the same time. You’re not really sure what you want.

B. Story by Dr. Seuss:

The Guy Who Couldn't Make Up His Mind

Did I ever tell you about the young Zoad
 Who came to two signs in the fork of the road
 He looked one way and the other way too
 The Zoad had to make up his mind what to do.
 Well, the Zoad scratched his head,
 And his chin, and his pants.
 And he said to himself,
 "I'll be taking a chance.
 If I go to Place One, that place may be hot
 So how will I know if I like it or not.
 On the other hand, though, I'll feel such a fool
 If I go to Place Two and find it's too cool
 In that case I may catch a chill and turn blue.
 So Place One may be best and not Place Two.
 On the other hand, though, if Place One is too hot,
 I might get a terrible earache and die.
 On the other hand, though, if Place Two is too low,
 I might get some terrible pain in my toe
 So Place One may be best."
 And he started to go.
 Then he stopped and he said,
 "On the other hand though,
 On the other hand, other hand, other hand though...
 For thirty-six hours and one half that Zoad
 Made starts and made stops at the fork in the road
 Saying, "No, don't take a chance. It may not be right.
 Then he got an idea that was wonderfully bright.
 "Play safe," cried the Zoad, "I'll play safe, I'm no dunce.
 I'll simply start off to both places at once."
 And that's how the Zoad who would not take a chance
 Went no place at all with a split in his pants.

C. Sometimes you've got to make a decision. Double-mindedness is devastating and debilitating. It makes you unstable, confused, in constant turmoil. **Three ways** indecision makes you unstable:

1. **Unstable emotions.** Worry, strain, loss of sleep and appetite happen when you can't decide. You wonder, "*Did I do the right thing?*" It creates emotional instability in your life when you can't make up your mind.

2. Unstable relationships.

- Lack of commitment destroys marriages. When you can't decide: Do I want in or do I want out? What am I going to do?
- When you're a parent and say one thing then you say another thing. We give double messages to our kids. It causes instability.
- You can't decide in a relationship.

3. Unstable spiritual life.

- Vs. 7, ***"That person will not think that they will receive anything from the Lord."***
- It blocks your prayers. Indecision keeps God from giving and you from receiving what God has to offer. Maybe you need to be more specific and have clear-cut goals.

D. Double-mindedness produces a double life. That's when you want to do your will and God's will at the same time. It produces and unstable life style.

II. The problem is indecision. What's the solution? James says, "Get wisdom".

A. Vs. 5, ***"If any of you lack wisdom you should ask God who give generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to them."*** Then he gives three practical steps:

1. **Admit your need.** ***"If any of you lacks wisdom..."*** We all lack wisdom. It is universal. Wisdom is different from knowledge. Wisdom is knowledge put into practice. Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view. Wisdom is making decisions the way God would make decisions. What do you do with knowledge? Do you put it into practice and make use of it?
2. **Ask.** Pray to God. Talk to Him. ***"If any of you lack wisdom you should ask God."*** How do you get wisdom? By listening to Dr. Laura? By reading "Cosmopolitan"? By watching TV? The Bible says you get wisdom by asking God. So you talk to God about it and you ask for wisdom. Proverbs 2:6, ***"It is the Lord who gives wisdom; from Him comes knowledge and understanding."***
 - King Solomon (wealth, fame, long life)
 - The reason we don't have wisdom is because we don't ask.
3. **Anticipate it.** Expect and answer in faith. ***"When you pray, if any of you lacks wisdom you should ask of 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."***

- **“not doubt”** First you’ve got to ask the right person. Then you’ve got to ask the right way – in faith, believing, not doubting. This means the key to wisdom is prayer, the condition is faith.
- **Peter walks on water.** The reason you don’t have wisdom is because you’re looking at the problem and not the Lord. Get your eyes off the problem, off the circumstance. Get your eyes on the Lord.
- Prayer should always be the first option, not the last.

III. THE PROMISE: GOD WILL GIVE IT!

A. **“If any one lacks wisdom you should ask God, who give generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”**

1. God wants to give you wisdom. He is eager. It pleases God when we come to Him and say, *“I haven’t the foggiest idea what I’m supposed to do. ...”* Ask God. It is God’s nature to give. Look how God says He’ll give wisdom:
 - **Continually.** **“Ask God who gives...”** In the Greek, that is in the continuous tense. He keeps on giving. He doesn’t run out of energy.
 - **Generously.** His resources are unlimited.
 - **Without finding fault.** God gives cheerfully and graciously. God is our model for giving. If we want to be like God we need to become giving people. God says, *“You give because I give.”*

Where do you need wisdom right now? What’s the biggest decision in your life?

- Is it a career decision? Marriage? Kids? Church membership? An investment?

It’s interesting that James gives us a practical application of where we need wisdom in vs. 9-11. Of all the areas James could have chosen to give as an example, **he chose money**. Why? More people make unwise decisions and foolish choices regarding their finances than almost anything else in the world.

- Many Christians are in financial bondage, because they are violating God’s principles.
- The point James is making in these verses is that regardless of poverty or prosperity we all need to realize that wealth is temporary and won’t last forever.
- Jesus said you can’t serve two masters. You can’t love God and money at the same time. We need to decide. Have we made up our mind what we’re going to save, to spend, tithe, give—those kinds of things.

There are a couple of things James is saying about decision-making:

1. God does not want to make the decision for you.

- He wants you to make the decisions, but based on His wisdom. Otherwise, you would never mature. God wants you to grow up.

2. God's wisdom is found in God's word.

- If I want wisdom I've got to get into His book. I get on my knees and say, "God, tell me what to do! Give me wisdom. Teach me principles that will apply in this situation." God's wisdom is found in God's word. We need to be reading through the Scripture continuously. The Bible says, ***"God's word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path."*** It shows the way.

What is James saying?

- **You will live your life either by chance or by choice**, either based on the circumstances where you're a victim of the circumstances and let everything batter you back and forth or you will choose to make choices.
- **James is saying that when we do not trust God it produces a lifestyle of instability in our lives.** The cause of all the frustration in my life is not my indecision over the job, the marriage, my kids, my health, although those are important. There is a deeper issue and that is my inability to trust God and lay it all in His hands and ask for wisdom.

Prayer:

Lord, there are some here that need to make You number One in their life and make the decision to put Jesus Christ on the throne of their life. Lead them to pray in their heart, "As much as I know how, I want You to come into my life and save me. Whatever all that means." Lord, I pray for those who have a major decision that they're struggling with. Lord, I pray for wisdom. You won't make the decision for us, but You have promised -- Your word says -- that You will give us wisdom. Help us to trust You, to believe that the answer will come, and then to get into Your word, the Bible. There are some here that need to join a small Bible study. There are some here that need to begin reading through their Bible on a regular basis and memorizing so we can have the wisdom that comes from your word. Thank you for Your word today. In Jesus' name. Amen.