

# Rightly Dividing<sup>©</sup>

James 1:8

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## Title: A Double Minded Man

### JAMES 1:8

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

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### CONTEXT:

The General Epistle of James was written to the entire church, which is known at this point as the “New Israel”. His use of the phrase “Twelve Tribes” indicates the entire Jewish nation. However, since the entire Jewish nation was scattered in the Diaspora and all could not have their existence outside Palestine, scholars explain the use of this term as symbolic.

The epistle of James is the first in a group of epistles called the general epistle (James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, and Jude). It is because these epistles are written to the entire church and not to a particular individual or group.

The epistle of James is a plea for Christianity and emphasizes faith with work rather than just faith like Apostle Paul. Scholars believe James wrote the epistle to combat the teachings of Paul. James agreeing to teach the circumcised gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship to deliver the gospel to the uncircumcised (Galatians 2:9). However, James emphasizes what faith produces – salvation. For James, works are the result of salvation. He claimed that works are essential - not works of the law but works of faith.

### JAMES HISTORICAL FACTS

Authorship and Date: Scholars believe that James, the Lord’s brother is the author because of similarity of language with James’ speech in Acts 15, the heavy dependence on Jewish tradition, and the consistency of content with historical notices in the New Testament concerning James, the Lord’s brother. Scholars suggest the author could not have been James, son of Zebedee because he was martyred in A.D. 44 and he had no position of leadership in the church. The epistle is traditionally dated either in the middle forties or early sixties just before James death. However, the epistle has been dated as late as A.D. 150 by those with the unknown James authorship theory. (ref. KJV 1156)



## Introduction:

James greets the twelve tribes and begins with his easy yet direct approach. He identifies himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very modest salutation yet appropriate for the church in which he writes. If James is indeed the Lord's brother, why not identify himself as so. The church is expected to know that this is James "the brother of Jesus" because of his leadership in the church of Jerusalem.

James addresses their wholeness of the church (twelve tribes) but yet exposes their frailty (scattered abroad). He begins the letter by introducing three main topics – trials, wisdom, and wealth. James gives a few remarks to the church: (1) count it all joy when you enter divers temptations, (2) know the trying of faith is patience, (3) understand patience has its perfect work and in that believers are complete wanting for nothing, (4) if you lack wisdom then ask God, (5) ask in faith without wavering, (6) double minded men are unstable, (7) low brothers should rejoice because he is exalted, and (8) the rich is made low and will fade away.

James describes the nature of wavering in faith suggesting that this person is like the waves of the sea – driven by the wind and tossed. This descriptive analog brings us to our featured message: **"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."** This referent is for the man that attempts to ask in faith for wisdom, but yet does not believe what he has petitioned. Because of unbelief, this man will not receive anything from the Lord because he is unstable in faith.

## Message:

James chapters 1 -3 is believed to be verification of genuine faith. Particularly, chapter 1 addresses the idea that God test our faith by trials. This test of faith by trial has a twofold result: (1) development of patience [vs. 3] and (2) reward hereafter [vs. 12]. Scholars believe

the trials to which James refers are the testing and refining situations in life. These trials are hard situations in which faith is tried (e.g. persecution, a difficult moral choice, or a tragic experience). These are also trials that would require the wisdom of God so that patience can be perfected and complete.

**Patience** [*hupomonē*] in the Greek means an abiding under [*hupo* "under" *menō* "to abide"]. According to Vine's, **patience** which grows only in trial may be passive – it equals endurance in trials. Vine's also suggests that patience perfects Christian character (James 1:4) and fellowship in the patience of Christ is therefore the condition upon which believers are to be admitted to reign with Him. It further says, for this patience believer's are strengthened with all power through His Spirit in the inward man.

Patience is the Christian virtue that may be passive, but also requires development (inward power by His Spirit) through process (trials). Christians can be confident that endurance is given during trials. However, endurance is linked directly to the petition for God's wisdom. Christians need divine wisdom to endure the trial that produces patience thus developing the whole man inwardly – perfect, complete, mature, entire and lacking nothing.

In asking God for wisdom, the believer must ask in faith with nothing wavering. If the believer is prone to waver, James suggests that this individual will receive nothing from the Lord and is deemed "double minded" and "unstable" in all his ways.

**Double minded** in the Greek [*dipsuchos*] means two souled [dis "twice" *psuchē* "a soul"] hence double-minded. The wavering believer has two minds, uncertain, and full of doubt. They are divided in interest thus being divided between God and this world. This uncertainty and doubt

### Message Continued...

(i.e the inward struggle) makes it impossible to receive anything from the Lord.

This double-minded believer is also unstable.

**Unstable (i.e. Restless)** in the Greek [*akatastatos*] from [*kathistēmi* meaning to set in order] is rendered unstable. The double-minded two-souled believer that is also unstable {restless} suffers with being unsettled, disorderly, unruly, and cannot be restrained. James describes this person like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. A person that wavers when seeking God for divine wisdom during trials will remain unsettled, disorderly, unruly, and unrestrained because of the inward struggle. The two-souled believer will not receive from the Lord because they are unreliable and restless in everything never being able to settle their mind in the way of God.

At this point, the believer needs singleness of mind – a trust for God and not the trust of their own ability. The trying of your faith, the ability to believe God and not ones own ability, develops patience. If we lack in the area of patience to withstand the trials, let's ask God for divine wisdom. God gives wisdom to everyone that ask in faith without wavering.

#### MESSAGE NOTES:

1. Rejoice in your trials because it produces patience.
2. If you lack patience – endurance in trials, ask God for wisdom.
3. If you are asking God for wisdom, please have faith in what you are asking.
4. Trust that God will give you what you ask according to His will. God is not like man – gives things and take them back.
5. Work on singleness of mind by asking God for divine wisdom. If you don't ask in faith, expect nothing from God.

## ASK FOR WISDOM

#### PERSONAL MESSAGE NOTES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### MESSAGE ILLUSTRATIONS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Concluding Thoughts...



Sermons for Pastors and Leaders  
of the Christian Faith!

This particular passage in the Epistle of James speaks to the need for divine wisdom and unwavering faith. The believer now understands that God's wisdom is needed when you are faced with trials. James makes it clear that God's wisdom is available if you ask in faith. He also makes it clear that asking in faith does not include wavering. If you waver, you are like the waves of the sea being tossed by the wind. James is suggesting that you will not be settled in your mind concerning the things of God.

Believers are not to be double-minded. Believers are to have faith in God by asking God. When a believer is double-minded, James suggests that the believer is now exposed because they are unstable in all their ways. Their life will be surrounded by instability. James wanted the twelve tribes to understand their purpose in trials and that God's wisdom is important to mastering the purpose – patience. Because, patience helps the believer to become complete and mature thus lacking nothing.

*The scripture and above material has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, and other bible resources. The opinions of this sermon are from Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis and should be researched further by the recipient. Rightly Dividing sermon series is a copyright of Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis with permission for use but not distribution.*

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