

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

— James 1:5 —

How Can I Understand the Bible

The book of James answers this question quite well.

James 1:5-8 **If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God**, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But **let him ask in faith**, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

My intention is not to tell you, but to show you what the Bible says by using numerous direct quotations from the King James translation. I could have used a modern English translation of the Bible to make these points, but many people do not like these versions. I feel the King James version is the most acceptable. Though many people think it is too hard to understand, I want to show that it is not as perplexing as you may think.

You Can Understand the Scripture

Please do not assume that the Bible is beyond you. Our ability to understand scripture has nothing to do with our IQ. Our desire to know the truth is the fundamental requirement. In teaching us to be persistent in praying, Jesus gave us an example in Luke.

Luke 11:5-13 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet **because of his importunity** he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father **give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**

What we are asking for in this scripture is the Holy Spirit. “Importunity” means a sense of urgency; persistence in praying. It means to keep asking “and it shall be given you,” to keep seeking “and ye shall find,” to keep knocking “and it shall be opened unto you.” God wants us to pester Him in humility. The Holy Spirit is the comforter which Jesus promised in John.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**,...

Become a Disciple

I have been a student of the Word for forty-seven years and have only scratched the surface. It is a lifelong endeavor, but we are not alone. We have a master teacher. Jesus said in John 8:31-32,

...If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And **ye shall know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free.

The word “disciple” simply means student. “To continue in His word” means we have a desire to know the truth and will return persistently to search for it.

The greatest obstacle to understanding the Bible is our mistaken assumption that we already know what it should say. We read a scripture, but it does not agree with the knowledge we presume we already have. Therefore, we become discouraged and blame it on our inability to comprehend. We have an “acceptance block” because of our preconceived beliefs. It prevents us from discerning the truth! If we will let the Bible say what it says and try not to make it say what we think it ought to say, it will make sense.

God gave us the Bible so we can know something about Him and about why we are here. It is certainly not all that there is to know, but it is more than any of us can ever hope to fully understand. We would be in the dark without it; thank God we are not in the dark. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 tells us,

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light**, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. **For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ**, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Desire to Know

God is not being unfair to us by making the Bible too hard to understand. He is offering us the truth on a silver platter. Only by our desire to know, and God’s revealing will we gain understanding. Matthew 11:25-26 says,

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent [wise in their own eyes], and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Understanding the Bible is totally dependent upon revelation from God through His Holy Spirit. Persistent prayer is the key. So keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

Proverbs 1:5-7 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge:** *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 2:1-6 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; **Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.**

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,...

Mark 4:41 ..., What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Mark 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Only Jesus Saves