

JUST ASK

-Ryan Parsons-

Ironically, this "Verse of the Day" came across my screen today: *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.* - James 1:5 If you are like me, making mistakes comes easily. Lacking wisdom and doing dumb stuff could be considered one of my specialties.

One of the greatest things we can do when things around us are not going well or we have messed things up, is to ask for help. Like guys asking for directions when they are lost, asking for help when things aren't going well is often a last ditch effort rather than the first line defense. Why is that? We know it is commonplace to build, install, or assemble something new without consulting the instructions. At least I do. Only when I have pieces leftover and/or the contraption doesn't work, do I pull out the guide that came in the box. I'm so stubborn that I once bought a book from the "How to...for Dummies" series. It sat on the shelf and collected dust until I threw it away.

On the flip side, I know that when I work a puzzle, I have to look at the picture for help. If I bake a cake, I must study the recipe. When I work on a car, it is imperative to consult the manual (or YouTube video). The list could go on and on. Are we like that about our everyday life and our faith? There is a huge contrast between the characters in the Bible who "did what was right in their own eyes" and someone like David who frequently "inquired of the Lord." The outcomes from their lives were radically different.

James tells us that God's wisdom is readily available as a gift. All we have to do is ask. If that weren't enough, Jesus encouraged his disciples to do the exact same thing (Matthew 7, Luke 11). Here are three ways we can do just that.

Ask God through prayer.

Paul seemed convinced that asking God to bless the Ephesian church was a worthy endeavor. As he closes his prayer he credits God with being able to "do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20). We are reminded over and over again that inquiring of God via prayer is vital to attaining wisdom.

Ask God through study of His word.

King David gives us a wonderful example when he said, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths." (Psalm 25:4) There was once a group of Berean Jews who nobly searched the scriptures daily to ensure that they knew God's will. Asking questions of God and then humbly studying His word for the answers will never fail us.

Ask God through His people.

In Acts 4, after Peter and John are released from custody, they gather together with other believers and enter into a time of prayer. Their concern was the increasing heat they were encountering as they preached the Gospel. Their petition for wisdom in the form of boldness is prayed in community (Acts 4:23-31). We should never underestimate the significance of community as we ask God for His divine guidance.

It seems like there is the occasion to ask God for wisdom daily. Thankfully the God we serve is not stingy.
Just Ask!