

WISDOM TO WALK WITH A SOUND MIND
(Week Five)

"God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." II Tim. 1:9

A sound mind---have you ever doubted you have one? I sure have!! It seems to me that we girls have ample opportunity to question if we missed the hour that sound minds were passed out! And POWER? Ever felt like a weak kitten standing in the path of a massive Pit Bull with nothing between the two of you but a short distance of slick linoleum, and as you turn to run, the sound of your paws clawing that slick floor tells you that you are going no-where fast, but straight into the devouring teeth of that giant enemy? In that moment of certain destruction and death, you want to scream out for someone who loves you enough to rescue you, but no one is there that loves you enough! You are so gripped with fear that any resemblance of a sound mind has disappeared as quickly as the RPM's of your claws rotating on that slick linoleum; a rotation so fast that your paws are a blur in the wind of your panting breath! You find yourself just a scared kitty in the path of a mean enemy.

And yet, God says this is not the spirit He has given us. So what is the problem? Is He mistaken, or do we not take Him at His word? I am certain it is the latter.

Read James 1:5. Now write the verse out in the space provided. _____

You may be wondering what II Timothy 1:9 has to do with James 1:5. Well, dear ones, it seems to me that when we encounter various trials, we are often gripped with fear, and a sound mind, power, and love go flying out the window, or so it seems. So if He has promised us these things: a spirit of a _____, of _____, and a _____, then we need the wisdom to embrace them. Do you agree? _____

Why do you suppose God instructed James to tell us to ask for wisdom, just after He has instructed us in the way to respond when we encounter various trials?

God's wisdom helps us to be able to respond with joy because we trust Him with whatever hard time has come our way. God's wisdom goes beyond common sense. Common sense would not tell us to choose joy in the face of tragedy; it would tell us, like Job's wife told him, to "Curse God and die." This wisdom is divine; it is from God. It is one more thing He does for us when we need Him. Asking for His wisdom is like asking to be like Christ.

Read I Corinthians 1:18-24 and fill in the blanks.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the _____ of God. For it is written: *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."* Where is the wise?

Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did _____, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who _____. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after _____; but we preach *Christ crucified*, to the Jews a _____, and to the Greeks _____, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the _____ of _____ and the _____ of _____. Because the foolishness of God is _____ than men, and the weakness of God is _____ than men."

Now read all of the verses again. For those who think it is weakness and stupidity to accept the truth of the cross, their wisdom is foolish and empty and does no one any good. For those who accept the truth of the cross and the love Christ has for us that caused Him to be crucified, they are like Christ, because Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God. Therefore, if we ask God for wisdom to endure with joy, He will give it to us liberally, and we will have His power to become "perfect, mature, and lacking nothing."

If we are perfect, mature, and lacking nothing, do you believe that the result would be that we can walk in the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind? _____

Why or why not? _____

James 1:5 tells us that when we ask God for wisdom, He gives it to us generously and freely without fussing at us for asking. All we have to do is ask! Wow! Just ask with a knowing faith that He will give it, and you will have the wisdom to trust that He is working in your life with a purpose and a reason. Since God's generosity caused Him to give the gift of His Son, "how much will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Rom. 8:32

Read James 1:6-8. What do these verses say to you about the position of your heart and mind when you ask for wisdom? _____

Do you think that the Lord is harsh in this matter of believing without doubting Him? _____

Why or why not? _____

This "doubt" means "divided mind." This doubt does not have anything to do with believing God can do something. It is a description of a people "divided" between being self-centered and God-centered. The picture James uses of the wave being tossed to and fro is a perfect example of being tossed to and fro between self and God. When we doubt, we trust self more than God.

Girls, let's get honest. Life is mean. Life is scary. Life is crazy. It causes us to believe that we are fearful, without love, and of unsound mind. It causes us to doubt our Father's love for us. But good grief! He sent His Son, He gave Him up for you and me, to be nailed to a cross after enduring horrendous scourging, beating, mocking, ripping and tearing of His flesh. He willingly did this that we could have forgiveness of our sins, be washed clean, and have eternal life with Him. He died, He rose, and He ascended into heaven, resurrected so that we can be resurrected to Him one day! While we wait for that day, God made a way for us to live above our circumstances, to live in wisdom and joy, knowing He has it all under control. Even if the outcome of our troubles is physical death, if we are "in Him", saved by His grace, WE WIN!!!!

Read John 10:10. This verse says that the thief, Satan, only wants to steal, kill, and destroy. But Jesus came that we may have LIFE, and that we can have it more abundantly. Abundant life is life lived with joy in all circumstances, and He says He came that we can live that way! He says in Him, we have a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind; power to overcome; love to fill and secure us; a sound mind to trust with endurance.

Read Isaiah 40:27-31. This business of "waiting on the Lord" brings huge returns: renewed strength, soaring above our circumstances, and strength and energy to run the race with victory! Let's not be as those of Jerusalem, who, when Jesus wanted to gather them under His wings like a hen gathers her chickens, were not willing to answer His call to "Come unto Me" and rest under His wings. No, let's be those who wait on Him so that we will "renew our strength; mount up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint!"

That, my dear sisters, is walking in power, love, and a sound mind with wisdom to know that *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man, The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* I Cor. 2:9