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We are in a series of messages from the book of James called Genuine Faith. What does real faith look like, act like? How can we know that our faith is genuine, true, real, biblical? The book of James is kind of like what goes on in law enforcement when they're training people how to spot counterfeit bills. I've heard that they don't show them a series of fake bills, they just have them examine in every detail the real thing. Once they are so equipped, knowing every characteristic of the real thing, they can spot a counterfeit in a heartbeat.

In this book, James is giving us a lengthy, detailed, description of what real, genuine faith looks like. It is imperative on us to accept it at face value; not to nuance it with some kind of modern twist. Last week we looked at the opening four verses of the book which details the joyful benefits of trials and problems. When you hear someone, a preacher, say that trials are of the devil, or you should never be sick as a Christian, or that God has promised to keep you from problems, you know that you are hearing a counterfeit message. James helps us understand genuine, Godly faith. Here's the next four verses:

### James 1:5–8

**<sup>5</sup> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, <sup>8</sup> *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

### Next Slide

Does anyone here have a situation that you just don't know what you should do? It may be an unresolved conflict, or financial distress, or maybe just one of those situations that seems to have no good answer. Every option you consider is going to be painful. Do you pray for wisdom?

This passage makes this extremely clear:

### Godly Wisdom is Given in Response to Prayer

What is wisdom? One of the definitions I read this week is this: Wisdom is seeing things the way God sees them. How does God see what's happening in the world? Is God fearful of Iran? How does He see what's happening in our nation? How does He see His church in these days? We pray that God would let us see things through His eyes.

### Ephesians 1:18

**18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**

### Next Slide

Do you want the eyes of your heart to be enlightened so that you know the hope you have, the riches of glory you have, the inheritance that is coming? That is what the Father wants to wash all over us. "See things the way I see them." He wants us to see current events through His eyes. He has given us ample prophecies to be able to understand the season of time in which we live. We know from reading the Scriptures that there will be end times conflicts between Israel and its neighbors including Persia which is modern Iran. There will be a coalition formed with Iran, Russia, and other nations to attack Israel but the Lord God will intervene and protect His people. We don't know yet if we are entering this end

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times war prophesied in Ezekiel 38, but it sure looks like it. Is God nervous about all this? He knows exactly what is going on and what He's going to do.

We pray for eyes to see the reality that is going on that we may not fear and respond as Christ would. The verse says you have to ask for this wisdom. The word means to beg as if you have a craving. Ever been so hungry or thirsty that it consumed you? That's this word. "Lord, no matter what it takes, give me eyes to see."

How does God dispense wisdom to us? The Scripture gives us two things about this gift of wisdom. It says God gives generously without reproach.

Generously – willingly bountiful

Reproach – to chide, rail at, scold

Let's say you've really messed up, said something you regret, lost your cool, lusted, cheated on your taxes, and you're going to God praying for wisdom in how to proceed. Now, if God were like us, He'd give you a little talking to, get some assurances of future performance before giving in to your request. But praise God He is not like us. There will be no scolding from God, just generous giving.

After saying that God will respond to our request for wisdom, James puts on a clear prerequisite to our prayer for wisdom – You must ask in faith without any doubting.

Faith – complete reliance

Doubting – to hold reservations, uncertainty

### **Genuine Faith is All In Faith**

You cannot ask for wisdom and hold on to some of your rights to control or decide or anything else. Faith demands complete reliance, trust, or it is not faith. I use the example of a father standing on the ground with his son on the roof of the house. The father calls to him, "jump, I'll catch you. You can trust me." It's scary to the kid because it seems like a long way down there. The personal risk is great. "What if he misses me or doesn't have as much strength as he thinks he has. Am I willing to jump, letting go of the perceived safety standing here apart from him." It is not faith for the child to say, I believe 100% that you can catch me and will catch me, but I'll take matters into my own hands and use the ladder, the perceived easier way. His actions prove his doubt.

### **Don't Ask for Wisdom Unless You're Willing to Jump**

God's wisdom may be to go ahead and have that difficult conversation where you let go of your pride and say you're sorry even though you know the other person made some errors also. You contend with God saying, it's not fair, they should say they're sorry. He says "do you want my wisdom or don't you. Do you trust me or don't you."

You pray about your lack of finances asking for wisdom and He says let's start by increasing your generosity to others. You contend with God that is not the way to go about meeting my financial need. He responds, "it may not be the way worldly wisdom works, but it is the way things are in my kingdom." "Do you trust me or don't you?"

If you are not all in, then you are a doubter. You can't trust Him with everything and the only reason anyone would not trust someone is they feel there is a chance of betrayal. Holding back from faith in God produces worry, stress, anxiousness, and great fear. Stop fighting God and jump.

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We met with our mission team this past week that will be going to Moldova next month. We started talking about the war in Ukraine which borders Moldova. I let them know that the war is 600 miles away from where we'll be and hasn't moved much in the past several months. I let them know I would not be taking them if I thought it wasn't safe. Then one of the teenagers that's going said this: "I'm not scared. Even if I die, I know I'm going somewhere much better."

Faith, not a speck of doubt. I want the faith of that young lady. That kind of faith brings stability to life, direction. It releases us from the worry we have over losing things that don't matter anyway. That kind of faith looks at the father down below coaxing us to jump and freely jumps with a smile on their face.

## The Loss of All Things is Ultimate Security

As long as you maintain control, you will worry, fear, get mad, be bound up. You will be "unfree." You say control of what – anything and everything. Here's the result of you maintaining control which is doubting God can handle it.

You will be like the surf of the sea which is completely at the whims of the winds. You will be tossed about from one thing to the next. And James doesn't say that this doubting will result in a lessening of God's gifts to you. No, look at verse 7:

### James 1:7 (NASB95)

#### **7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord**

#### **God Won't Work with Doubt**

If He has to prove Himself to you, forget it. If He has to act in ways you think He should act, forget it. That's not how this works. You're the little kid and He's the father.

But that's not all. It gets worse. He says that not only will you receive nothing, but you will also be double-minded, unstable in all your ways. The word double-minded is "dipsuchos" – Di meaning two, psuchos is the word we get psyche or psycho from. You want the world's thinking, but also want God's work in your life. If that's you, you will be tossed around by the situations of life. Your joy will be dependent on the externals of life, and it will be fleeting if not present at all. You won't make good decisions – ever. Here's a statement that may be hard to hear:

#### **Many Christians Today are Double-Minded**

They want two things – God's will and their will. Think about it for a minute. How many people today see God's role in their lives as providing a nice, comfortable lifestyle and protecting them from problems? He is not that. He is the object of our faith meaning that we trust Him with whatever He wants to do in every circumstance. What if He wants you poor – is that OK? What if He wants you insignificant? Is that OK? What if He wants you to go to a foreign land or become a preacher or be single for a while more or be highly successful, influential, or speak in front of large audiences when you're an introvert? Are you all in with what He wants?

### Philippians 4:11–13

**11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

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**NEXT SLIDE**

Real life is not about getting what I want or think I need, it's about this amazing adventure of being in the will of God completely.

Here's an illustration of what I mean.

Have you ever told your kid or grandkid on their birthday, let's say, we will do anything you want to do. Doesn't matter what it is, we'll do it. This is throwing yourself completely at the mercy of their will. You have absolutely no say in the matter. We did that last month with our grandsons. They all have birthdays within a five-week span. So, Merrick was first. He wanted to go out with just his parents and grandparents, just the five of us – no friends and no brothers. At first, I thought, how cool is that? Then he told us he wanted us all to go to the Austin Aquarium followed by a visit to Dart-Em-Up. It's a place for nerf gun wars. SO, after the aquarium, I found myself with a semi-automatic weapon, blasting away at 8–10-year-olds. I had no choice because I was at the mercy of his will.

Next was Sawyer, the oldest and he wanted to go to a Dallas Stars hockey game against his favorite team, the Pittsburgh Penguins. So, I bought tickets which were not cheap, booked a hotel room and now I can say I've been to an NHL hockey game. We had no choice; that's what he wanted. Then came Atticus, the youngest. He said I just want friends over. Whew!

When you place faith in Christ, that is what you are saying. Whatever you want I'm good with. We have an underlying expectation that He always wants good, easy, prosperous things for us. But that's not always the case, is it? What about a couple who spend their lives in ministry serving as pastor, chaplain, and then finally it's time to retire and God speaks. He tells them there are babies in Tanzania that need them. So their retirement is spent in launching a ministry to rescue at risk babies. But God doesn't stop there – He opens doors to transform the lives of the women who have those babies, giving them skills to start their own business. But God doesn't stop there – what about reaching the lives of the nannies hired to care for the babies. But God doesn't stop there – last month they held their first conference for men. Michael and Dorris – you're an inspiration to many because of the way you demonstrate faith in Jesus believing He can accomplish anything.

So the choice is the stability, freedom, joy of faith or the instability, worry-filled fear of doubt. God continually calls His children to jump off roofs so He can catch them up in what He is doing.

Aren't you tired of trying so hard to make things work out? Aren't you just exhausted trying to hold on to expectations and hopes that don't seem to be happening? Are you ready to risk it all with God? Are you ready to be free? Are you ready to jump?

I want you to bow your heads. I want to ask you to respond to two questions by raising your hand.

The first question is directed to people who have never placed faith in Jesus for their salvation or they're not sure of their salvation. They hear message after message, and it strikes at their heart and somehow, they think they might be ok because they're here listening. But, deep inside they know they have never encountered Jesus personally, prayed to Him to forgive them, transform them, bring them into His family. Jesus died on the cross for your sin. He rose from the dead, so that you to may rise from the deadness of your sin to new life in Him. Today is your day. Question one:

Will you place your faith in Jesus today for your salvation? If that's you, would you take the bold step of simply raising your hand in faith? By doing so, you're saying I believe, I believe in Jesus and His gift of life for me.

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The second question is directed to the doubting believer. You just can't jump. You may ask, how do I know if I'm a doubting believer. Do you worry? Do you fear? Are you bound with anxiety? Do you see problems as disasters or opportunities? Are you joyfully free? Are you holding on to something? Question two:

Will you admit you've been a double-minded believer, and will you give in, take a risk, and jump placing all your faith in Jesus today?

Pray