



Better than Street Smarts!

Are You Aware this Upgrade Is Possible?

My family went to the latest Spider-Man movie not long ago and I was fascinated by a few aspects to it. First, the central themes to the movie are all Biblical. Redemption, transformation, loyalty, and love all are woven into the fabric of the film. Once you unwrap the many irrational layers to this movie, multi-verses, bizarre villains and pop science fantasy, you find yourself in what very well could be a parable set in modern comic book imagery that identifies much of the message of the Bible, excluding of course the most important part, Christ. There is in all of the Spider-Man movies a capability the superhero has that reminds me much of what the Bible indicates is available to all who have put their faith in Christ. The franchise calls it Peter Parker's "spidey sense". He has the ability to sense danger, to feel evil nearby. What the believer has is much more profound and valuable than what is commonly labeled intuition. Let us take a look at what we see described in the letter James wrote to the church and other places in the Bible that provide insight for us.

Consider what we see in James 1. **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;** (James 1:5-7 NIV) The promise is that God provides wisdom to those who ask Him for it as long as they believe with real faith He gives it. There are two types of wisdom described in the Bible. The first is just the common insight and understanding found among people at large. You could call it "street smarts". It is the insight anyone can gain from experience or native intelligence. We can all benefit from the wisdom of those around us. Everyone you know has something to offer you. This however is not the wisdom James is talking about. He is speaking of the second type of wisdom the Bible describes; the intelligence that comes from God, the insight He provides. It is supernatural understanding.

To gain God's wisdom requires faith. You can have a good grip on things without faith. You can know how to fix a car, understand the symbolism in a novel, be a respected parent or do well in the stock market but to see what just God can show you, to have insight into the depths of things known only by Jesus, you need to have faith. James says you must believe and not doubt. We find examples of believing and doubting in the Bible. Peter when he climbed out of the boat to walk toward Jesus on the storm driven waves of the Sea of Galilee believed and doubted at the same time which is why although he started off well, he quickly began to sink in the terrifying waves. The same seems to have been the case for a blind man who was brought to Jesus for healing. **They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.** (Mark 8:22-26 NIV)

Faith mixed in with doubt are often seen in the Old Testament. That is what tripped up Moses when he spoke with God at the burning bush. He believed it was God speaking to him but doubted the Lord's ability to make

him a leader of Israel. That is why Aaron his brother wound up in a position of authority over the Israelites that he never should have had. Belief and doubt led to the Israelites balking the first time God called them to go take possession of the Promised Land. They lost their lives as a result. Faith and doubt. Faith and doubt led Pharaoh to his death when he chased after Moses and the Israelites despite knowing full well it was God who had brought all the disasters upon Egypt. Faith and doubt was behind Abraham telling foreign kings twice that his wife Sarah was his sister and putting her at risk of being taken in as a part of either king's harem. You may not like the parameters of gaining God's wisdom, but they are there, nonetheless. Believe God will give you wisdom and push aside all doubt that He will, and you will have the Lord's thinking guiding you along.

I mentioned this a few weeks ago but it is worth repeating. When the elderly Simeon was waiting on the Temple Grounds the day the newborn Jesus was brought there to be dedicated to the Lord, it was not just a random choice of Simeon to be there then. God told him he would see the Messiah in the Temple that day. **It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.** (Luke 2: 26-27a NIV) That is what the Bible promises you, supernatural insight into things that you cannot figure out using just your skills of observation and mental acuity. We see something similar when Paul the Apostle was warned by the Holy Spirit not to go into the Roman province of Asia despite wanting to do so. **Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.** (Acts 16: 6-7 NIV)

Of course many good Christian people don't believe God operates this way, showing normal people who follow Him what to do in everyday life. Consider these three passages before you decide on the matter. The writer of Proverbs asks a pertinent question that must be taken seriously. **A man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?** (Proverbs 20: 24 NIV) When there is so much more to this world than just what we see and hear, when we operate within a universe where spiritual forces have power and authority and leave traps and landmines for us that can destroy our lives and those we impact, we need much more than the ability to figure out things on our own. We need the insight of God who sees it all and knows the end from the beginning to have a rational and reasoned idea of what is best to do. How can you really know what is best to do in any given circumstance, what is really best? You need God to show you the way. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the time to come when the salvation of God is given to His people makes this great promise to you. **Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."** (Isaiah 30: 21 NIV) Let that sink in for a moment. The Lord will guide you in the decisions you have before you. This promise is not for some highly trained Bible scholar or great person of God. It is not an elitist club that God has designed. The ones who have access to God's wisdom are those who live and breathe and walk about with questions. It is for you.

Paul the Apostle makes an astounding statement that generally gets ignored by God's people. It is most informative though when we think about the supernatural wisdom God offers you and me. **The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.** (1 Corinthians 2: 14-16 NIV) When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you immediately have the mind of Christ working in you. This is of course a supernatural event, something that cannot be detected naturally with your normal capacity to think. It is God given and God empowered. God's thoughts are open to you to guide you, protect you, give you understanding. As James warns however, you cannot know what God is thinking or how to see things His way if you doubt this great promise to give you wisdom any time you ask. Take this week practicing this crucial skill set. Pray for wisdom throughout the day in any and every situation you face and bury your doubt in God as you do so. You will experience, perhaps for the first time, supernatural wisdom and see things as Christ your savior does.