

## ***The Practicality of Redemption (10)***

### Warnings Re. Defective Faith

#### Introduction

- A. The practicality of Christianity is demonstrated in how God, in His great mercy toward us -- has warned us regarding some critical areas of life.
- B. Among warnings regarding idolatry (Exodus 20:1-3), hypocrisy (Isaiah 29:13), self-righteousness (Jeremiah 7:1-16), disobedience (Matthew 7:21-23), wrong priorities (Matthew 23:23), and covetousness (Ephesians 5:5), we are carefully admonished and counseled regarding faith.
- C. These warning are not to be taken lightly. We are being shown in these, not only some of the critical foundation stones of the Christian life -- but also areas where we are prone to fail. As the wise and kind Father that He is -- the Lord has sought to protect us. We must listen to Him.

#### **I. The Twofold Context Regarding this Warning.**

##### **A. The place of trials in the life of the believer.** James 1:2-4

- 1. God's purpose in permitting trials -- is to lead us to maturity.
- 2. When we respond to God by faith in the trials, and submit to what He has in mind to teach us (patience) the result is twofold: we will be perfect (maturity) and entire (complete).
- 3. Because of the value of such maturity -- we are exhorted to accept our trials with joy. V2

##### **B. The Promise to be claimed in our trials.** James 1:5

- 1. The wisdom promised is to enable us to understand our trials, how to respond to God in them, and how to grow through them.
- 2. We need this wisdom because of our natural tendency to refuse the trial and to fall into unbelief, complaining, coveting, and self-pity.
- 3. We must beware of interpreting our trials incorrectly.

#### **II. The Instruction Regarding our Trials -- Respond by Faith.** James 1:6A

- A. Faith is a divine gift -- given in salvation -- possessed by all believers.
- B. Faith is like a function, an ability, a gift that must be used in order to product benefits.
- C. True faith is rooted in the faithfulness of God and is characterized by trust, a willingness to wait, and a surrender to God and His Will.
- D. The one indispensable key to spiritual growth, to fruitfulness, to joy, to stability and every other virtue -- is our faith.

### **III. The Warning Regarding Defective Faith.**

#### **A. The explanation regarding defective faith. James 1:6B**

1. To "waver" in our request for wisdom -- is to mix the supplication with doubt.
2. We waver and doubt when we're not really sure we want what we ask.
3. We waver and doubt when we're not fully surrendered to His Will.
4. We waver and doubt when we have areas in life we do not wish to deal with -- and we're not sure He will leave them alone. Too often we want God's blessing but we don't want to face our grudges, our bitterness, our sins of omission and commission, our anger, our hypocrisy, our unfulfilled promises and vows, or our responsibilities.

#### **B. The illustration of defective faith. James 1:6C**

1. When we say to God, "I want Your wisdom and Your will -- but please do not ... " -- our life is like a surging and wind-swept ocean.
2. As water has no inner stability to resist pressure -- the doubter is one who is pushed one way and then another by his own desires and by the circumstances and temptations of life.

#### **C. The instructions regarding defective faith. James 1:7**

1. Now we have a promise of unanswered prayer. When we doubt and thus say to God -- "I want wisdom about this, but not that, and I want Your help with this, but not with that" -- then we are acting out our sinfulness, playing at being God, and make it impossible for God to bless us.
2. How ironic is the life of the doubter. He asks of God -- but does not want what he asks -- and that is what he gets -- nothing.

#### **D. The conclusion regarding defective faith. James 1:8**

1. A defective faith is rooted in a defective character.
2. The double-minded person is one who has not made up his mind. He is constantly wavering between two positions.
3. Biblically a double-minded person is one who has not surrendered himself unreservedly to God and to the will of God. He tries to give himself to God one day and the next day lives as though he belongs to himself.
4. The double-minded person is "A walking civil war in whom trust and distrust of God wage a continual battle against each other." William Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter
5. The character of a double-minded person permeates into all he thinks and does-- it produces instability everywhere. Nothing is ever really settled, priorities and goals are always changing, and firm convictions cannot be found.