

# The Giving God

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon highlights the importance of approaching God in prayer, emphasizing His generous nature and the necessity of faith and sincerity in our requests.*

**Duration:** 19:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:7, Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, Luke 11:9, John 14:13-14, James 1:5-6

**Topics:** "Giving"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book of James and the different interpretations of its structure. He then focuses on James 1:5, which encourages believers to ask God for wisdom and promises that He will generously give it without finding fault. The preacher emphasizes that God is a giving God and encourages the congregation to have faith and believe that their prayers will be answered. He concludes by sharing a story about a woman in need and emphasizes the importance of not giving up in prayer.

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## Transcript

I just want to give you a verse that I think will help you. Everyone just turn to your left and to your right and tell someone God answers prayer. Just turn to your left.

Yes, he does. The tricky part for us is encouragements to pray because every advance of the kingdom is done through prayer and every advance in a person's life is done through prayer. God has just made prayer absolutely instrumental.

Whether you're a pastor, a new believer, whatever, God's law is ask and I'll give it to you. That's the law. So now the book of James, as we know, is written by the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Same mother, but Jesus was born of a virgin, Mary, before she had any relations with Joseph. Mary and Joseph had children after Jesus was born and one of them was James and he became called later on, it seemed like he was not converted at first and became a follower of his own brother, but then later became a convert and the Lord made a special appearance just to James after he rose from the dead. We don't know the details of that.

He became a leader in the church. There are several James in the New Testament, like James the brother of John, James and John. This is not that James.

And he was called James the Righteous. Tradition tells us that when he died and his body was being buried as followers who loved him as his sheep, that they saw on his knees, he had calluses like his knees were like a camel's knees because of all the time he had spent on his knees in prayer. His letter is totally different than letters like Romans or Galatians where Paul is making a theological argument about justification by faith and how a person is saved and the difference between the law and grace.

James is very practical and he's giving practical instructions like we said before about the tongue, very practical. In fact, he has more to say about the tongue than any other letter in the New Testament. At the beginning of the letter, he says something out of nowhere about the fact that no matter what tests and trials we go through, we should rejoice.

And the word he uses of testing is a double-edged word that can mean tests that God permits and God sends because God does send tests to his children. And it also could be the word used for temptations that Satan would use. God sends tests and trials to build us up.

Satan sends temptations to bring us down. But either way, James says, count it all joy and rejoice when you go through that because this is the way your faith gets stronger and you can learn endurance. You have to have endurance as a Christian.

It can't be someone who's going up and down like a yo-yo depending on the circumstances. One of the signs of maturity is to have an endurance in your faith. You're not just trusting God when things are going good, you're trusting God when you're laid off.

You're trusting God when the baby's sick. You're trusting God when everything around you is going crazy. You're trusting God in the middle of a service when things are glorious.

You're trusting God. Immaturity are people who are flying up and down with their trust. So James says, trials and difficulties is the only way for God to teach us endurance.

He doesn't give it as a gift, impart it like a gift of the Spirit, no. It's developed like a bicep muscle is developed. So if you put a 10 pound weight here and you just tell me to do a lot of reps as I'm lifting it, this muscle here and then my bicep and my tricep, especially my bicep in the lifting, it's developed because of the resistance.

The weight is pulling me down, but I'm lifting it up. And the resistance working against the gravity and the 10 pound weight, that's what develops the bicep muscle. So he's saying this is the only way God develops endurance and a strong faith, through trials.

You can't get it overnight in a prayer meeting. It comes through difficulties. How many, since you've been a believer, have faced at least 10 trials in your life? If it's more than that, wave your hand at me.

If it's more like 10,000, just put your hand down. You're tired already, already. Then out of nowhere, although it could be related, like how to deal with this, the commentators disagree on that.

Some think James is making some consecutive sequential argument and treaties. Others say James is giving us just nuggets, nuggets, this nugget, that nugget. Then he comes up and he says this, in chapter one, verse five.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all, without finding fault, and it will be given to you. Let's go to the next verse, then we'll come back to five, verse six. But, when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind, unstable.

Back to verse five. If any of you lacks wisdom, I want to take out the context of wisdom and what James is talking about here about wisdom. Wisdom is spoken a lot about in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

We learn that wisdom builds the house, not intelligence, not high IQ, not talent, wisdom. To understand things and to know how to apply truth to it. To understand what God's will is and how to get there.

One writer has said wisdom is understanding what God's will is and then saying yes to it. The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord. Wisdom is used in a lot of ways, but it's not how smart you are.

You can be a PhD and have no wisdom whatsoever, and you could be a third grade dropout and be full of spiritual wisdom. Now, later on in this letter, he compares worldly wisdom with godly wisdom, because there's a wisdom of this world, which he says is almost demonic. It is demonic.

It's touched by powers of darkness, but it's the wisdom that people use many times to get ahead in the world, but that's not godly wisdom, the wisdom that's from above. He delineates between that. But now, I want you to take out wisdom and just put blank, because as we go to prayer tonight, I don't know what you need, but what's true for wisdom is true for anything that's good, because James tells us every good and perfect gift, remember this, every good and perfect gift comes down from heaven, from God, who loves to give.

So let's look at that verse again, verse five. If any of you lacks blank, a job, a spirit of forgiveness for people who have hurt you, wisdom to know how to deal with a troubled child. If any of you lacks power in your life over sin, over the powers of darkness, if any of you lacks whatever, wisdom is just used here, but the principle is true for everything.

If any of you lacks whatever it is that you need, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault. And you know what? I'm not even gonna go beyond this verse. Yeah, we gotta have faith, you gotta believe that'll answer, but there's too much there to unfold in just those little sentences.

If any of you lacks whatever, you should ask God who gives generously to all. Let's just stop there. Literally, in the Greek language, if that was translated literally, the way it's found in the text as one of the translations, I think it's Rotherham's translation, the New Testament has, you should ask the giving God.

They put it, you should ask God who gives generously. But what it actually means, or says, you should ask the giving God. Because God loves to give.

Doesn't that help us pray tonight? God is a giving God. Many of us don't see God that way. And thus, we're slow to approach Him.

We're slow to go to pray. We're afraid to ask Him from certain things. I just wanna point out two things, because it's a prayer meeting, so we should spend more time now in prayer.

You should ask, notice, you have to ask, the giving God, or the God who gives generously, to all without finding fault. So here's what we learned about God. He loves to give generously.

He's the giving God, that's His name. Anything any of you have tonight, God gave it to you. How many say amen to that, right? Every good and perfect gift comes from God.

So this is what God delights in. Do you wanna know about His personality? Here's one thing God wants us to know. I love to give things.

I love to give things. Later on, James tells us, you have not because you, God wanted to give it to you. He's a giving God.

And here's where the battle is. Without finding fault. A lot of times, Satan will talk to your mind, and say, yeah, Pastor Simba quoted that verse, God is a giving God.

For God so loved the world that He gave. He's a giving God. Jesus was always giving of Himself, giving healings, giving out.

But come on, Jim, do you really think you can go to God after some of the stunts you've pulled in your life? The mistakes you've made? Yeah, that's true. He'll impersonate the Holy Spirit. You're not quite ready to receive from God.

But if you'll just get more sanctified, if you'll just clean up your act, then God will give you. That's a lie. Because James says, God, when you approach Him, He wants to give, and if you're sincere, He doesn't find fault in you.

He's not like one of those suspicious people or those judgmental people that goes, I can't believe you're asking me. After the way you treated me, you have some nerve to come and ask me for anything. Oh, how many? Sincerely now, no laughing.

How many are so happy God doesn't find fault? In other words, He loves to give. Someone up in the balcony, would you receive that? God wants to give you something. Well, of course He does.

How else would you and I have anything unless He gives it to us? What, are you gonna manufacture it? Every good and perfect gift comes down from the giving God who loves to give. And when you come, notice, He gives to all without finding fault. I read just recently this tragic story about this poor, poor woman in England 150 years ago, and she was living in this little rat hole of one room, and she didn't have proper heat, and there was the fire, and she was older, and she bundled up to fight against the cold.

So one day, right before lunch, the minister felt prompted and said, I gotta go and see Sister So-and-so. So he went to the door, and he knocked on the door, and nobody answered. He knocked again, because he had some money, and he wanted to help her, because he had heard she was in trouble.

And then when he peered in the window, because he knew she couldn't have gone out, she was huddled near the fire, just looking at the fire, huddled up with the covers almost, her blanket over her ears almost, just facing the fire. And he knocked again, and that was so strange. He came back at dinnertime, because he was troubled.

He came, knocked on the door. She looked out, saw who it was, opened the door. Oh, hi, Reverend.

And he said, you know, Mrs. Brown, I came here at 12 noon today to give you some money that I got. Someone blessed me with some money, and I felt prompted to share it to you. But you didn't let me in.

She said, yeah, I thought you were the bill collector. That's the way we are with God. He knocks, and instead of coming and saying, I'm here, here's what I need, God, help me, God, forgive me, God, strengthen me, God, encourage me, God, whatever you need, God, I need wisdom, I need whatever.

We're afraid because we think he's the bill collector coming for what's past due, gonna give us, like they do in Argentina, they go like that when, you know, you're gonna get it from someone. He's not the bill collector. He's the giving God.

He's our Father. How many are happy he's our Father who wants to help us? He's knocking on your door tonight. He's knocking on my door and saying, come on, I have something for you, ask.

Pastor Semble, where are you going with this? No, I'm telling you what the Bible says. He's knocking on the door and saying, ask. I'll help you.

I'll help you. I'll strengthen you. I'll strengthen you.

Pray, tell me what's on your heart, talk to me. We learned some good lessons here on Sunday from the BT kids, oh my goodness. So the effectual fervent prayer is very strong and mighty in its getting results and what they taught the kids and what they taught all of us is the three keys, if I can remember them, are you gotta come sincerely to God.

You gotta be sincere and you gotta use your own words. You gotta ask in faith. You gotta trust God that he'll help you.

See, that's why I read these verses for you because I prayed a lot of times when I was a kid. I don't believe God would answer. I was just praying because people told me, you better pray if you're a Christian, but actually expect God to answer me after the way I had carried on at times.

See, Satan is the accuser trying to keep us from really believing that God loves me and hears me. We learned good on Sunday afternoon. Be sincere, don't copy how anyone prays.

Don't try to pray like some other person prays or your mother prayed growing up. Just talk to God and have faith that he's listening to you and he wants to help you. What else can God say but through his servant James? Now you come to the giving God who gives generously to everyone without finding fault.

Why would he ask you to come and ask if he was gonna scold you and say, get away? Do you think that's the kind of God we have? Is that the father who gave us Jesus Christ? Come and pray, oh, now that you're here. I got this against you and that against you. Does that make any sense? No, God is a giving God.

And the last thing that they taught us was don't give up because you never know when the next prayer breaks through and gets the answer. That was a beautiful illustration they used about the man who built a tunnel to try to get out of a mess that he was in and then he collapsed and he was only one shovel away from breaking through to escape to fresh air. Let's close our eyes.

I want to pray and the deacons here want to pray with you. The pastors want to pray with you. If I don't pray with you, what kind of pastor am I? What kind of leaders are we if we don't want to pray with you? But I want you to know that God is telling you, what do you lack? If anyone lacks blank, let him come to the giving God who gives generously and doesn't to everyone and he doesn't find fault.

So trust him, he's going to help you. I declare to you in the name of the Lord, he will help you. He answers prayer.

That he won't is a lie from the devil. The devil's speaking lies because that's the only language he knows is to lie. You have to fight against that and say, no, I'm going to the giving God who is my father and James tells me he didn't call me to find fault with me, he called me so that he can help me in my spiritual development, in my life where I'm lacking, where I'm lonely, where I'm fighting depression, whatever it might be.

And we're just going to stand here in God's presence and talk to him gently, quietly. We're just going to pray. We called out to God, we got loud, we prayed, that's a good way to pray and then sometimes you just got to talk quietly.

Like Hannah, who wanted to have a baby boy so bad and she didn't even lift her voice, just her mouth moved but God said she prayed from her heart and God heard it. He's the giving God who gives generously to all without finding fault. You have not because you ask not.

If you need something that will glorify God, will help you but you're also going to pledge to God tonight God when you answer, I'm going to glorify you. I'm going to tell somebody what you did for me. That'll remove all selfish, foolish requests.

Only let's ask God for things that will help us and then we're going to glorify him for it. Just come out of your seat if you want to pray with us. Just come up, those who have special needs tonight.

I love that, special needs. Oh, I've had so many special needs in my life. Just those of you who say, no, I don't want to move.

I don't want to leave yet. You just come up here to the front, stand here.

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