

Finding God's Direction

Scripture Reading — James 1:5-8

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.

—James 1:6—

As a child I often played a game with friends in which one player would be trying to find someone or something. The rest of us would try to guide the “seeker” by saying how “warm” or “cold” they were getting. The closer they got to the target, the “warmer” they would be; but when they started to stray in the wrong direction, we’d warn them that they were getting “colder.”

Sometimes we try to play that game with God. We pray for guidance, but what we really want is God’s support for something we already have in mind. When it seems God is helping us toward our desired outcome, we cheer him on: “Warmer ... warmer!” But when it seems he is veering away from the goal we want, we warn, “Colder ... COLDER!”

When it comes to praying for guidance, prayers like that are just plain backwards. We’re not really asking God to guide us; we’re asking God to let us guide him. Instead of looking to serve God, we’re really trying to get him to serve us.

James warns against this role reversal. When we ask for God’s guidance, we must have his goals in mind, not ours. And we must ask and believe that God will answer. We must steer straight to avoid being tossed about by the wind.

When you ask God to guide you, are you looking in his direction?

Prayer

God, what we need is for you to lead us. Please help us to get that straight. We pray in Jesus’s name. Amen.

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Printed on January 18, 2021

