



Saint James AME Church
588 Dr. M.L. King, Jr. Blvd.
Newark, NJ 07102-1214
www.experiencesaintjames.com
Ronald L. Slaughter, Senior Pastor

Bible Study Outline

11:00 AM

Rev. Lonnie Jones, Facilitator

May 8, 2019

“Our Trust in the Bible and God: Is It Faith, Wisdom, or Reasoning?”

When discussing the Bible or our religious practices, the question of faith, wisdom, and reasoning are often discussed. Where some will argue that Wisdom and Reasoning is a logically acceptable and valid way of thinking, where faith sometimes gets pushed aside as not being logical or practical thinking. Today, let us briefly discuss or humane way of thinking.

Reasoning is what we do when we take information that we are given, compare it to what we already know, and then come up with a conclusion. Reasoning skills are essential to day-to-day life: we use them to make choices among possible options, to distinguish between positive and negative situations, to decide how to approach a problem and resolve it, and much more.

Deductive Reasoning: What is (*absolutely*) true?

Inductive Reasoning: What is observably (most) true?

Adductive Reasoning: What is most likely true?

Reductive Reasoning: What is NOT true?

Fallacious Reasoning: What you think is true?

Wisdom is knowledge gained from experience. Obviously, a person needs to have experiences to have wisdom, which, taken one-step further, means you need to be older to actually have wisdom. Wisdom is knowing whether to do it or not, the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting.

Faith is complete trust or confidence in someone or something. A strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

What is Biblical Reason?

As many people have misunderstandings of faith, they also have misunderstandings of reason. Reason is a tool that God has given us that allows us to draw conclusions and inferences from other information, such as the information He has given us in His Word. Reason is an essential part of Christianity; God tells us to reason, let us look to **Isaiah 1:18** and the apostle Paul did **Acts 17:17**.

In fact, I could not know that I am saved apart from using reason. After all, the Bible nowhere says, “that Rev. Lonnie Jones is saved.” Instead, it tells me that in Romans 10:9, “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”.

From that verse, I have acknowledged that Jesus is Lord, and I believe that God raised Him from the dead. Therefore, I am saved. Therefore, I must use logical reasoning to draw this conclusion. This is perfectly appropriate and is the kind of reasoning God expects us to use. We are to reason from the principles of God's Word. So God tells us to be ready at all times to give a good reason for our faith as stated in **1 Peter 3:15**. So it is our duty as followers of Christ to preach the gospel look at **2 Timothy 4:2**.

What is Biblical Wisdom?

We are commanded to seek wisdom and understanding **Proverbs 4:5-7**. God wants us to use the mind He has given us. But, He wants us to use our minds properly, in a way that is honoring to Him. In **Proverbs 3:13-18**, blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who understands, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Solomon says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom let us read **Proverbs 9:10**. Although we stated that wisdom is gained by one's life experiences over time, As Solomon stated we must fear God we must also:

1. Desire Wisdom. The first step to getting wisdom is to desire it with all our heart. As Solomon says, we must "look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure" **Proverbs 2:4**.
2. Pray for Wisdom. As James tell us, "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" **James 1:5**.
3. Study God's Word. The third step in getting wisdom is studying and meditating on God's Word. Let us look at **Psalms 19:7**. We should not rely merely on our own understanding though, but lean on the wisdom and insight produced by Christians throughout the church's history.

To get wisdom we must fear God, study his Word, and prayerfully desire to understand life from God's perspective.

What is Faith?

Some will say that to be a Christian you must have Blind Faith.

Blind Faith is belief without true understanding, perception, or discrimination. Blind faith is trusting in something without any evidence. It has been described as a leap in the dark, a giving over of oneself to something despite a solid foundation. Does God expect us to have this type of faith? NO.

Biblical Faith is the act of believing in something unseen for which we do have a good reason. For example, when we believe that God will keep a promise, this constitutes faith because we cannot "see" it and yet we have a good reason for it: God has demonstrated that He keeps His promises.

What does The Bible tells us about faith. In **Hebrews 11:1** we are told that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". So biblical faith is not blind but is bold confidence.

The phrase “hoped for” does not imply mere wishful thinking as in “I sure hope the weather is nice next week.” Biblical Faith indicates a confident expectation: the kind of confidence we have when we have a good reason to believe something.

We are supposed to trust God and not lean on our own understanding **Proverbs 3:5**. The Bible tells us that the “just shall live by faith” **Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11**. It seems that we are supposed to trust God regardless of whether His words make sense to our understanding.

Finally:

Reasoning and Wisdom is a crucial part of defending the Faith. But we must always keep in mind that conversion is up to God alone. It is not our job to “convince” the unbeliever—nor can we. It is our job to make a good case; it is the Holy Spirit’s prerogative alone to bring repentance.

1. What method do you use when studying or analyzing the Bible, Wisdom, Reasoning, or Faith, or all three.

2. Have you ever experience in studying the Bible any other example of reason outside of Deductive Reasoning.

Notes: _____

