

ASK

James 1:5-6

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” James 1:5-6





Why was this theme chosen, and what does it mean to you? Brother Stephen W. Owen, Young Men General President, and Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, share their thoughts.

WHY THIS SCRIPTURE?

Sister Oscarson: The Lord knows what message you are going to need, and it's remarkable how some of the issues that arise during the year are answered by the theme and how it really fits what's going on in your lives.

When we discussed James 1:5–6 as a possibility for this year's theme, the Spirit filled the room. And we all agreed that it would be a great scripture for our youth because it has several connections. It has connections to Church history—it's the scripture that Joseph Smith read that prompted him to go to the Sacred Grove and pray. And the second great connection is that it bears testimony of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, something we need in a time when his reputation and Church history are continually being questioned by the world. It's also a message of how we receive personal revelation in our lives, which everyone needs to know.

Brother Owen: There is so much going on in your lives today, and you have so many questions. With all of the social media and search engines we have, there are a lot of sources where you could turn to get answers for your questions of faith. This key scripture shows Joseph Smith's process of revelation, which is a model we can follow.

HOW CAN YOUTH PERSONALIZE AND USE JAMES 1:5–6?

Sister Oscarson: This scripture has such a great message. It says, "Ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). This is particularly poignant. You need to ask in faith, not in doubt.

Brother Owen: And asking in faith means asking with real intent. When Joseph Smith got the answer of which church to join, he didn't just say, "Well, that's good to know, but . . ." He went forward in faith.

Sister Oscarson: Remember that a righteous prayer is not asking for what we want but finding out what God wants for us.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUTH ABOUT USING PRAYER IN THEIR LIVES?

Sister Oscarson: Make it a habit. You can't forget about it. You can't

neglect it. The brother of Jared gives us an example of that (see Ether 2:14).

Brother Owen: Forgetting to pray from time to time is one thing, but more troubling is turning away from the Lord and not wanting to pray. When you feel like you shouldn't pray, that's when you really need to pray. And if you're saying your prayers and reading the scriptures, you'll be in tune. And if you're not, you're going to distance yourselves.

Sister Oscarson: We can speak directly with God. He places no time limits. What a gift to know that we can do that and that He's always there.

HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED TO PRAY IN A MEANINGFUL WAY?

Sister Oscarson: I can't think of any one experience; it's a culmination of a lifetime. Praying has become one of the most meaningful parts of my day because I make an effort to be consistent. I've become much better at listening and receiving answers. We learn and we get better the more we engage in the process. It's just being consistent with it every single day, making sure that I don't miss that opportunity to talk to my Heavenly Father. The more we pray, the better we get at listening to those answers.

Brother Owen: In my youth when I really needed to know something, I remembered the First Vision and thought, “Joseph Smith did it. I don’t need a huge manifestation, but I need an answer.” And so in faith I followed that pattern. I remember kneeling down and bowing my head and saying a prayer out loud. Continuing to follow that pattern has blessed my life many times to receive personal revelation.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOUTH CAN LEARN FROM THIS SCRIPTURE?

Brother Owen: I just want to reemphasize the pattern of prayer that Joseph Smith established. At just 14 years old, he was confused, so he read his scriptures. The First Vision was not a fleeting moment where Joseph simply kneeled down. There was a lot of work beforehand. He reflected on his question over and over again. When he found James 1:5–6, he said, “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). It entered with great force into his heart, and then he acted upon it. He prayed with real intent and moved forward in faith. And that’s what we’re hoping you will be able to feel with this scripture throughout 2017. ■



ONLINE RESOURCES

Whether you’re planning an activity or conference or simply thinking about the theme on your own, you’ll find art, music, and additional resources for this year’s Mutual theme at lds.org/go/11752.