

James
Part 6
Two kinds of Wisdom

James 3 NIV

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

- At the beginning of Chapter 3 James speaks to a strict judgment for those who are teachers and those who desire to be teachers. Then he says “Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect.
- There he speaks of how they should talk; here he speaks about how they should live.

“James addresses the person who is ‘wise and understanding.’ The word sophos (‘wise’) was the technical term among the Jews for the teacher, the scribe, the rabbi.” (Burdick)

- The book of James really hones in on a few different topics and wisdom is one of them.

James 1:5

“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.”

“Wisdom is not mere head knowledge. Real wisdom and understanding will show in our lives, by our good conduct.” (Guzik)

- **For example:** Today if someone is looking for wisdom they might look online. They might look to Instagram or Facebook. Every now and then something is shared that is inspiring or maybe a quote is shared that is moving. But the Bible tells us that if you really want to find wisdom you first turn to God. Wisdom can also be found in people you might not expect. Those that are usually not loud or claim to know it all. The kind of people who have genuine wisdom, are most likely quiet and have learned to put it to practice.

Vs. 13

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Good Life + Deeds Done + Humility = True Wisdom

- When it comes to looking for advice. Look for those who first off demonstrate true devotion to Jesus. Look for someone who, when you ask their opinion they say something like this; Well the Bible says...

Do you know what that says about that person?

- It says that person understands where wisdom comes from. They have found the source and have themselves drawn from the well of God's wisdom. They have practiced Biblical principles in their life and have found God's ways are better than mans.
- It says that person, regardless of all their experience and past victories still relies on God each day.
- There is a submission to God and his word, that is humility.

Good Life + Deeds Done + Humility = True Wisdom

Vs. 14-15

14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. **15** Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

Bitter envy + Selfish ambition = Earthly Wisdom

- Here James indicates two things that are opposed to the wisdom that comes from God; Bitter envy and Selfish ambition.

- Bitter envy and selfish ambition is a wisdom killer because it comes from the opposite place of humility...
- Is there anything that looks more like the devil than bitter envy and selfish ambition...
- Isaiah describes the Devil and why he was cast out of Heaven.

Isaiah 14

12

How you have fallen from heaven,
 morning star, son of the dawn!
 You have been cast down to the earth,
 you who once laid low the nations!

13

You said in your heart,
 “I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.

14

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”

15

But you are brought down to the realm of the dead,
 to the depths of the pit.

16

Those who see you stare at you,
 they ponder your fate:
 “Is this the man who shook the earth
 and made kingdoms tremble,

- When it comes to bitter envy and selfish ambition, satan is the author and originator.

- Satan looked at all that God had and said to himself, “I want that for myself”... “I will ascend, I will make myself like God”...

Then when Satan tempted Eve in the Garden what did he say to her?

Genesis 3:5

“For God knows that when you eat from it (Tree of the knowledge of good and evil) your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.”

- The Devil tempted Eve with the same sin he fell from heaven with... The temptation to be like God.
- It's no wonder the 10th Commandment in Exodus 20:17 is "thou shall not covet."

Do you now what the antidote to bitter envy is? Thankfulness
Do you know what the antidote to selfish ambition is? Worshipping God

- **If you want to get set free of envy, thank God for what you have...**
- **If you want to get rid of self centeredness, lift your hands to God and worship Him...**

Have you ever heard that Lucifer or Satan was originally the worship leader of heaven? That's what they say; I don't know if he was actually the worship leader of heaven, but it says in

Ezekiel 28 (Word of the Lord to King of Tyre believed to be a description of Lucifer)

12b

"You were the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13

You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone was your covering:
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes
was prepared for you on the day you were created.

- If it's true that Lucifer was created to worship God, he failed by allowing bitter envy and selfish ambition to fill his heart.
- If this is what selfishness and envy does to the heart, how should we deal with this temptation in our own hearts?

Romans 1

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

— — —

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

NLT - **21** they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks.

Vs. 15

Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

Bitter envy + Selfish ambition = Earthly Wisdom

Vs. 16-18

16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

- Here James puts another nail in the coffin on envy and selfish ambition.
- He makes it clear where you find it, you find disorder and every evil practice.

Does this happen in Politics?

Does this happen in Business?

Does this happen in Schools?

Can this happen in Christian Homes?

Can this happen in a Christian Church?

- The spiritual tug-of-war is powerful and real...
- How do we break it?

Vs. 17

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

- James gives us a landmine of diamonds to help us understand what wisdom from heaven looks like.

Pure: “The reference is not to sexual purity but to the absence of any sinful attitude or motive.” **(Burdick)**

Peace-Loving: “This is one of the great words of character description in the NT. it is used mostly of God’s disposition as a King.

He is gentle and kind, although in reality he has every reason to be stern and punitive toward men in their sin.” **(Burdick)**

Considerate: NKJV - **Gentle:** “It is impossible to find an English word to translate this quality. Matthew Arnold called it ‘sweet reasonableness’ and it is the ability to extend to others the kind consideration we would wish to receive ourselves.” **(Barclay)**

Submissive: NKJV - **Willing to Yield:** Not stubborn nor obstinate. “Easy to persuade, not in the sense of being pliable and weak, but in the sense of not being stubborn and being willing to listen to reason and to appeal... skilled in knowing when wisely to yield.” **(Barclay)**

Full of Mercy: Willingness to show Mercy. “It does not judge others strictly on the basis of the law, but will extend a generous hand.” **(Guzik)**

- This is Mercy given based upon **Matthew 7:2** "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Good fruit: Just watch what comes from it. Take a step back and give it time. The person who walks in Heavenly Wisdom will bare good fruit. The result of their life, what they put their hand to, the people they impact, the things they institute, it will bare good fruit and will be a witness of them.

Impartial: As James mentioned in Chapter 2 it is without favoritism or partiality.

Sincere: NKJV - **without hypocrisy:** “Without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask. Seeking nothing but God’s glory, and using no other means to attain it.” **(Clarke)**

Vs. 18

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Closing:

Consider the difference?

Result of Worldly Wisdom:

bitter envy and selfish ambition, earthly, unspiritual, demonic. Bringing disorder and every evil practice.

Result of Heavenly Wisdom:

Good Life, Deeds Done, Humble

pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Peacemakers sowing in peace.