

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE GODLY WISDOM, PART 4

James 3:13-18 - <sup>13</sup>*Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.* <sup>14</sup>*But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.* <sup>15</sup>*This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.* <sup>16</sup>*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.* <sup>17</sup>*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.* <sup>18</sup>*And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

**Theme:** There are two kinds of wisdom:

- (1) A wisdom from above (godly wisdom)
- (2) A wisdom not from above (godless wisdom)

### ① The priority of godly wisdom

- Both the Old and New Testaments show the importance and value of having godly wisdom. Godly wisdom should be desired and it is essential to the Christian life.

### ② The definition of godly wisdom

- (1) Fearing God (*Proverbs 1:7*)
- (2) Understanding God's ways (*Psalms 107:43; Hosea 14:9*)
- (3) Applying God's ways and Word to life (*Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 8:13*)

### ③ The acquisition of godly wisdom

- (1) Through a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (*1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 2:3*)
- (2) Through a thorough knowledge of God's Word (*Psalms 19:7; 119:98*)
- (3) Through the influence of wise companions (*Proverbs 13:20*)
- (4) Through prayer (*Ephesians 1:17; James 1:5*)

### ④ The test of godly wisdom (v. 13)

- (1) A consistent pattern of obedience
- (2) An attitude of gentleness (toward God and others)

### ⑤ A description of godless wisdom (vv. 14-16)

- Definition: Every thought, attitude, word, act that is contrary to God's revealed wisdom in His Word.
- The two chief characteristics/motives (v. 14):
  - *bitter jealousy* - competition with others over what we want or don't want
  - *selfish ambition* - competition with God over what we want or don't want
- The source (v. 15): from the world, from the flesh, and ultimately from the devil
- The results (v. 16): *disorder* (1:8-unstable and 3:8-restless) *and every evil thing*

### Summary of vv. 13-16:

- Godly wisdom is obedience with a gentle attitude which shows that we're trusting God's way as the wisest and best way to respond to a circumstance or person.
- Godless wisdom is disobedience with a self-centered attitude (jealousy or selfish ambition) which shows that we're trusting our own way as the wisest and best way.

⑥ A \_\_\_\_\_ of godly wisdom (vv. 17-18)

Godless Wisdom	Godly Wisdom
<p><b>v. 15</b> - <i>This wisdom is not that which comes down from above...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The source:</b> <i>earthly, natural, demonic</i></li> <li>• <b>The chief characteristics/motives (v. 14):</b> <i>bitter jealousy and selfish ambition</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>v. 17</b> - <i>But the wisdom from above...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The source:</b> _____ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1:5 - <i>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously.</i></li> <li>○ 1:17 - <i>Every good thing given and every perfect thing is from above.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>The chief characteristic/motive:</b> <i>first pure, then...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>first</i> - not chronological, but “chief” or “foremost” or “of first importance”</li> <li>○ <i>then</i> - “thereafter” or “afterwards”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

v. 17 - *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then...*

- *pure* (hagnos) →
  - *holy* (hagios)
  - “wholly free from defilement” (Septuagint)
  - “unmixed”
- Implication: Sincere, pure motives \_\_\_\_\_ from bitter jealous and selfish ambition
- Matthew 5:8 - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [BEATITUDE #6]
- Hebrews 12:14 - *Pursue...sanctification (hagiasmos) without which no one will see the Lord.*
- John Blanchard - “*I believe that we would be capturing the spirit of what both Jesus and James meant by purity if we called it unmixed devotion, an undivided love for God burning in the human heart. This seems to be confirmed by James telling us that purity is the criterion of true wisdom, in contrast to the false wisdom which was characterized by jealousy and selfish ambition. False wisdom puts self at the center of life; true wisdom puts God at the center and in that sense is ‘pure’, being both undefiled and undivided.*”

v. 17 - *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

- v. 13: The foundation of these qualities: *good behavior in deeds*  
(godly wisdom shows itself in this \_\_\_\_\_ way: a consistent pattern of obedience)
- v. 17: The description of a life of obedience  
(godly wisdom shows itself in these \_\_\_\_\_ ways)

<b>Group 1</b> <i>eirēnikos</i> (peaceable) <i>epieikēs</i> (gentle) <i>eupeithēs</i> (reasonable)	<b>Group 2</b> full <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of mercy</li> <li>• and good fruits</li> </ul>	<b>Group 3</b> <i>adiakritos</i> (unwavering) <i>anypokritos</i> (without hypocrisy)
---	--	--

**Q:** Why would James have arranged these qualities in this way?

**A:** For \_\_\_\_\_

## ② Peaceable (*eirēnikos*)

- Throughout Scripture, there's a connection between peace and wisdom
  - Proverbs 3:17 - *Her ways are pleasant and all her paths are peace.*
- One definition: “ready for peace”
  - Does not mean:
    - Peace at all \_\_\_\_\_
    - Toleration of \_\_\_\_\_
    - Compromise with or agreement with \_\_\_\_\_
- A better definition: “peace \_\_\_\_\_”
  - Matthew 5:9 - *Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.*  
[BEATITUDE #7]
  - To be a peacemaker or peace-lover, we must:
    - (1) Seek to \_\_\_\_\_ peace where it exists
      - Ephesians 4:3 - *Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
    - (2) Seek to \_\_\_\_\_ peace where it does not exist
      - Romans 14:19 - *Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*
  - What about those who refuse to be at peace?
    - Romans 12:18 - *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
 Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
 Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
 Where there is discord, let me bring unison.*

### ③ Gentle (*epieikēs*)

- Definition: “bigheartedness” or “graciousness” contrasted with “strict justice” (Aristotle)
  - A generous treatment of others
  - Looking for the best in the worst of people
- Edmond Hiebert - *“It conveys the thought of respect for the feeling of others, being willing to waive all rigor and severity in its dealings with others.”*
- This is a quality of:
  - God (Psalm 86:5 - *For You, Lord, are good* (*epieikēs*))
  - Christ (2 Cor. 10:1 - *I urge you by the meekness & gentleness* (*epieikeia*) of Christ)
- Required of elders (1 Tim. 3:3 - *not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle* (*epieikēs*))
- Commanded of all believers (Phi. 4:5 - *Let your gentle* (*epieikēs*) *spirit be known to all men*)
- Titus 3:2-4 - *...malign no one, be peaceable, gentle* (*epieikēs*) *showing every consideration for all men.*
- Matthew 5:10-12 - *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [BEATITUDE #9]*
- Robert Johnstone - *“The Christian man loves to make allowances for the ignorance and weaknesses of others, knowing the great need he has in constantly of having allowance made for himself both by God and man.”*

### ④ Reasonable (*eupeithēs*)

- Definition: “to be easily persuaded”
  - Not gullible, but a willingness to listen and learn (opposite of \_\_\_\_\_)
- Douglas Moo - *“It is a willing deference to others when unalterable theological and moral principles are not involved.”*
- Example: King David and Nabal (1 Samuel 25:32, 35) \_\_\_\_\_
- An attitude that is humble, teachable, yielding, submissive
  - Matthew 5:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit [BEATITUDE #1]*
  - Matthew 5:4 - *Blessed are those who mourn [BEATITUDE #2]*
  - Matthew 5:5 - *Blessed are the gentle [BEATITUDE #3]*
- Proverbs 26:16 - *The sluggard (or fool) is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer.*

*“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. Go up to your house in peace. I have listened to you and granted your request.”*

## ⑤ full of mercy and good fruits

- Definition: A compassion toward someone in distress that motivates us to action
  - *mercy + good fruits = \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_*
- This is true of God
  - Psalm 86:15 - *You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious*
  - Psalm 103:8 - *The Lord is merciful and gracious.*
  - Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy*
  - Psalm 103:13 - *Just as a father has compassion (or mercy) on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those that fear Him.*
- This marks a true believer
  - Matt. 5:7 - *Blessed are the merciful... [BEATITUDE #5]*
  - Matt. 5:6 - *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [BEATITUDE #4]*
  - Matt. 23:23 - *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.*
  - Luke 10:36-37 - [Jesus:] *“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” And he (the lawyer) answered: “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”*
- John Blanchard - *“A Christian should not only be growing in his knowledge of God, he should also be the best neighbor a man could have. When there is an accident or sickness in a neighbor's home, when some crisis arises, when some need appears, the Christian should be the first to offer help because godly wisdom has provided him with a store of good fruit.”*

## ⑥ unwavering (*adiakritos*)

- Definition: “not divided” (wisdom acts consistently; it is not unstable)
- James 1:6 - *But he must ask in faith without doubting, for the one who doubts is like surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.*
- Ephesians 4:14 - *...we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.*
- Matthew 5:13 - *You are the salt of the earth [Our character as seen in the Beatitudes]*

## ⑦ without hypocrisy

- Definition: “not playing a part” or someone who is “undisguised”
- If the Apostle Peter was susceptible to hypocrisy, so are we
  - Galatians 2:13 - *The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*

v. 18 - *And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

v. 16 Godless wisdom produces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>disorder</i>      ←</li> <li>• <i>every evil thing</i>      ←</li> </ul>	v. 18 Godly wisdom produces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____ →</li> <li>• _____ →</li> </ul>
	NIV: <i>Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness</i>
<b>The Point:</b> Negatively, righteousness cannot be cultivated where there is a climate of jealousy and selfish ambition	<b>The Point:</b> Positively, peacemakers produce a harvest of righteousness.

**Q:** Why is a harvest of righteousness important?

- Isaiah 61:3 - *...they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.*
- Matthew 5:16) - *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

**A:** Living a life of godly wisdom produces a harvest of righteousness which brings \_\_\_\_\_ to God