

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE GODLY WISDOM, PART 3

2:14-26 A living faith will be accompanied by godly works

3:1-12 A living faith will be accompanied by godly words

3:13-18 A living faith will be accompanied by godly wisdom

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

❶ 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.

❷ The definition of godly wisdom

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

❸ 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 (Psalm 19:7; 119:98)
- (3) Through the influence of wise companions (Proverbs 13:20)
- (4) Through prayer (Ephesians 1:17; James 1:5)

❹ The test of godly wisdom (v. 13)

Who among you is wise and understanding?

Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

- (1) A consistent pattern of _____
- (2) An attitude of _____
 - Toward God: A calm acceptance of our circumstances from God for our good, and a refusal to complain about those circumstances
 - Toward others: A humble, gracious spirit (even when wronged)

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

- Every thought, every attitude, every word, every act that is _____ to God's revealed wisdom in His Word.

Human wisdom is like a chameleon that changes itself to match its circumstances. It will express itself in countless secular and spiritual forms.

The Key: Regardless of how many forms or manifestations it takes, it looks the same at its _____.

① The _____ of godless wisdom (v. 14)

v. 14a - *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart...*

- *bitter jealousy* (zēlos) = _____ (English)
 - Definition: energy, heat, enthusiasm for a cause
 - Zeal can be good (Jn 2:17-Christ's zeal for His Father's house consumed Him)
 - Most often in the NT, zeal is used to speak of an evil motive
 - Greek Lexicon: "The kind of zeal which does not try to help others, but rather to harm them—the predominant concern being personal advancement."
 - Summary definition: To be jealous is to feel resentment against someone else because you see that person in _____ with you, and you resent their success, or their advantages, or something else about them.
 - It can express itself in the family, at work, at school, and even in the church.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-5 - *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy (zēlos) and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.*
 - 2 Corinthians 12:20 - *For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy (zēlos), angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances...*
 - It is characteristic of unbelievers
 - Galatians 5:19-21 - *Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy (zēlos), outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Q: When we struggle with jealousy, what should we do?

A: Put off jealousy, renew our mind with Scripture, and put on _____
(1 Corinthians 13:4 - *Love is patient, love is kind and is not _____*)

- *selfish ambition (eritheia)*
 - History: day laborer → mercenary → corrupt politician → proud self-interest
 - Philippians 1:15-17 - *Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition (eritheia) rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment...2:3-7* - *Do nothing from selfishness (eritheia) or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*
 - Selfish ambition promotes self and has no concern for others (a horizontal sin), but Scripture emphasizes the vertical nature of this sin. The heart of selfish ambition is rebellion against God. Just like bitter jealousy lives in competition with others, selfish ambition is _____ with God.
 - It is the characteristic of those who are perishing
 - Romans 2:4-8 - *Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious (eritheia) and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.*
 - It is one of the works of the flesh
 - Galatians 5:17-20 - *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes (eritheia), dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
 - It was part of the very first sin
 - Genesis 3:4-6 - *The serpent said to the woman... "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate...*
 - It was at the heart of Satan's rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-14)

v. 14b - ...do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

- Translated: If you think you have wisdom, but you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, then you lie against the truth because that is not true wisdom.

② The _____ of godless wisdom (v. 15)

v. 15a - *This wisdom is not that which comes down from above...*

- James 1:17 - *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*
 - If our life is characterized by jealousy and selfish ambition, then whatever wisdom we are living by is not the wisdom from above. It is a professed wisdom (*Professing to be wise, they became fools* - Romans 1:22).

Q: If this is wisdom that does not come down from above (if it is not from God), then what is the source of this wisdom?

A: v. 15b - [*it is*] *earthly, natural, demonic*

- *earthly* = of the _____
- *natural* = of the _____
- *demonic* = of the _____

- Isaiah 14:12-14 - *How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*

- **Bottom line:** Anything we do out of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition is living by a wisdom that exalts self above God and others. And that wisdom originates not only from the world (around us) and the flesh (our heart within us), but ultimately from Satan himself.

③ The _____ of godless wisdom

v. 16 - *For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.*

- *disorder* = instability (1:8-*unstable in all his ways*) or unrest (3:8-*the tongue is a restless evil*)
 - (1) _____ unrest: Jealousy and selfish ambition will eventually produce disputes and factions in the church
 - (2) _____ unrest: Jealousy and selfish ambition will eventually produce rebellion against authority
- *every evil thing*
 - Nothing good comes from jealousy and selfish ambition—it only produces bad

Application:

Philippians 2:3a - *Do nothing from selfishness (eritheia) or empty conceit (vain-glory, pride)...*

- PUT OFF: Selfish ambition

Philippians 2:3b-4 - *...but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interests of others.*

- PUT ON: The _____ of others

Philippians 2:5-16 - *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

- Christ was more concerned about others than Himself

The Big Picture Point of 3:13-16:

The test for godly wisdom (v. 13):

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

The characteristics of godless wisdom (vv. 14-16):

- (1) Bitter jealousy (competition with others)
- (2) Selfish ambition (competition with God)

Q: Why would these things prove whether or not we have godly wisdom?

A1: Obedience with a humble gentle attitude in response to a circumstance or person shows that we're trusting and using _____ way as the _____ and _____ way to respond to that circumstance or person. That's godly wisdom.

A2: If we sin (bitter jealousy or selfish ambition) in response to circumstance or person, it shows we are trusting our _____ way as the _____ and _____ way in that difficulty. That's godless wisdom.

Biblical wisdom is theocentric (God-centered). So, if our life is centered on God (not on self) we will live all of life in godly wisdom because we will be applying His ways and His Word to life (circumstances and relationships).