

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE GODLY WISDOM, PART 1

James 3:13-18

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

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

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

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

① The _____ of godly wisdom

v. 13 - *Who among you is wise and understanding?*

- Presuppositions behind this question:
 - (1) Wisdom is absolutely crucial in the Christian life
 - (2) All of us should long for the skill of wisdom
- Wisdom is not a small or optional issue to James—it is at the heart of our faith
 - He grew up in a godly Jewish home immersed in the OT Hebrew Scriptures
 - One of the greatest goals that is held up in the OT is the attainment of wisdom
 - Because he was so immersed in the OT, it's not a surprise that his letter is called the _____ of the New Testament
- Secular wisdom literature dates back to about 2700 BC (*Instructions of Shuruppak*)
- The emphasis on wisdom reached its apex during the life of Solomon
 - 1 Kings 3 - ⁹"Give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil..."¹⁰It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing..."¹²"I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. 1 Kings 4 - ²⁹Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. ³⁰Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹For he was wiser than all men.
 - Solomon took that wisdom and wrote it down in what we call the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament

- There are 5 books in the Bible specifically devoted to teaching us godly wisdom (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
 - A survey of these books shows that wisdom makes all kinds of amazing promises and provides all kinds of amazing benefits:
 - It protects and delivers us from all kinds of troubles (Proverbs 2:8)
 - It helps us master every kind of difficulty that we might face in life (Ecc 8:5)
 - It rescues us from things that would destroy us (Proverbs 13:14)
 - It achieves lasting results (Proverbs 24:3)
 - It brings success with it (Ecclesiastes 9:11)
 - It bestows honor (Proverbs 3:35)
 - It brings blessing (Proverbs 12:18)
 - Nothing compares to the value of wisdom:
 - Proverbs 16:16 - *How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.*
 - Proverbs 3:13-15 - ¹³*How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. ¹⁴For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. ¹⁵She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. ¹⁶Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast.*
 - Proverbs 8: An Ode to Wisdom
 - vv. 1-5 The call of wisdom to all men
 - vv. 6-13 Wisdom produces right conduct
 - vv. 14-21 Wisdom is the key to all success in life
 - vv. 22-31 Wisdom was the key principle behind the act of creation
 - vv. 32-36 Wisdom is the most important thing in life:

Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, for blessed are they who keep my ways. Heed instruction and be wise, and don't neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord. But he who sins against me injures himself; all those who hate me love their own death.

- The New Testament has the same priority for wisdom
 - Luke 2:52 - *Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*
 - Acts 6:3 - *Select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.*
 - Acts 6:10 - *But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.*
 - Romans 16:19 - *I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.*
 - Colossians 1:28 - *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom.*
 - Ephesians 5:15 - *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise*
 - Colossians 4:5 - *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders.*
- Since wisdom is a priority in the Bible, it should be a priority for us. So, is it?

② The _____ of godly wisdom

v. 13 - *Who among you is wise and understanding?*

- wise (English) = _____ (Greek)
 - The Greeks loved wisdom and passed along the love of wisdom to the rest of the world, which has benefited culturally from it. But it is vastly different from biblical wisdom.

| GREEK WISDOM | BIBLICAL (HEBREW) WISDOM |
|-------------------------------|---|
| _____ -centered | _____ -centered |
| Academic knowledge (_____) | Practical ability or skill (_____) |
| Affects primarily your _____ | Affects your entire _____ |
| May produce no change in life | Will display itself in behavior and conduct |

- God is wise and has true wisdom
 - H.B. Smith - *“Wisdom is that attribute of God, whereby He produces the best possible results with the best possible means.”*
 - In _____
 - Psalm 104:24 - *O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all.*
 - In _____
 - Romans 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*
 - In His _____
 - Romans 8:28 - *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*
- What does wisdom look like for us?
 - *wise* (sophos) or *wisdom* (sophia) in the Septuagint = _____
 - Used throughout the historical books of the OT, it is used most often for technical skills (like the skill of a carpenter, a metal worker, or a weaver)
 - Used throughout the books of poetry and prophecy as a skill in _____
 - To be wise means the skill of managing life well in the same way that God chooses the best goals and the best means to accomplish those goals
- **Definition:** Godly wisdom is the practical skill or ability to live all of life in a way that pleases God because life is _____ on God
 - Nowhere in Scripture are unbelievers said to have this kind of wisdom. They can be knowledgeable, but they are not biblically wise apart from God.
 - To truly have the skill for living in God's world means that we have to be rightly related to Him.

- Three basic elements of biblical wisdom:

(1) _____ God

- Proverbs 1:7 - *The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
 - Fearing God is the first and controlling principle in wisdom.
 - Biblical wisdom must be _____ (God-centered)

(2) Understanding God's _____

- Psalm 107:43 - *Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things, and consider the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.*
- Hosea 14:9 - *Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right.*

(3) Having the practical skill to apply God's ways and God's Word to _____

- Hosea 14:9 - *Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them.*
- Psalm 111:10 - *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.*
- Proverbs 8:13 - *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.*

③ The _____ of godly wisdom

- Ultimately, wisdom is a _____ from God (Proverbs 2:6 - *For the Lord gives wisdom*)
- God gives us wisdom through four means

(1) Through a saving knowledge of _____

- 1 Corinthians 1:30 - *By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*
- Colossians 2:3 - *In [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom*
- J.I. Packer - *“Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God's holiness and sovereignty, acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down in Christ, can divine wisdom become ours.”*

- John Blanchard - *“Only when we become God-centered in our relationship to Christ, do we have our first experience of true wisdom.”*

(2) Through a thorough knowledge of His _____

- James 3:13 - *Who among you is wise and understanding?*
 - understanding (epistēmōn) = knowledge of an expert
(acquired thru careful study & observation)
 - Implication: We learn God's Word by careful study and that makes us better qualified/equipped to live the Christian life
- Psalms 19:7b - *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*
- Psalms 119:98 - *Your commandments make me wise*
- Proverbs 2:6 - *For the Lord gives wisdom. From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*
- 2 Timothy 3:15 - *...from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
- John Blanchard - *“Every Christian has an inescapable responsibility to use whatever ability God has given him to appropriate spiritual truth. There has never been a time in the history of the world when God's people have had such readily available material to help them in their study of His Word. Yet indolence, undisciplined, and laziness have made pygmies out of many who should be giants. God has given us all the written directions we will ever need on this earth in His infallible Word, and we will grow in wisdom only as we immerse ourselves in it and allow its truth to permeate every part of our lives.”*

(3) Through the influence of wise _____

- Proverbs 13:20 - *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

(4) Through _____

- Ephesians 1:17 - *[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.*
- Colossians 1:9 - *We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*
- James 1:5 - *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*