



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: How Wise Are You?

Passage: James 3:13-18

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: We live in a world overflowing with knowledge but starving for wisdom. Yet despite all this brilliance, our world remains broken, divided, and confused.

“The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants.” — General Omar Bradley

Wisdom isn't proven by intelligence or education, but by conduct — by the way a person lives. True wisdom shows itself not in clever words but in Christlike character. James shows us that there are two very different kinds of wisdom: one that comes from above, and one that rises from below. Tonight, we will see the contrast clearly—to examine the nature of worldly wisdom and the nobility of heavenly wisdom, and to ask which one rules our hearts.

I. **The Nature and Fruit of Worldly Wisdom** (Verses 15-16)

James describes worldly wisdom in three words: earthly, sensual, and devilish. Each word shows us a deeper layer of corruption, moving from the world, to the flesh, to the devil.

A. It Is Earthly - Mind Without Heaven

Worldly wisdom begins on the earth and never looks any higher. It measures everything by temporary success: money, position, popularity, pleasure. Its horizon stops where the sky begins.



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“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him...” (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Worldly wisdom sees only what can be counted and measured —it leaves God out of the equation entirely.

“...Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name...” (Genesis 11:4)

Earthly wisdom produces people who may know how to make a living but not how to make a life. It seeks the advancement of self, not the glory of God.

B. It is Sensual - Desire Without Restraint

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

Sensual wisdom makes choices based on feeling rather than faith, emotion rather than Scripture, and the result is always heartache.

C. It is Devilish - Ambition Without Submission

Satan always disguises his lies as superior understanding.

Pride is the root of such wisdom. It refuses to bow to God’s authority. It insists on its own way. Worldly wisdom may wear a robe of sophistication, but beneath it is rebellion.

D. Its Fruit - Confusion and Every Evil Work

Worldly wisdom promises freedom but produces slavery. It promises unity but breeds division. It promises progress but ends in destruction.

We have reached the stars, but not the Savior. We’ve learned to split the atom, but not to control our anger. That’s what happens when knowledge grows faster than character.

II. The Character and Fruit of Heavenly Wisdom (Verses 17-18)



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True wisdom comes “from above.” It’s not discovered; it’s received. It’s not learned by intellect but granted by grace.

Heavenly wisdom begins with prayer and humility. It sees life not from earth’s perspective but from heaven’s.

Qualities of Heavenly Wisdom:

- Pure — It is holy at heart. It desires what pleases God.
- Peaceable — It seeks harmony, not conflict.
- Gentle — It treats others with kindness and patience.
- Easy to be entreated — It listens, it yields, it’s not stubborn
- Full of mercy and good fruits — It’s compassionate and active.
- Without partiality — It’s fair and consistent.
- Without hypocrisy — It’s sincere, without pretense.

Worldly wisdom leaves behind strife; heavenly wisdom leaves behind peace. The person filled with God’s wisdom becomes a peacemaker—sowing seeds of grace, truth, and reconciliation.

Conclusion: Do you operate by worldly wisdom—driven by pride, ambition, and self-interest? Or do you seek heavenly wisdom—marked by purity, peace, gentleness, and mercy?

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)

Wisdom is not about knowing more; it’s about living more like Christ.

