

**James 3:13-18**  
“Think Right to Speak Right”  
April 19, 2026

**V 13** In this section, James is making the point that an unbridled tongue is a natural human behavior stemming from natural human wisdom.

“good” *kalos* beautiful; noble; “conduct” manner of life. “meekness” not self-impressed; tame, when used of animals; courtesy.

The NKJV adds the words “that” and “are done;” the NASB is more literal. An amplified translation might read:

“Who among you has the insightful comprehension that it’s not appropriate for a believer’s tongue to be inconsistent with the love of God for every person? He is to show, by a beautiful, noble manner of life, his deeds in the meekness of wisdom, not being overly impressed with his own importance, but in submission to God’s will for his speech.”

**V 14** “in your hearts” That’s where damaging words come from. The meek, self-controlled manner of life is in contrast to “bitter envy” and “self-seeking.” Our tongues represent the outworking of our thoughts. An untamed tongue represents untamed character.

“bitter” i.e., sharp; vindictive

“envy” *zelos*; in a good sense, “zeal;” in a bad sense, “jealousy; eagerness to match or surpass someone; rivalry”

“self-seeking” i.e., selfish ambition; wanting what you want, regardless of others

“lie against the truth” This truth is that strife is not God’s plan for us. This behavior is fleshly, not spiritual.

**V 15** “from above” as in, “from God”. The manner of life of bitterness, desiring to outdo everyone, being jealous of others, and trying to get your own way, regardless of what others think or feel, is a form of wisdom, that of the world, and it is definitely not from God. See **James 1:17**.

“earthly” *epigeios* pertaining to the earth, as opposed to heavenly. **John 3:12** “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

“sensual” *psychikos* natural; unspiritual. **1 Cor 2:14** “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

“demonic” *daimoniodes* demoniacal, devilish; *may be* “typical of the way a demon acts.” Only used here in NT.

**V 16** “confusion” i.e., disorder; **1 Cor 14:33** “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

“evil” i.e., low grade; base; ordinary; worthless; evil; mean  
“Demon-like” is what comes naturally; base; ordinary; worthless; disorderly and unruly. This is human behavior, left to itself.

**V 17** “from above” i.e., “heavenly; from God”  
“pure” *hagnos* holy; chaste; of divinity; from which we get “sanctified”  
“peacable” i.e., peaceful; the OPPOSITE of disorder, confusion, strife  
“gentle” i.e., kind; courteous; tolerant; “not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom (BDAG)”

“willing to yield” i.e., reasonable; compliant; obedient; only used here in NT; the OPPOSITE of self-seeking

“mercy” i.e., compassion

“without partiality” i.e., nonjudgemental; impartial

“without hypocrisy i.e., genuine; sincere

A believer led by the Spirit will demonstrate the above characteristics in his/her interactions with other believers, as well as with those outside the church. Our divine wisdom does not turn off when we leave the confines of the church.

**V 18** The effective teacher must be committed to peace; and, he must sow his words in peace to produce the fruit of righteousness.

**See 1 Corinthians 2:11-16.** There are only two sources of wisdom, that which is earthly and natural to the human being, and that which is from above. God’s will is for us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, **Romans 12:1,2**, so that we can live by His wisdom.