

Step-by-Step: Practical Living from the Book of James

Take the Step of Wisdom

James 3:13-18

Wisdom: Today we are talking about wisdom. The word *wise* or *wisdom* appears over 700 times in your Bible, making it one of the major themes of scripture.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, & it will be given him.” James 1:5

Main Idea: Wisdom is Not about What You Know, but How You Live

“Who is wise & understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy & selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast & be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy & selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder & every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy & good fruits, impartial & sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” James 3:13-18

Two Types of Wisdom:

I. Fool’s Wisdom

Who is wise & understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy & selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast & be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy & selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder & every vile practice.” James 3:13-16

“We need to learn & to declare again the mystery of wisdom from above. Truth consists not merely in correct doctrine, but in correct doctrine to which is added the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.” A.W. Tozer

II. True Wisdom

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy & good fruits, impartial & sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” James 3:17-18

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hate, may I bring love; Where offense, may I bring pardon; May I bring unison in place of discord.” St. Francis of Assisi

“Bless those who persecute you; bless & do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:14-18, 21

We are guilty of Fool’s Wisdom that is selfish, bitter, unspiritual & demonic, but God calls us to be people of True Wisdom that is gentle, merciful & most of all, peaceful. This is a real challenge, but there is good news. We have a perfect example of the Wisdom of God...and it’s Jesus!

*“For Jews demand signs & Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews & folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews & Greeks, **Christ the power of God & the wisdom of God.** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, & the weakness of God is stronger than men.” 1 Corinthians 1:22-25*

“Take my yoke upon you, & learn from me, for I am gentle & lowly in heart, & you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy & my burden is light.” Matthew 11:29-30

To take the Step of Wisdom, it’s going to require you to be yoked together with Jesus, which can only happen when you turn from your sins and place your faith in Him.

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – Elwell & Comfort (2001)
- *New American Commentary: James* – Kurt Richardson (1996)
- *Shoe Leather Christianity* – Johnny M. Hunt (2014)
- *Holman NT Commentary: Hebrews & James* – Max Anders (1999)
- *The Book of James* – Johnny M Hunt (2003)
- *James: Faith that Works* – R. Kent Hughes (2013)
- *Exploring the Epistle of James* – John Phillips (2003)
- *Be Mature* – Warren Wiersbe (2010)
- *Swindoll’s Living Insights: James, 1&2 Peter* – Chuck Swindoll (2014)
- *MacArthur’s NT Commentary: James* – John MacArthur (1998)