

FAITH + WORKS

JAMES 3:13-18



OPENING

- Begin by asking the group members if they have any questions about the book of James that have preoccupied them thus far (and feel free to respond together as a group). If they have no questions, ask which verses or themes they've been thinking of most. Then pray together about what God has been speaking to the group through these recurring questions and thoughts.

SERMON REVIEW

- Wisdom is not only reserved for the aged. David and Josiah were both mere children when they learned to rely on the wisdom of God.
- We can all grow in wisdom, but it is our choice whether or not to do so.
- James 3:13-18 teaches us that two types of wisdom exist. That which is *not* from heaven, and that which *is*.
- What is *not* wisdom from heaven? That which is accompanied by bitter envy, selfish ambition, boastfulness, and the denial of truth. It's earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.
- *Envy* may not be a term that resonates with you, but many translations use the word *jealousy*. And which of us cannot come up with a list of things for which we are jealous (for example, someone else's relationship, hairstyle, financial status, skill set, etc.)?
- We live in an age of narcissism. People are obsessed with themselves! And if you aren't acting against it, then you are probably participating.
- What *is* wisdom from heaven? First of all, it is pure. It's also peace-loving, considerate, submissive (willing to yield), merciful, productive (it bears "good fruit") impartial, and sincere.
- How does one grow in true wisdom? Ask God for it, explore and investigate the Bible for yourself, walk in community with other believers, and imitate those who are wise.

DISCUSSION

- This passage says that good works are "done in the humility that comes from wisdom." How does wisdom lead to humility, and humility to good works?
- Is the wisdom mentioned in verses 14-16 really wisdom at all? Explain why or why not.
- James says that true wisdom comes from heaven. He uses a similar expression in 1:17, that "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...." What does reading these verses together tell us about the nature of the wisdom from God?
- Why does James emphasize the purity of true wisdom above its other attributes?

- Work together to define each of the attributes that James associates with true wisdom: pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere. Use a bible concordance to come to a broader, biblical understanding of any terms that remain vague (if you don't have a physical copy, *Nave's Topical Concordance* and *Torrey's New Topical Textbook* are available in digital format at www.biblestudytools.com/concordances).

CHALLENGE

- Be serious about finding God's wisdom for every situation in your life. Ask for it, and listen to what He says through Scripture.
- As we discussed a few weeks ago, we cannot be mere *hearers* of the Word. Don't begin the search for wisdom unless you plan to act on what you find! If you've already sought it out, respond to His instruction and guidance.
- Continue reading, writing, and memorizing the book of James.

PLAN AHEAD

- Take a look at James 4. As the leader of this group, ask God to give you the wisdom necessary to teach and apply its truth next week!