

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Open up your swords to James 3,

One day a rabbi was sitting in his office looking out the window.

He saw a beggar across the street scratching his back against the fence.

He went out and talked with the man.

He learned this poor guy had not had a hot bath for weeks.

So he gave this beggar money for food and clothes and enough money to pay for a room at the local motel so he could clean himself up and have a good night's rest.

Word of the rabbi's compassion got around the village, and two other men ran to the fence and began scratching themselves against it.

The rabbi saw them and went to them, but instead of giving them a handout, he began to beat them with his cane.

"You can't fool me," he cried. "You guys are fakes!"

The two were bewildered and asked, "Why did you believe the other guy but not us?"

The rabbi answered, "Because he was alone and naturally had to use the fence to relieve his itching."

But you are two and if you were not fakes, you would scratch each others' back.”

The point of this story is to show the difference between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom – the rabbi demonstrated godly wisdom in his response to the beggar that scratched himself with the fence.

The two fakers used worldly wisdom in an attempt to deceive the rabbi in order so they could prosper.

In our study this morning, James is going to make this same distinction to us.

And the reason he is going to do it is so that we can examine ourselves because our conduct will determine what type of wisdom are we following.

Let's pray...

**[Jas 3:13-18 NKJV] 13 Who [is] wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct [that] his works [are done] in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking [exist], confusion and every evil thing [are] there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**

A few weeks ago when we started our study through James,

James wrote, (James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

And the reason that James wrote this was in response to the church having a difficult time enduring trials that they were going through –

Not only does this apply to the early church – this application applies to you and me.

We are to ask God for wisdom on how to respond to the trials that we face so that we may be able to endure them.

Without His wisdom, we will not be able to count it all joy – we will not be able to allow the trials to mature us.

The question is, how do I know if the solution I've been given is truly from God or not?

You see, just because we pray for wisdom, and we think we have a solution to the difficult thing we're facing, doesn't mean it's the answer that God has given to you and me.

Because what tends to happen is that our flesh creeps in and we start to respond to our flesh instead of the wisdom that God has given us.

Or many times, we have already determined what our response will be – and in doing so, we really don't want God's wisdom.

Someone wrongs you at work – they start spreading rumors about you.

You pray for wisdom, just like James said – then the next morning you go to work and start spreading rumors about them.

Is that the solution that God gave you? Of course not.

And that is what James is going to demonstrate here –

He is going to give us some qualities of “real wisdom” or Godly wisdom that will act as a test for the decisions that we make.

**[Jas 3:13 NKJV] 13 Who [is] wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct [that] his works [are done] in the meekness of wisdom.**

Over the past couple of weeks, James has challenged us to examine ourselves or to test ourselves to see where we stand spiritually.

Two weeks ago, he challenged us to examine our fruits, our works – because the lack of fruit will reveal our faith.

Last week, he challenged us to examine the words that we speak – because what comes out of our mouth will reveal what is in our hearts.

Here in verse 13, James is challenging us by saying – Godly wisdom is not something that you keep up here (in the head)

Godly wisdom is visible.

It should be “seen” by our “good conduct”, by how we live our lives.

Our conduct is how we live our lives – it is what kind of person we show ourselves to be.

If we claim to have godly wisdom and understanding, we must show it first by our behavior and our exemplary lifestyle.

At the beginning of the chapter – James was warning those that were aspiring to be teachers to think it through because they were going to face a stricter judgment.

They were going to be judged on what the words that they spoke – as well as their conduct and their motives.

I asked you to make a note of the word meekness –

Meekness is that opposite of anger and pride – it is to be pleasant, gentle and humble.

When we show meekness toward God, what we are doing is accepting His dealings with us as good – therefore we don't dispute or resist the work that He is doing in our lives.

Meekness means not preoccupying ourselves with our own self-interests – but placing our trust in God's goodness and control over every situation.

Look at how Jesus described Himself when He said,

**(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

Gentle and lowly in heart = meekness.

It is important to note that meekness doesn't come from within – meekness is a fruit of the Spirit – one of the evidences of our maturity is meekness.

So our first characteristic of godly wisdom that James lists is “meekness”

**[Jas 3:14 NKJV] 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.**

Here in verse 14, we have two motivations that are counter to an individual who demonstrates godly wisdom through their conduct.

- Bitter envy – can be better translated as bitterly jealousy.

This is the individual who instead of rejoicing when someone else succeeds, they resort to criticizing them.

“I can't believe that they got that promotion – I would have done a much better job”

This is the individual who instead of feeling burdened when others fail – they rejoice.

Self-seeking means that all you care about is yourself.

You are fixated on self-promotion – no matter what the cost.

When you watch the political debates on television, the job of the candidate is to promote himself or herself so that we may get to like them and eventually vote for them.

Even if that self-promotion includes trashing the other candidates or even stretching out the truth.

Not only does this go on in politics, it also goes on in the church – those that were aspiring to be teachers – the ones that James was speaking of earlier – some of them – that is what they were doing. Promoting themselves.

It's all about me, me, me.

Turn with me to Philippians 2,

**[Phi 2:3-8 NKJV] 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to [the point of] death, even the death of the cross.**

Paul tells us here in Philippians that we our motivation for our actions should be based on our love for one another instead of our own selfish ambitions.

if you have envy or selfishness, don't claim that your "wisdom" has come from God as an answer to your prayer. It comes from somewhere else...

**[Jas 3:15 NKJV] 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, demonic.**

The three great enemies of the believer are the world, the flesh, and the devil, which correspond to the three characteristics of false wisdom that James mentions here.

Wisdom that comes from the world – it's focus is only on the here and the now.

It is derived from reason instead of revelation.

We have example after example in scriptures about people relying on earthly wisdom instead of Godly wisdom.

Earthly wisdom is what led Sarah to offer up her servant to Abram – and we see the consequences today from that decision.

Earthly wisdom is what led King Saul to offer up his armor to David before he battled Goliath – but God had other plans right.

In both examples, they used reason to make their decision.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 1,



Let's see what Paul has to say about the wisdom of the world.

**[1Co 1:20-21 NKJV] 20 Where [is] the wise? Where [is] the scribe? Where [is] the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

The message that Paul is saying here is that God cannot be found through human or earthly wisdom.

The true knowledge of the true God can only be found through the message of the cross.

James also mentions demonic wisdom here –

Adhering to this type of wisdom will only lead us to go against God's will.

**Turn with me to Matt 16 –**

Here we have the perfect example of this.

**[Mat 16:13-17, 21-23 NKJV] 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some [say] John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I**

am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ...

Peter is given this revelation by God.

Peter did not come to the conclusion that Jesus was indeed the Christ by looking back at the teachings and miracles of Jesus – this was not a result from reasoning or human wisdom.

Let's continue in verse 21

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, **for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**"

From verse 21-23, Peter was no longer depending upon the wisdom of God – he made those statements in response to demonic wisdom.

That is why Jesus rebukes him.

So we always have to be mindful of where wisdom is coming from.

**[Jas 3:16 NKJV] 16 For where envy and self-seeking [exist], confusion and every evil thing [are] there.**

Here in verse 16, we have the fruit of earthly wisdom.

Most notably, it produces disorder.

Instead of bringing people together, it drives them apart.

Instead of producing peace, it produces confusion.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 14 -

**[1Co 14:33 NKJV] 33 For God is not [the author] of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.**

The word “confusion” that Paul uses here, is the same Greek word that is used by James.

And this “confusion” will occur in our households and in every church where people are pursuing their own selfish concerns and partisan causes rather than the good of the body as a whole.

The only way we can change from worldly wisdom to godly wisdom is to have the Holy Spirit residing within.

He will guide us away from the fleshly wisdom that we have been so used to and lead us into the wisdom of Christ.

**[Jas 3:17 NKJV] 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.**

Earthly wisdom leads to confusion – but notice the consequences of heavenly wisdom here in verse 17.

This is where we test our decisions that we are currently seeking answers for –

We compare them to the following qualities and this will tell us whether the solution comes from Godly wisdom or from earthly wisdom.

The first quality that James list is pure: **Is the wisdom pure?**

By pure, James means, is it God centered – does it have a sinful motive behind it???

I remember back in the 90's, many young believers were wearing wristbands that would have the letters WWJD – What would Jesus Do?

It was intended for us to think about what we were about to do –

That is what James is saying here – Would God be pleased in the decision that you are about to make???

The second quality that James makes here is **peaceable**.

Will the solution that you are about to take – does it bring peace. Because God's wisdom is often accompanied by peace.

Does this mean that every decision God wants you to make is “easy”? No!

Easy and peaceful are not necessarily the same thing.

You can have a godly peace about something and still be in the middle of some pretty difficult times.

God's wisdom promotes peace between people, not strife.

Every godly decision may not result in peace with others, but we need to be sure to be doing our part.

The next quality that James brings us is gentle –

Godly wisdom is gentle.

Will our response be to kick someone when they are down or will we respond with gentleness and forgiveness?

We have the example in the Gospel of John with Jesus and the adulteress.

When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus and the Pharisees demanded He pronounce judgment, Jesus said that anyone without sin could go ahead and throw the first stone.

The next quality – willing to yield.

The person who is willing to yield is the person who is willing to hear all sides of a question, but he does not compromise his own beliefs.

He can disagree without being disagreeable. He is “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19).

Many people are just plain stubborn and they must have their own way.

However, when God’s wisdom is at work, there is a willingness to listen, think, pray, and obey whatever God reveals.

The next quality, full of mercy

Back in James 2:13 – James had already brought up the necessity to show mercy to others.

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy

Godly wisdom knows that the same measure of mercy we grant to others is the same measure God will use with us.

The next quality is good fruits,

This quality is tied into the previous quality.

It is the good fruit that is a response to the mercy we demonstrate to others.

We can show mercy and have no fruit in response to the mercy.

However, we must remember that Christianity is more than a simple emotion – it is more than just showing pity toward someone. We must act.

We can never say that we have truly pitied anyone until we have actually helped them out.

The next quality is **without partiality**.

Back in chapter two, James spoke about showing partiality within the church.

However, the word “partiality” here in context suggests “singleness of mind” or someone who is unwavering.

When you lean on the world’s wisdom, you are pressured from one side and then another to change your mind or take a new viewpoint.

However, when you have God’s wisdom, you don’t need to waver; you can be decisive and not be afraid because wisdom from above brings strength from above.

And the last quality that James points out is **without hypocrisy**.

The word hypocrite means one who wears a mask.

And this is a characteristic of someone who gets their wisdom from the world.

One who pretends to be something that they are not.

One who will tend to be insincere?

However, Godly wisdom produces the individual who is going to be open and honest – speaking the truth in love.

**[Jas 3:18 NKJV] 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**

Here in verse 18, James is equating Godly wisdom to righteousness.

And when we deal with each other in godly wisdom, we continue to sow the fruit of righteousness and that itself produces more righteousness.

We must remember that Godly wisdom isn't disconnected to the relationships we have with one another.

Jesus said,

**(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**

If one professes to be a Christian, he must prove it by living like a Christian.

And nothing is more convincing than the kind of wisdom revealed in his or her behavior.

God's wisdom will be revealed in the way we live.



And when we hear Him and we love Him and we obey Him and we serve Him, it will be manifest by a purified heart in humble peacemaking deeds of righteousness that reproduce themselves.

It's a tremendous, tremendous picture. And James says that's how a person proves whether or not he has the wisdom of God.

## Conclusion

Which wisdom leads your life? Godly wisdom or Worldly wisdom?

Worldly wisdom self-promotes. Godly wisdom elevates others.

Worldly wisdom seeks the highest place. Godly wisdom seeks the lowest place.

Worldly wisdom avoids the mirror of the Word. Godly wisdom submits to the mirror of the Word.

Worldly wisdom says trials will crush you. Godly wisdom says trials will mature you.

It is easy to know which one we are following.

All we have to do is to look at our life conduct, our character and attitude.

The good news is that even though we may lack godly wisdom – James says – all we have to do is ask, and God will give it. Period.

God waits for that request and He is eager to grant it. Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.