

James 3:13-18 - Living Right with Wisdom!

Scriptures:

James 1:5 - 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.

Proverbs 4:7 - Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you?

4680 – skillful in discernment

1990 – intelligent, learned

Notes:

In the last text James told us that the tongue is an unruly evil. Wisdom from God (Jam. 1:5) is one of the ways we control the tongue.

Living in this fallen world means dealing with the challenges that come from a world that is headed the wrong way. James is writing to believers so that they can better navigate the challenges this world produces. Real faith is not just for our relationship with God. Real faith is not what we do at church. Real faith touches every part of our life.

Let him show by good conduct that his works are

1166 -

2570 – morally good

391 – behavior, way of life

2041 -

In this text James is going to talk about wisdom. He will tell us that there are two types of wisdom. To be able to live right in this wrong way world we need to be able to discern which wisdom we are to use, because one type is right and the other one is wrong.

Knowledge is power! But that power can only be used in a godly manner with godly wisdom. Wisdom is the right exercise of knowledge and meekness is the right application of power.

done in the meekness of wisdom.

4240 – gentleness, humility

4678 - prudence, discretion, i.e., the capacity to understand, and hence act wisely

Scriptures:

¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in

4089 -
resentful

2205 - jealousy

2052 – selfish
ambition, rivalry

Notes:

Bitter envy and self-seeking are signs of using the wrong kind of wisdom.

“In Genesis 3 the serpent tempted Eve to trust in his wisdom instead of God’s wisdom, and the adversary is doing the same thing in every one of our lives today.” (Platt, 2014) page 83

 your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 

2620 -

5574 – speak
falsely

225 - that which
is in accord with
what really
happens, facts
that correspond
to a reality,
whether historical
(in the
time/space
continuum) (Lk
4:25; Ac 4:27), or
an eternal reality
not limited to
historical fact

Putting our trust in any wisdom other than God’s is how we choose to sin.

‘do not boast’ – Do not say you are wise if bitter envy and self-seeking is in your heart because you are lying to yourself and the rest of the world.

The wisdom of this world exalts man and robs God of His glory!

Scriptures:

Ephesians 2:1-3 - And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

John 8:42-44 - Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Jude 16-19 - These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. 17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Psalm 36:1b - There is no fear of God before his eyes.

Proverbs 9:10 -

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but

4678 -

2718 -

509 – “from above adv. — at or originating from a location above oneself (whether literally or metaphorically).”

is earthly, sensual, demonic.

1919 - human

5591 – natural, worldly

1141 – of the devil

Notes:

“Worldly wisdom views life from a limited perspective.” (Platt, 2014) page 83

Worldly wisdom measures wisdom based on its impact on you. It is about advancing yourself, pleasing yourself, promoting yourself.

James warned against partiality earlier in his epistle. He used the poor as an example. To show partiality to the rich and not to the poor is a sign that you don't think the poor have anything to offer you, but the rich do. That is earthly wisdom at work.

‘earthly’ = relates to things of the earth. Not focused on the things of God, heaven, or eternity. Like the legalization of ‘recreational drugs’. The courts and jails are filling up with people charged for possession of marijuana – so make it legal, frees up the police to go after other crimes and we can control the flow of marijuana.

‘sensual’ – pertaining to the senses. The flesh (our sin nature) desires what the flesh can experience. Same-sex marriage – even some Christians thought it was okay because gay people just wanted to be happy, and they didn't want to be alone. Those who live according to earthly wisdom may not have the Spirit of God (Jude 16-19).

‘demonic’ = of the devil. The devil's ‘wisdom’ will confound and confuse those who try to use it. Wisdom from the devil is not just another type of wisdom, its nature is of the same as Satan's (John 8:42-44). Satan's wisdom is based on a lie – that's all he can do. A woman's right to choose what happens with her body, according to this demonic wisdom, includes killing her baby while it is in her womb because it is unplanned, inconvenient to her career, the wrong gender, or will be born with a handicap.

This is the type of wisdom we all walked in before coming to Christ (Eph. 2:1-3).

The reason people are drawn to earthly wisdom is because they have rejected the only real source of wisdom – God (Psa. 36:1b/Rom. 3:18). Without a fear of God there is no pathway to true wisdom (Prov. 9:10).

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1 John 1:5 - This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*,

confusion and every ~~xxx~~ evil thing *are* there.

181 - rebellion,
disorderly
insurrection

5337 – bad,
morally base

Notes:

Envy and self-seeking is what led Cain to killing Abel.

Gender confusion in our culture is a result of envy and self-seeking and earthly wisdom.

Confusion (1 Cor. 14:33) and evil (1 John 1:5) are signs of earthly wisdom at work. They have no place in a believer's life, marriage, family, or church.

Scriptures:

Proverbs 2:1-9 -

My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you,

2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,

And apply your heart to understanding;

3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,

And lift up your voice for understanding,

4 If you seek her as silver,

And search for her as for hidden treasures;

5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,

And find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD gives wisdom;

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;

7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;

He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;

8 He guards the paths of justice,

And preserves the way of His saints.

9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice,

Equity and every good path.

¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first ^Dpure,

509 - from above,
often implying
from heaven

4412 -

then ²peaceable, ³gentle, ⁴willing to yield, full

1516 - free from
worry

1933 -
considerate

2138 -
persuadable

of ⁵mercy and ⁶good fruits, ⁷without partiality and

1656 -

18 -
morally
good

2590 - outcome,
deeds

87 - impartial,
not prejudiced,
unwavering

without ⁸hypocrisy.

505 - genuine

Notes:

Some wisdom can be acquired through intellectual effort and personal experience, but the wisdom from God surpasses it all.

"A kind of wisdom, a godly wisdom, sees things from an eternal perspective that can only come from God." (Platt, 2014)

This is one of the reasons why prayer is so important. We don't know everything God knows about the things we are praying about. We need God's wisdom which is infinitely greater than ours so that we can live right in this wrong way world.

This kind of wisdom is accessed through God-centered humility.

"Wisdom from God produces humility in man. But the world is exactly the opposite: Wisdom from the world produces self-centered pride in man." (Platt, 2014) page 85

8 Characteristics of Wisdom from Above - Godly Wisdom:

- 1 - Pure -
- 2 - Peaceable -
- 3 - Gentle -
- 4 - Willing to Yield -
- 5 - Full of Mercy -
- 6 - Full of Good Works -
- 7 - Without Partiality -
- 8 - Without Hypocrisy -

We can examine what is put forth as wisdom using this list of characteristics. Critical Theory is a good example of this. It sees any inequity within systems as a sign of oppression. The conclusions CT or CRT draw fail to meet any of the characteristics of wisdom from above.

The very nature of human nature means there will always be unequal outcomes because of our ability to make our own choices. One good or one bad choice can change the outcome of your life. The only way to make outcomes become equal is to eliminate all choice. But even then, people's God-given abilities (different for everyone) will make outcomes vary.

Scriptures:

¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace

1343 – what is
right, justice

4687 -

1515 -

by those who make peace.

Notes:

One of the ways you can determine what type of wisdom is at work is by its goal and by the fruit it produces. The goal of godly wisdom is peace, with God and others, and it results in righteousness. Godly wisdom produces results that are pleasing to God and are good for the people of God. It will also be good for those who are not God's people though they might not appreciate that.

Peace can never be at the expense of truth. For example: Referring to a man who says he believes he is a woman as a woman is not using wisdom from above because it involves lying about the reality of the man's true God-given identity.

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