

## Wisdom From Above

**Text : James 3: 13-18 ; I Corinthians 1: 18-31**

- S#1.**  
**S#2.**
- A. Our lessons from the book of James have shown it to be a difficult book.**
1. There is a reason it has come to be known as the N.T. book of wisdom.
  2. Like the O.T. book of proverbs ( wisdom ) it goes directly to the heart of our lives.
  3. Its lessons are all very practical as opposed to theoretical, doctrinal or abstract.
- B. Though James discusses several different subjects they are all related.**
1. Bro. James emphasizes the practical nature of the gospel.
  2. His instructions demonstrate that the word of God is meant to be lived, not studied.
    - a. He first points out that one's faith is reflected in his attitude toward adversities.
    - b. One who blames God for bad things needs wisdom to understand God's goodness.
  3. He proceeds to explain that the word of God is a blueprint for life, not just for study.
    - a. It is of no value locked in one's head; it must be implanted into his heart.
    - b. Once in one's heart, he must be a "doer of the word" ... convert the word to action
- C. When the word programs one's life it affects the way he interacts with others.**
1. The word forces one to bridle his tongue so as not to be offensive to God or others.
  2. It motivates him to be compassionate toward those who cannot care for themselves.
  3. When the word guides one's life he treats everyone with respect and love.
  4. He is eager to demonstrate his faith each day by the way he lives.
- D. The one who has the word implanted will not seek to dominate others.**
1. He does not repeat the sin of the Pharisees :
 

**Matt. 23: 5-8** – But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments **6** They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, **7** and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. **8** But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.
  2. James warns about seeking positions of honor.
 

**James 3: 1** – Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.
  3. This is not to say that a Christian should not desire the work of a teacher.
    - a. **I Tim. 3: 1** – It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.
- S#3.**  
**S#4.**

- b. God has appointed that some men in the church hold the office of a teacher.

**Eph. 4: 11-12**– And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, **S#5.**  
and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,  
**12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,  
to the building up of the body of Christ;

- 4. HOWEVER, the church cannot be all Chiefs and no Indians.

- a. One must reach a basic level of maturity before becoming a leader.
- b. That maturity involves achieving a certain mastery of one's tongue.

**E. Christian maturity also involves developing spiritual wisdom. – didaskalos**

### **I. Spiritual wisdom is manifest in one's daily life, not in amassing knowledge. S#6.**

**A. In any realm just amassing volumes of knowledge is not indicative of wisdom.**

- 1. We've all known people who knew a lot but didn't know how to use their knowledge  
ILL. – My father's brother knew a lot about many things, but couldn't do anything.  
He would tell my father how to do things and together they got the job done.

- 2. Knowledge is the accumulation of information or facts, wisdom is applying it. **S#7.**

- 3. We've all known people who knew a lot about the bible, but don't understand it.

- a. They memorize the word, but don't study with a view toward applying it.
- b. Paul prayed the Philippian brethren would discern well enough to apply the word.

**Phil. 1: 9-10** – And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more  
in real knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve  
the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless  
until the day of Christ;

**B. Bro. James says that a wise person who understands the word will live it. S#8.**

- 1. **James 3: 13** – Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by  
his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.
- 2. This is the same thing James taught about faith, if you have it, folks will see it.
  - a. **James 2: 18** – But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works;  
show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
  - b. Just as faith is more than mental assent, wisdom is more than knowledge.

### **II. There is a wisdom that is not spiritual and does not come from God. S#9.**

**A. James 3: 15** – This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, **S#10.**  
but is earthly, natural, demonic.

**B. Notice the wisdom that does not come from God has three characteristics.**

1. It is earthly.
  - a. It is characteristic of belonging to this present evil age. (*temporary*)
  - b. Earthly wisdom is only profitable when applied to earthly things.  
**I Cor. 3: 19** – For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. **S#11.**
2. It is natural.
  - a. That which is applied to the fleshly nature of man. (KJV – sensuous)
  - b. **II Cor. 1: 12** – For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.
3. It is demonic. (Jesus told Peter .. “Get behind Me Satan.”)
  - a. Since God is not its source, earthly wisdom reflects its sources.
  - b. Its source is the God of this world.  
**II Cor. 4: 4** – ... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving

**C. This wisdom that is earthy, sensual and demonic is obvious by its fruit. **S#12.****

1. **James 3: 14** – But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above,
2. When earthly wisdom is applied in the church it brings about catastrophic results.  
**James 3: 16** – **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, **16** For **S#13.** where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.
3. Love is other people oriented .. focused outward .. jealousy & ambition are inward
  - a. The Christian must be able to take pleasure in the success and prosperity of others.
  - b. The Christian looks at the world as being about God and HIS glory, not one’s own.

**III. Spiritual wisdom which is from above produces the fruit of love. **S#14.******James 3:17**

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, **S#15.**  
full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

**A. It is pure. “the wisdom from above is first pure” **S#16.****

1. Any words that come from God are pure.  
**Psa. 12: 6** – The words of the Lord are pure words;  
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

2. The one who has wisdom from above seeks to be pure.
    - I John 3: 2-3** – .... We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, **S#17.**  
because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
  3. One of the Christian's greatest challenges is to maintain purity amid evil. **S#18.**
    - a. **Matt. 5: 8** – Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ( cf. **Rm 12.2** )
    - b. Purity can only be accomplished living in devotion to Christ.  
**I John 1: 7** – but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- B. It is peaceable.** “the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,” **S#19.**
1. Peaceable translates a word meaning to “love peace, to bring peace with it.”
  2. The one who has spiritual wisdom strongly desires harmonious relationships.  
**Matt. 5: 9** – Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
  3. As Christians we are called to live in peace with God's family.
    - a. **Col. 3: 15** – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **S#20.**  
put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. **14** Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.
    - b. Notice how similar this is to our text.
  4. Loving each other and living in peace does not necessitate peace at any price. **S#21.**
    - a. **Rom. 12: 18** – If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
    - b. The Christian must advocate for Christ ( I Pt 2:9 ) regardless of consequences.  
**Matt. 10: 34** – Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth;  
I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.
  5. Jealousy and personal ambition are antithetical to these Christian values.
  6. God's people are to be known for being like God.  
**II Thes. 3: 16** – Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!
- C. The wisdom from above is ... gentle.** **S#22.**
1. “Gentle” does not carry the connotation of being weak. **Equitable, Fair, Suitable**
  2. Often translated as “meek” it refers to one who relies on God not his ability to force.

2. “Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God’s goodness and control over the situation.”
3. This is a virtue exemplified by Christ Himself.  
**Matt. 11: 29** – Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls
4. Gentleness is a segment in the fruit of the Spirit.  
**Gal. 5: 22** – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **S#23.** goodness, faithfulness, **23 gentleness, self-control;** against such things there is no law.
5. Preachers are required to teach and to advocate gentleness.  
**Titus 3: 1-2** – Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, **2** to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

**S#24.****D. Wisdom from above is ... reasonable / willing to yield. ( KJV .. easy to be entreated )**

1. This translates a word that literally means : easily obeying, compliant.
2. The wise man doesn’t always have to have his own way.
3. It is a person who is willing to subvert his will to God’s will or to others.  
**I Cor. 7: 35** – This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. ( *This is the only other use of word in N.T.* )
4. Again, this is also the antithesis of jealousy and personal ambition – worldly wisdom

**E. Heavenly wisdom is full of mercy and good works.****S#25.**

1. Mercy carries with it the attitude of compassion, of a desire to help those in distress.
2. It is considered one of the more important aspects of God’s will, a weightier matter.  
**Matt. 23: 23** – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.
3. “good works” ... Compassion must be practiced, not just felt and taught.

**G. It is unwavering. ( KJV .. without partiality ) ( Used only here in the N.T. )****S#26.**

1. This word is defined as “without dubiousness, ambiguity or uncertainty.”
2. The person with wisdom from above is fully persuaded, unencumbered by doubt.
3. **James 1: 6-7** – But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.  
( **Mark 9:24** – The boy’s father cried out and said “I do believe, help my unbelief.” )

S#27.

**H. Wisdom from above is sincere, unfeigned, from the heart, not hypocritical.**

1. It is of highest importance that our relationship with God be totally from the heart.
  - a. **Jer. 17: 10** – I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. S#28.
  - b. **Prov. 16: 2** – All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives.
  - c. **I Cor. 4: 5** – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. S#29.
2. God's wisdom requires that all we do in our relationships be from the heart.
  - a. **Rom. 12: 9** – Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. S#30.
  - b. **I Tim. 1: 5** – But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

**Summation :**

- A. **There is a wisdom that works well for those oriented to this earthly realm.**
  1. It is earthly, natural, demonic because it's source is "the god of this world."
  2. Its goal is for one to advance self above others.
- B. **Christians strive to develop a different wisdom, one whose source is God.**
  1. **James 3:17-18** – But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
  2. The wisdom from God is NOT directed inward, but seeks to elevate others.
  3. Its highest goal is the glory of God in Heaven and on earth, now and eternally.
- C. **I pray the prayer for you that the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian brethren**  
**Eph. 1: 15-19** – For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, **16** do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. **18** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.
- D. **Do you rejoice in the hope of His calling? Do you long to see Him in the clouds ?**  
**S#1.** ... Communion slide

**Lesson Text :****James 3: 13-18**

**13** Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. **18** And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

**I Corinthians 1: 18-31**

**18** For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.

**20** Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. **22** For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; **23** but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, **24** but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**26** For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; **27** but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, **28** and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, **29** so that no man may boast before God. **30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, **31** so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."