

Faith That Works
“How to Be a Wise Guy”
James 3:13-18

Introduction- We live in a world today that has made great advancements in knowledge...yet it is in “wisdom”.....

Proverbs 8:11, *“Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”*

What is wisdom? How does it differ from knowledge?

Wisdom is living your life with a proper sense of values. It’s living in light of what is true, right, and lasting. It’s the ability to make right choices in life. The Hebrew idea of wisdom is practical, it enables one to live a life of godliness. Without this kind of wisdom, the Bible says a man is a fool; whether learned or ignorant.

Proverbs 4:7, *“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.”* We need this kind of wisdom today in our homes, churches, communities, and the nations of our world.

James contrast false wisdom with true wisdom in three ways:

1. Origins
2. Operations
3. Outcome

But before James does that, He asks a question and then gives a command.

1. “Who is a wise man?” (vs. 13)
2. The command (vs. 13) “Let him show.”

“Let him show out of a good life, marked by meekness and wisdom” or N.I.V. *“by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom.”*

Meekness and humility are sign’s of a truly wise person!

James in giving us a penetrating test for any who think themselves to be wise. Remember, Jesus was meek. So, it’s being like Jesus.

The wise person lives a beautiful life of Christ-like meekness.

I. False Wisdom, vv. 14-16.

1. It's origin, vs. 15. Note: It's not "from above," so not from God.

- a. It's earthly. The world. Its motives, methods and aims are conditioned by what is temporal and mundane. It evaluates everything by worldly standards and makes personal gain life's highest goal.

Phil. 3:19, "mind earthly things."

Note the danger for Christians to be worldly, I John 2:15-17.

Illus.: The dangers in the home and church.

2. It's sensual. The flesh.

N.A.S.B.- "Natural" and N.I.V. "unspiritual".

We get our English word "psychology" from this greek word. It's a natural wisdom, not spiritual.

I Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man can't...."

Note this three facts about the natural man.

- His spirit is dead.
- He is at war with God.
- He has a distorted judgment, the things of God are foolishness to him.

3. It's devilish or demonic, so the devil.

Note- World, flesh, devil.

A person living in false wisdom:

- Looks to the world for ideas and approval.
- To the flesh for strength.
- And so plays into the hands of the devil.

Satan works through the world and flesh. Be careful Christian, don't let the world press you into its mold. Rom. 12

A. It's Operation, vs. 14.

1. Bitter envying.

- It's discontent at the good fortune of others. A jealous anger.
- Cain and Abel; the brothers of Joseph; Saul of David.
- Prov. 14:30, "*envy brings rottenness to the bones.*"

2. Strife or selfish ambition.

- Envy often leads to strife. It ments a party spirit. Used of a politician seeking office.
- In our homes and church.
- Phil. 2:3, "*Let nothing be done through strife or...*"
- Note vs. 14, its "in your hearts." In their glorying in false wisdom they were "lying against the truth."
- Their attitude and actions were repudiating the truth of the gospel.

Are you?

B. It's outcome, vs. 16

1. Confusion. It's to disturb.

2. Every evil work. Evil does not mean bad, it literally means *worthless or good for nothing*.

"James describes the arrogant and bitter wisdom in its effects. The most notable thing about it is this, that it issues in disorder. That is to say, instead of bringing people together, it drives them apart. Instead of producing peace, it produces strife. Instead of producing fellowship, it produces a disruption in personal relationships," William Barclay

Illus.: In a marriage, divorce! In the church.

May God help us to reject the false wisdom of our day and seek the true wisdom. Where do we find it?

II. True Wisdom, vv. 17-18.

1. It's origin (vs. 17). “*But the wisdom that is from above...*” It's from God. Not the world, flesh or devil.

Where is it found? Not in the man-centered world, but in the Word of God, the Bible!

Psalm 19, “*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*”

If you reject this wisdom, you are a fool!

2. It's operation, vs. 17.

a. First it's pure.

- It's morally pure, not just sexual. True wisdom says not to “immoral behavior.”
- Paul instructed Timothy, his young son in the faith, to keep himself pure,” 2 Tim. 5:22. Illus.: Joseph
- Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God,” Matt. 5:8.

An impure person is not wise! So seek to live pure lives.

b. Peaceable or peace loving, vs. 17.

- Note the order, purity before peace. So not peace at any price.
- Purity brings peace. Holiness brings happiness.
- It's a peace with and of God. In the heart.
- It's not a peace that avoids conflict.

Illus.: “*Like the couple who had just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Someone asked the gentleman the secret of their marital bliss. “Well,” the old man drawled, “the wife and I had this agreement when we first got married. It went like this: When she was bothered about somethin’ she’d jus’ tell me and git it off her chest. And if I was mad at her about*

some thin', I was able to take a long walk. I s'ppose you could attribute our happy marriage to the fact that I have largely led an outdoor life."

c. Gentle or considerate, vs. 17.

- It's making allowance for the feelings of others.
- It's a person who though wronged, does not insist on their rights.
- It's moderation without compromise.

2 Cor. 10:1, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."
Jesus was gentle.

d. Easy to be entreated (vs. 17) or submissive. Not stubborn, easy to live with.

- Open to reason. Illus.: David and Abigail- Nabal-fool!
- Approachability

e. Full of mercy and good fruits, vs. 17.

- Empty your cup of mercy and someone will fill it.
- Jesus said, "*Blessed are the merciful, for...*"

f. Without partiality (vs. 17). Literally unwavering. It does not vacillate. Stands on consistent principle.

- Without distinction. The wise person sees no class, no distinction, race or sex distinction.

g. Without hypocrisy or sincere. Straightforward, without show or pretense.

Illus.: "*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, used to tell how he sent a telegram to each of twelve friends, all men of great virtue and considerable position in society. The message was worded: "Fly at once, all is discovered." Within twenty four hours, the story goes, all twelve had left the country.*"

3. The outcome of true wisdom (vs. 18).

It's a harvest of righteousness. True wisdom brings righteousness and peace. Heavenly wisdom is the answer to earth's conflict.

How do I get true wisdom?

- **The Scripture**

- **Christ**

- **Prayer**

Our only wise God, we pray that you will make us “pure” in our moral lives and in the purity of our devotion to you. With all our hearts we desire this first-name characteristic of wisdom- the foundational element of wisdom from above.

We pray that you will further fill us with Heaven’s wisdom, making us “peace loving.” Give us your shalom, and help us promote peace with our brothers and sisters.

God, we entreat you to make us “considerate” so we will gently make allowances for the weaknesses of others and will be reasonable and kind in all our dealings with difficult people.

Make us “submissive” so we will submit to reason, abandon unthinking stubbornness, and be open to the changing of our minds when we are wrong.

Lord, Heaven’s wisdom is “full of mercy and good fruit,” compassion that brings merciful action. Help us to go beyond pity and sentiment so that we do merciful acts, becoming the hands of Christ.

Grant us the wisdom to be “impartial,” unwavering in respect to Biblical principle, so our lives will exude fairness.

Finally, make us “sincere,” clear-eyed, honest, forthright, without masks- so others will perceive the wisdom of Christ in us.

Lord, give us wisdom from Heaven.

We pray this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.