



Wisdom from Above (Part 2)

James 3:13-18

I. Overview of Wisdom (James 3:13a)

- ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you?

I. Overview of Wisdom (James 3:13a)

A. Knowledge/Understanding vs. Wisdom

B. God's Wisdom is revealed in:

--Nature

--Salvation

--General human flourishing

--Accomplishing practical tasks

--Resisting sin

II. Earthly Wisdom is aggressive, chaotic, and destructive (James 3:14-16)

- ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.
- ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.
- ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

II. Earthly Wisdom is aggressive, chaotic, and destructive (3:14-16)

A. When you have these internal conditions:

--bitter jealousy and selfish ambition

B. You will engage in these external actions:

--boasting and falsifying the truth/lying

C. Because your wisdom is:

--earthly, unspiritual, demonic

D. Resulting in:

--vile practice and disorder

Bitter Jealousy and Selfish Ambition

- ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:25-26 ESV)
- “A man who seems unusually concerned with the demotion of others is usually concerned with the promotion of himself”
- --John Blanchard, *Truth for Life*, p. 210

Wisdom that is “earthly, unspiritual, demonic”

- Example of “earthly wisdom”: “If it feels right, it cannot be wrong.”
- “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)
- ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4-5)

Wisdom that is “earthly, unspiritual, demonic”

- ¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
- ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (I John 5:19-20)

III. Heavenly Wisdom is calm, orderly, and fruitful (3:13b, 17-18)

- ^{13b} By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.
- ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.
- ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

III. Heavenly Wisdom is calm, orderly, and fruitful (3:13b, 17-18)

A. When you have these internal conditions:

--meekness

B. You will engage in these external actions:

--good conduct and good works

C. Because your wisdom is:

--pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable

--merciful, fruitful, impartial, sincere

D. Resulting in:

--righteousness and peace

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Meekness (Humility)

- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding
(Psalm 111:10 ESV)
- I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you (2 Corinthians 10:1)
- “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

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- Lesson: A person with wisdom is not impulsive; they maintain self-control

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The Way to Righteousness

- **John Wesley:**
- Loving the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength is the first great branch of Christian **righteousness**. . . .

Christ, salvation, righteousness, wisdom

- “The wisdom of God is embodied in Christ, and when we receive him as Saviour, we receive the **righteousness**, holiness, and redemption he came to secure for his people. Another way of putting this is to say that only when we become God-centred through our relationship to Christ do we have our first experience of true **wisdom**.”
- --John Blanchard: *Truth for Life*, p. 203

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*

(384-322 B.C.)

- The “highest good” is “happiness” (Everyone wants happiness)
- Human beings are primarily rational beings (“thinking things”)
- Logically, the striving to achieve *excellence (arete)* (the fulfilling of your potential or function, i.e. being the best “you” that you can be) leads to “happiness” (*eudaimonia*) = human flourishing.

The Way to Happiness

- **John Wesley:**
- Loving the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength is the first great branch of Christian **righteousness**. You shall delight yourself in the Lord your God; seeking and finding **all happiness in Him**.
- Humans are primarily “spiritual beings” created by God in His image
- Thus, our greatest happiness comes from being reconciled to God by being “redeemed” from our sins, through the cross of Jesus Christ by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives.

The Happiness—Peace Connection

- We then share this happiness—this “shalom” (“unity,” peace) from knowing God and being loved by Him—by living peacefully and practicing peace-making.
- “In Matthew 5:9, Jesus is stating that *‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God’* (ESV). Peacemakers, in this context, are those who promote God’s peace. This peace is taken from the Hebrew word *shalom*, which can be defined as total or complete well being—both personally and communally.”
- --Stephanie Englehart, Crosswalk.com

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Takeaways:

Putting Wisdom into Practice

1. Understanding of Wisdom from God's Holy Word

“For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6 ESV)

2. Awareness of Wisdom practiced by other believers

“Where there is no guidance, a people falls,
but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14)

3. Application of Wisdom in our own lives

“False wisdom puts self at the centre of life; true wisdom puts God at the centre”

--John Blanchard

Let Us Pray

