

James 3:13, 16-18

“This wisdom from above”

- I. Intro
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I. Intro

We conclude chapter three of James as we continue to examine the point that wisdom is essential for a godly life. The key for the believer is to personally determine which of the two types of wisdom (Worldly and Godly) they are listening too. To do this James gives his readers an outline of three contrasts between human wisdom and Godly wisdom that we can use to determine what type of wisdom are influencing them:

- I. Its **ORIGIN**
- II. Its **OPERATION**
- III. Its **OUTCOME**

We have covered the, “**ORIGIN**” as well as the four distinct characteristics of “worldly wisdom” noticing the “**OPERATION**” of worldly wisdom in our lives. This morning we will conclude our study with the “*nine characteristics of Godly wisdom*”. Then lastly, we will compare the outcomes. We noted that “worldly wisdom” is so effective as it appeals to our old fallen nature as the apostle John wrote of in 1st John 2:16 and laying that over what James tells us in 3:15 we note the appeal of worldly wisdom directly corresponds to the fallen nature of man:

1. Earthly: “*Lust of the flesh*”; It appeals to our natural reason and intellect which is contrasted against our spiritual nature.
2. Sensual: “*Lust of the eyes*” This word in the Greek is where we get our English word for Psychology which reveals to us that worldly wisdom appeals to our emotions and feelings.
3. Demonic: “*The pride of life*” as such we see that it appeals to our pride and

arrogance.

II. Vs. 13, 17 Nine characteristics of Godly wisdom's

Vs. 13, 17 As, already noted these characteristics both of worldly wisdom and Godly wisdom are scattered amongst the 6 verses but are still quite easy to pick out. When James asks here in verse 13, “*Who is wise and understanding among you?*” he is asking a very important question and so the reader not miss his point he goes on to answer his own question saying that a person demonstrates this by their life being Godly with these 9 characteristics that will go into making up “*good conduct as their works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*” In verse 17 James gives us a very interesting point as to the trajectory of wisdom as he says that “from above” but in the Greek it is literally “**Is COMING from above**” which reveals that these nine characteristics are not in “*one-time allotments*” that can only be procured on the installment plan. Instead James paints the picture that Godly wisdom with these 9 characteristics come in from above in a “*steady flow*” as God keeps lavishing down upon all His children His wisdom to all who will listen and apply it. Also note that James describes these 9 characteristics in two categories the first 7 are positive and the last two of what isn't to be found when Godly wisdom is on display.

1. Vs. 13 **Meekness**: Godly wisdom is not “weak” as some suppose that the word “meek” means. Quite the contrary the Greek word for “meek” is one used to describe a wild stallion who has been broken so that it's power and strength can now be under control and harnessed. One of the chief ways in which Godly wisdom manifests its-self is that person who is in possession of it seeks only the glory of God and not recognition for its use. Instead the person has

the “right use of power and knowledge” as their right attitude will go along with right actions!

2. Vs. 17a **Pure**: James lists first because God’s wisdom is like His nature and as such is based upon His holiness. The Greek word means, “case, free from defilement”. God has no double standards, there is in Godly wisdom no phrase that says, “*Do as I say not as I do!*” Neither is there any hidden motives it is transparent with nothing under the surface, what you see is what you get in Godly wisdom as Godly wisdom will always lead us to purity whereas worldly wisdom will lead us to sin.
3. Vs. 17b **Peaceable**: Worldly wisdom leads to competition, rivalry and fights whereas Godly wisdom leads to peace that is based upon holiness not compromise. It is interesting to note that in the priority of these characteristics’ “purity” proceeds “peace” as the peace of the church is never more important than the purity of the church. In fact, where the church remains pure it will remain peaceable. God’s wisdom **never suggests to “cover up” sin to keep peace it says to “confess” sin and you will have peace.** Peace that that stems from purity is approachable and never self-righteous as we will share the process not just the victory. This kind of peace comes from Godly wisdom as it realize that true peace comes from knowing that in God there is far more power than whatever storm presses against us. Isaiah wrote of this in 26:3 saying, “*You will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast on you.*”
4. Vs. 17c **Gentile**: The Greek word carries the idea of “moderation without

compromise” and “gentleness without weakness”. Gentleness is the characteristic of servants and of Jesus as He described Himself in Matt. 11:29 as being “gentle and humble in heart”. Paul told a young pastor in Titus to “speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Strife is the world’s wisdom, but gentleness comes from Godly wisdom.

5. Vs. 17d **Willing to yield**: This word is only found here in the N.T. and describes Godly wisdom as having a conciliatory spirit that wants to listen to reason. It is a military term that means “willing to take instructions”. When a person is applying godly wisdom and they are in charge they are “gentle” but when they are under authority they are “willing to take instructions”. View characteristics are greater than being teachable as without such a heart to learn we will go no further than where we are at.
6. Vs. 17e **Full of mercy**: To be “FULL” of something means biblically to be controlled by it, thus Godly wisdom in our lives is seen by us being “***controlled by mercy***”. This reminds yet again that Godly wisdom is demonstrated by our behavior not just spoken of in our words. Our walk must match our talk, which in the case of mercy towards others is seen in not giving them what they deserve and in grace giving them what they don’t deserve.
7. Vs. 17f **Full of good fruits**: Godly wisdom will also lead a person to be controlled by “good fruit”. Those who are faithful to apply Godly wisdom will be fruitful in their works towards others. Godly wisdom produce a full life whereas worldly wisdom produces an empty life. Godly wisdom is always

practical, it changes not only our lives but the lives around us impacting in and through us towards others.

8. Vs. 17g **Without partiality**: This term in the Greek is used to describe someone who is not discriminatory towards others or themselves. Godly wisdom leads a person to not have a double standard one that favors them and the other that discriminates against another. Worldly wisdom makes a person a politician Godly wisdom makes a person a saint! Worldly wisdom speaks well of a person one day and ill of him the next and does so only to gain advantage for themselves. There is a singleness of mind that comes when we apply godly wisdom. The wisdom from above produces a strength from above!
9. Vs. 17h **Without hypocrisy**: The word means “without masks” not a phony! They are people of sincerity if they have Godly wisdom, “speaking the truth in love”, as Eph. 4:15 says. Godly wisdom is living without drama and scheming, free in the security and identity of the Lord.

III. Vs. 16-18 Origin determines outcome

Vs. 16, 18 The final contrast is the contrasts between “Outcomes” and we immediately realize that “ORIGIN DETERMINES OUTCOMES”. Worldly wisdom can only produce worldly results as verse 16 indicates where we read, “*For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*” It ought to be clear from this verse that God is not among these four things as wrong thinking will always produce wrong living. The amazing thing is how many time we think that if we continue to listen to worldly wisdom that appeals to “Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” that we will come up with different results. That my dear friends the definition of insanity

where we continue listing and doing the same things but keep on expecting different results. This is the reason the world is in such a mess is that the majority of humanity is only listening to worldly wisdom that is appealing to their flesh but never are able to see that it is never going to grant them right results! The word “confusion” in verse 16 in the Greek is a word that means “*disorder that comes from instability*” nothing will lead to confusion faster than envy and self-seeking. And confusion sets the table for “every evil work” or worthless work. Contrast that with the “fruit” of Godly wisdom. The first thing we note in verse 18 is that “fruit” is a product of a life lived in Godly wisdom as such our fruit as the seeds to produce more fruit as we sow the fruit with the seeds to produce more and not the seed’s. So, from Godly wisdom comes Godly behavior that not only produces peace for us but for those around us as well.