

Wisdom for Living in a Fallen World

James 3:13-18

James 3:13–18 (NKJV)

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Introduction:

One of the most obvious missing needed ingredients in our culture is wisdom. Practical everyday wisdom. As our culture and the church drifts father and farther from truth, a casualty of such a departure is the death of wisdom. We are

front row witnesses of what it looks like when you have a mind that is devoid of God, devoid of His Word and devoid of His Wisdom.

I often find myself saying, “Where did all the common sense go, nobody has common sense.”

Biblically, common sense can be thought of as a combination of wisdom and discretion ([Proverbs 3:21; 8:12–14](#)). Wisdom is knowing what to do; discretion is knowing when and where to do it.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/common-sense.html>

But tragically our problem is much worse. In order to have wisdom or even common sense you have to start with basic knowledge. Information that is accepted as truth. But today, there has been a wholesale attack on basic knowledge and basic truth.

When you reach a point that you have to identify a man as a biological male, as if there is some other type of male, you have lost all basic knowledge and have no hope of wisdom!

It is impossible for any people or person to have wisdom if they deny the fundamental facts of reality. In a Christ rejecting, God hating culture that we are now living in, (like John MacArthur calls it, “A pre-christian culture) we are surrounded by a large population of people who have no wisdom.

There's lots and lots of knowledge. Lots and lots of facts, more than we have ever had access to in the history of the world, but little wisdom.

When you leave God and His Word, you can have a great amount of knowledge but no wisdom.

This is the case in Romans 1

Romans 1:18–22 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became **futile** in their **thoughts**

futile

3154. ματαιόω *mataiōō*; contracted *mataiō̄*, fut. *mataiō̄sō*, from *mátaios* (3152), vain. To make vain or worthless, to cancel out. In the pass. *mataiōomai*, to become vain, destitute of real wisdom (Rom. 1:21), to be or act perversely, foolish. In reality, to get off the right path, to follow foolish or bad courses (Sept.: 1 Sam. 13:13; 26:21; 2 Kgs. 17:15; Jer. 2:5).

Syn.: *astochéō* (795), to miss the mark, fail; *lanthánō* (2990), to escape notice, be ignorant of; *hamartánō* (264), to sin; *paraphronéō* (3912), to act foolishly, thoughtlessly.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

thoughts

30.10 διαλογίζομαι^a; διαλογισμός^a, οῦ *m*;
ἀναλογίζομαι: to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness—‘to think out carefully, to reason thoroughly, to consider carefully, to reason, reasoning.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 350). United Bible Societies.

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became

futile in their thoughts, and their **foolish** hearts were darkened.

foolish

ἀσύνετος asúnetos; gen. *asunétou*, masc.–fem., neut. *asúneton*, adj. from the priv. *a* (1), without, and *sunetós* (4908), sagacious. Without insight or understanding (*súnēsis* [4907]), unintelligent, foolish. In Matt. 15:16, Christ characterized Peter and the other disciples as being *asúnētoi*, since they were unable to reason out the practical application of His parabolic teaching (see Ps. 92:7; Mark 7:18).

In Rom. 1:21, Paul calls unredeemed man's heart *asúnetos*, because of its inability to conclude from the observable creation that there must be a Creator. ...Fallen man cannot figure out creation, therefore he propounds foolish theories.

In Rom. 1:31, Paul ascribes the adj. *asunétous* (pl.) to fallen men.

Romans 1:31 (NKJV)

31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

Syn.: *áphrōn* (878), without reason, mental insanity; *mátaios* (3152), vain; *anóētos* (453), thinking incorrectly; *mōrós* (3474), stupid, morally worthless, sluggish.

Ant.: *hugiēs* (5199), sound, healthy, with particular application to the mind; *sunetós* (4908), able to reason logically and arrive at the proper conclusions,

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

22 Professing to be wise, **they became fools**,

they became fools, Aorist Pass. Ind.

3471. μωραίνω *moraínō*; fut. *mōranō*, from *mōrós* (3474), foolish. To make dull, not acute, to cause something to lose its taste or the purpose for which it exists, e.g., salt not being able to make things salty
Syn.: *paraphronéō* (3912), to be beside oneself.

Ant.: *sōphronéō* (4993), to be of a sound mind; *sōphronízō* (4994), to act with a sound mind; *sophízō* (4679), to make wise.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

We started down the slippery slope to foolishness long ago when we listened to Charles Darwin. When we decided the “Nobody plus nothing equals everything” is better than God is the creator of all things, we plunged off the cliff and have been in free fall ever since. Our schools and Universities are

filled with this and many of our social disciplines are permeated with this.

Wisdom has been abandoned for a love of lies. Darkness has taken over the light, while all along many believe they can see.

Back in the 1970s, Francis Schaeffer told us that one day we would wake up and discover that the America we once knew was gone. That day is here. One does not have to be a prophet to see that dark days are coming to the United States. There are ominous signs that the freedoms we once assumed were ours are disappearing. Forces of secularism lead inevitably to a totalitarian state to which everyone is expected to submit.

Lutzer, Erwin W.. When a Nation Forgets God (p. 16). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

The secular left does not believe that America can be fixed; they say it must be destroyed. On the rubble of America's Judeo-Christian past a new America will emerge, which they say will be free of poverty, racism, and white supremacy. The secular left's goal is a future in which everyone will be equal on their

terms and the disparities of the past will be read about only in history books. Those who resist this utopian vision are to be vilified, bullied, and shamed until they admit to the mistakes of the past and embrace the secular left's great hope for the future. Take a moment to reflect on what has happened in America in the last 20 years. Consider the increasingly sexually explicit curriculum in our public schools; listen to the racial rhetoric of the self-appointed social justice warriors who are committed to enflaming racial division; and look at the new laws forcing Christian colleges to compromise their biblical stance about marriage and surrender to the LGBTQ agenda. Who would have ever believed the day would come when men would say that they too can bear children

Lutzer, Erwin W.. We Will Not Be Silenced: Responding Courageously to Our Culture's Assault on Christianity (pp. 18-20). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

We should not be shocked that a culture that had rejected God would end up in a cesspool of lawlessness and debauchery.

But having been blessed to live in a country that for many decades embraced the Judeo-Christian ethic, it is truly shocking just how far a culture can go without God and truth.

But I must admit, have have been more shocked as to the lack of wisdom in the modern evangelical church. With the last few decades of constant importing the culture into the church, so that we can be less offense and more agreeable to the social norms, the church has bought into the lies of secularism and marxism in an astonishing way. Wisdom has been abandoned for desire to be a friend of the world.

Today we face cultural pressures that are forcing us to combine Christ with other religions, or to combine Christ with a political or ideological agenda.

Lutzer, Erwin W.. When a Nation Forgets God (p. 15). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

The key to this caving in is found in the historical account of how the churches responded to Hitler

HITLER DID NOT discourage people from attending church. He was a baptized Catholic who had long since abandoned his faith, but he did not mind if others continued

to attend church as long as it did not affect the way they lived or the values they held. In fact, he explicitly said that he would not interfere with the specific doctrines of the church, just as long as the churches were teaching those things that were in harmony with the good of the German people. He called this “Positive Christianity.”

Lutzer, Erwin W.. When a Nation Forgets God (p. 19). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

The phrase,
“he did not mind if others continued to attend church as long as it did not affect the way they lived or the values they held.”
is the key to understanding how we are where we are and why we continue to sink at an alarming rate.

IT IS THE ABANDONMENT OF BIBLICAL WISDOM

Wisdom simple defined — is knowledge applied. It is knowledge to know that the stove is hot because the burner is glowing red, it is wisdom to know not to put your hand on it. It is knowledge to recognize a poison-is snake, and it is wisdom to know to keep your distance.

Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God's truth to daily life. All of us have heard preachers and teachers who say many good things, but who somehow miss the heart of God's message and fail to relate truth to everyday life. It is this kind of "knowledge without wisdom" that James is writing about

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 362). Victor Books.

Wisdom was an important thing to Jewish people. They realized that it was not enough to have knowledge; you had to have wisdom to be able to use that knowledge correctly

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 362). Victor Books.

Knowledge is easy. It can be gained academically or experientially. It's easy to learn facts or to experience reality. But it is much more difficult to have wisdom. To know how and when to apply the knowledge you have.

To have knowledge of something does not automatically mean you have wisdom.

When I was training to be an EMT, we spent months studying and learning facts about the respiratory and circulatory systems of the body. I learned amazing things about the heart, how it works, what causes it to beat, where it gets its oxygen, and how to start a heart back beating when someone experiences a cardiac arrest. But I'm sure that none of us would want me performing open heart surgery on you.

Knowledge is good but wisdom is much better.

Wisdom is highly exalted in Scripture. It is a worthy goal and the supreme riches.

Proverbs 3:13–18 (LSB)

- 13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom
And the man who obtains discernment.
- 14 For her profit is better than the profit of silver
And her produce better than fine gold.
- 15 She is more precious than pearls;
And nothing you desire compares with her.
- 16 Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and glory.
- 17 Her ways are pleasant ways
And all her pathways are peace.
- 18 She is a tree of life to those who seize her,

And all those who hold her fast are blessed.

Proverbs 4:5–27 (NKJV)

- 5 Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
- 6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;
Love her, and she will keep you.
- 7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get understanding.
- 8 Exalt her, and she will promote you;
She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.
- 9 She will place on your head an ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to you.”
- 10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
And the years of your life will be many.
- 11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in right paths.
- 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered,
And when you run, you will not stumble.
- 13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go;
Keep her, for she *is* your life.
- 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
And do not walk in the way of evil.
- 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;

- Turn away from it and pass on.
- ¹⁶ For they do not sleep unless they have done evil;
And their sleep is taken away unless they make
someone fall.
- ¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
- ¹⁸ But the path of the just *is* like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
- ¹⁹ The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble.
- ²⁰ My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
- ²¹ Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
- ²² For they *are* life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.
- ²³ Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
- ²⁴ Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.
- ²⁵ Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.
- ²⁶ Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.
- ²⁷ Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

In our text today, James shows us that wisdom is more than knowledge, more than facts, and more than truth understood. It is truth applied, knowledge lived, and the fruit of facts.

Much like what he has been telling us repeatedly like a good teacher will.

James 1:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 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.

James 1:22–25 (NKJV)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a

forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

James 1:26–27 (NKJV)

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. **27** Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

James 2:1 (NKJV)

2 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

James 2:14 (NKJV)

14 What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

James 3:10 (NKJV)

10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

LESSON

- I. The Singularity of Wisdom
- II. The Sense of Wisdom
- III. The Source of Wisdom

I. The Singularity of Wisdom

13 Who *is wise* and *understanding* among you?

The two adjectives “wise and understanding” are used together only here in the New Testament. They appear in Deuteronomy 1:13 (LXX) as the needed qualifications of tribal judges in Israel; but in Deuteronomy 4:6 and Hosea 14:9 they are united as desired qualities in all God’s people

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 204). BMH Books.

wise

4680. **σοφός** *sophós*; fem. *sophé*, neut. *sophón*, adj.
In Class. Gr. it not only described respected philosophers and other truly learned men but was also appropriated by vain quibblers and rhetoricians

whom Aristophanes parodied and Plato and Aristotle censured. The meaning of *sophós* in the NT and its Hebr. equivalent, *chōkmah*, differs from the classical meaning in at least two ways. First of all, the biblical concept of wisdom is theocentric rather than anthropocentric. It denotes a fear of God and an understanding of His ways. Lastly, wisdom signifies the possession of a certain adeptness or practical ability. It does not necessarily imply brilliance or scholastic training; rather, *sophós* indicates adroitness, the ability to apply with skill what one knows (especially religious truth). In some instances, however, particularly in the Pauline writings, the word is used of one who has acquired special information, secret doctrine (*mustérion* [3466]). Here the noetic aspect of the word is prominent in its meaning. Hence, the following meanings:

- (I)** Skillful, expert (1 Cor. 3:10; Sept.: 2 Chr. 2:7; Is. 3:3).
- (II)** Skilled in the affairs of life, discreet, judicious, practically wise (1 Cor. 6:5; Sept.: Deut. 1:13; 2 Sam. 13:3; Is. 19:11).
- (III)** Skilled in learning, learned, intelligent, enlightened, in respect to things human and divine.

In Jewish usage, “wise” (*sophos*) described the individual who possessed moral insight and skill in deciding practical issues of conduct, a wisdom derived from his personal knowledge of God (cf. under 1:5).

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, pp. 204–205). BMH Books.

Sophos (wise) is a general word, often used by the Greeks to designate speculative knowledge, theory, or philosophy. For the Jews, as noted earlier, it carried the deeper meaning of careful application of knowledge to personal living

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). *James* (p. 168). Moody Press.

understanding

1990. ἐπιστήμων *epistēmōn*; gen. *epistēmonos*, masc.–fem., neut. *epistēmon*, adj. from *epístamai* (1987), to know thoroughly, understand. Endued with knowledge, understanding, expertise epistemology (James 3:13; Sept.: Deut. 1:13; 4:6), the equivalent to the Eng. “scientist.”

Syn.: *gnōstēs* (1109), one who knows, an expert.

Ant.: *idiótēs* (2399), a person without professional knowledge, an unskilled, unlearned person; *agrámmatos* (62) or *amathēs* (261), unlearned; *apaídeutos* (521), uninstructed.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [*The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

“Understanding” (*epistēmōn*), which occurs only here in the New Testament, was used of one having the knowledge of an expert, a specialist able to apply his fuller knowledge to practical situations. The two terms are synonymous, and suggested precise distinctions are not certain. Probably the first denotes a moral quality and the second an intellectual. The call is for an individual who possesses not merely academic learning but also practical moral and spiritual insight.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

Epistēmōn (understanding) appears only here in the New Testament and carries the idea of specialized knowledge, such as that of a highly skilled tradesman or professional.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [*James*](#) (p. 168). Moody Press.

We can only have wisdom if we have understanding and we can only have understanding if we have truth and we can only have truth if we have God. There is no right and wrong, good or bad, truth or error if there is no God. Therefore, it is impossible

to have wisdom without God existing. We have truth because God is.

We have logic because God is.

We have standards because God is.

If God isn't then there is no truth, no logic, no standards. It becomes a free fro all with no boundaries and no limits.

But backing up even more. We would not and could not exist apart from God existing. The universe and the planetary system exist because there are set absolutes that God set in motion. The physical body that you have and live in is because there are set absolutes that God has set in place. So we would not even begin to be able to discuss the reality of truth if God did not exist, because we would not exist.

John 14:6 (NKJV)

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 1:17 (NKJV)

17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 17:17 (NKJV)

17..... Your word is truth.

So sense God is the singular source of all truth, then by default, He is the singular source of all Wisdom.

Proverbs 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth *come* knowledge and
understanding;

Daniel 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.

Colossians 2:2–3 (NKJV)

² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

1 Corinthians 1:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Colossians 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

It would be safe then to say all wisdom comes from God and is dispensed thru His Word and Christ. Therefore all Christians have a singular access to this wisdom.

So in answer to the question,

13 Who *is wise* and *understanding*
among you?

We would conclude, Christians, specifically those who are diligent to apply God's Word, because even as a Christian, you can know the facts of God's Word and not necessarily apply them.

There are some dangers that must be avoided in the seeking and applying of Biblical Wisdom

1. Orthodoxy without Orthopraxy.
2. Orthopraxy without Orthodoxy
3. Orthoprax base on Heterodoxy

1. Orthodoxy without Orthopraxy.

This is the emphasis of doctrine over practice. Right living is not as important as right doctrine. The emphasis of precise doctrine can bring unnecessary division over secondary issues or tertiary things. There is a danger to be avoided in churches like ours with the emphasis of precision in exposition, doctrinal clarity and commitment. This is having the Word without wisdom. Knowing about God without living for God.

2. Orthopraxy without Orthodoxy.

This is the WWJD mentality... What would Jesus do, thinking. The emphasis may be on practice rather than precision. Doctrine can and often does take a back seat. It is the “Preach the gospel, and if necessary used words” approach. The emphasis here can be more about what we do than what we believe. Pragmatism has its roots here. If it works, let’s do it, no matter if it contradicts what we believe.

3. Orthopraxy base on Heterodoxy

This is wrong practice base on errant theology and interpretation of Scripture. This is to often the case. Someone misinterprets the Bible and then based on that misinterpretation applies it to life. We are seeing more and more of this. Biblical wisdom is gone because the interpretation of Scripture are wrong.

Like John MacArthur correctly noted.. The Word of God is only the Word of God when it is rightly interpreted.

Your misinterpretation of Scripture is not what God said.

But sadly, many theologians, preachers and prominent evangelicals are speaking errors of interpretation as if they are the Word of God and then applying it to church and culture as if it is wisdom.

We see this with Revoice. CRT. Social Justice. Because the church as already opted for orthopraxy over orthodoxy, it's consuming desire to be culturally cool has led to many errant applications based on faulty hermeneutics...

So in order of avoid those dangers, we need to spend the time necessary and labor hard in word

and doctrine to accurately handle and interpret the Bible so then we will have the mind of God and the Mind of Christ in all things and be able to answer the Question.

13 Who *is wise* and *understanding*
among you?

I. The Singularity of Wisdom

II. The Sense of Wisdom

¹³ Who *is wise* and *understanding* among you? Let him show by good conduct *that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.* ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

The sense of wisdom, or the perception and evidence of wisdom is seen in the conduct, just like the works show the faith, so wisdom is seen in its works.

v. 13....Let him show by good conduct *that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

His question does not imply that none is wise but challenges to self-examination those who rashly assume that they are.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 204). BMH Books.

v. 13....Let him show

James demands that the possession of wisdom, like faith (2:14–26), must be proved by conduct. The aorist imperative “let him show” (*deixatō*) calls for an effective demonstration. The proof must be given, not through victory by a clever argument, but “by his good life.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

1166. **δεικνύω *deiknúō*; fut. *deíxō*.** To show, used trans.:

(I) To point out, present to the sight, to cause to see (Matt. 4:8; Luke 4:5, “all the kingdoms of the world”; John 5:20; 14:8, 9). In Matt. 8:4, “show yourself to the priest” (a.t.), present yourself for inspection; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14; Sept.: Ex. 15:25; Deut. 34:1, 4; Judg. 4:22; of what is shown in visions (Rev. 1:1; 4:1; 17:1; 21:9, 10; 22:1, 6, 8).

(II) To offer to view, exhibit, display (John 20:20, “showed them the hands” [a.t.]; Heb. 8:5; Sept.: Ex. 25:9, 40); of deeds (John 2:18; 10:32; 1 Tim. 6:15; Sept.: Mic. 7:15, *ópsesthe* [3700] see); of inward things meaning to manifest, prove, (James 2:18; 3:13 [cf. Sept.: Ps. 60:5; 71:20]).

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

v. 13....Let him show **by** good conduct

by

“By” (*ek*), better “out of,” points to the general source whence the proof is to be drawn.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

good **conduct**

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

391. ἀναστροφή anastrophē; gen. *anastrophēs*, fem. noun from *anastréphō* (390), to turn up, to move about. A turning about. In the NT, mode of life, conduct, behavior, deportment (Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 4:12; James 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:7; 3:11); life, as made up of actions (Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 1:15).

Syn.: *agōgē* (72), mode of living; *bíos* (979), living, livelihood; *zōē* (2222), life; *katástēma* (2688), demeanor; *trópos* (5158), a manner of living; *políteuma* (4175), the behavior of a citizen; *bíōsis* (981), the spending of one’s life; *éthos* (1485), custom; *éthos* (2239), moral conduct, used usually in the pl. meaning morals.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

Galatians 1:13 (NKJV)

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.

Ephesians 4:22 (NKJV)

²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct,
the old man which grows corrupt according to the
deceitful lusts,

1 Peter 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy
in all *your* conduct,
Hebrews 13:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Remember those who rule over you, who have
spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow,
considering the outcome of *their* conduct.

So James has in mind all your daily life activities
and engagements. What you do, what you say, how
you act and react. But notice not just any kind of
conduct but it must be
good.

2570. καλός *kalós*; fem. *kalé*, neut. *kalón*, adj.
Good. Constitutionally good without necessarily
being benevolent; expresses beauty as a
harmonious completeness, balance, proportion.

(I) Good as to quality and character.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).
AMG Publishers.

His social behavior must be recognized as “good” (*kalōs*), “noble, beautiful, attractive.” His winsome daily conduct should demonstrate his possession of the needed practical insight and understanding to deal with the daily problems of life. “Not one’s orthodoxy (right preaching) but one’s orthopraxis (right living) is the mark of true wisdom.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

v. 13....Let him show by good conduct
that his works are done in the
meekness of wisdom.

The attractiveness of his life must be established “by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.” His deeds, which are the acid test of his wisdom, must be wrought by his personal faith, providing external evidence of God’s transforming power within.

His deeds must be “done in the humility that comes from wisdom.” The emphasis is on “humility” (*prautēti*), more commonly translated “meekness” or “gentleness.” Such “meekness” is a characteristic of true wisdom and is the opposite of arrogant self-assertiveness (cf. 1:21b). It is that attitude of heart that produces gentleness and mildness in dealing with others—not weakness (Matt. 11:29) but power under control. The meek man does not feel a need to contend for the recognition of his rights or acceptance of his personal

views. His life will be characterized by modesty and unobtrusiveness. “This Christian meekness,” Moo notes, “involves a healthy understanding of our own unworthiness before God and a corresponding humility and lack of pride in our dealings with our fellowmen.” Understandably, such an attitude of meekness was not prized or appreciated in the non-Christian world.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

4240. πραΰτης *praútēs*; gen. *praútētos*, fem. noun from *praús* (4239), meek. Meekness, but not in a man’s outward behavior only, nor in his relations to his fellow man or his mere natural disposition. Rather, it is an inwrought grace of the soul, and the expressions of it are primarily toward God (James 1:21; 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:15; Sept.: Ps. 45:4). It is that attitude of spirit we accept God’s dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist. *Praútēs*, according to Aristotle, is the middle standing between two extremes, getting angry without reason (*orgilótēs* [n.f.]), and not getting angry at all (*aorgēsía* [n.f.]). Therefore, *praútēs* is getting angry at the right time, in the right measure, and for the right reason. *Praútēs* is not readily expressed in Eng. (since the term “meekness” suggests weakness), but it is a condition of mind and heart which demonstrates gentleness, not in weakness,

but in power. It is a balance born in strength of character.

Syn.: *epieíkeia* (1932), fairness, moderation, gentleness, expressing an active dealing with others; *chrēstótēs* (5544), kindness, mellowness; *tapeinophrosúnē* (5012), humility; *praüpátheia* (found in some MSS in 1 Tim. 6:11), a meek disposition, meekness.

Ant.: *orgé* (3709), a disposition to anger; *thumós* (2372), anger externalized; *parorgismós* (3950), exasperation; *aganáktēsis* (24), indignation

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [*The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

The meek person does not selfishly assert himself. The Greek word was used for a horse that had been broken so that his power was under control. The meek person seeks only the glory of God and does not cater to the praises of men. Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23); it cannot be manufactured by man. There is a false humility that some people mistake for meekness, but it is only counterfeit.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 364). Victor Books.

The phrase, “meekness of wisdom,” is an interesting one (James 3:3). Meekness is the right use of power, and wisdom is the right use of knowledge. They go

together. The truly wise person will show in his daily life (*conversation* means “behavior”) that he is a child of God. Attitude and action go together.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 364). Victor Books.

The truly wise man is humble

Blue, J. R. (1985). [*James*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 828). Victor Books.

For believers, **gentleness** is to be willingly under the sovereign control of God. Numbers 12:3 (kjv) describes Moses as “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” Yet that same Moses could act decisively, and flared up in anger when provoked.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [*James*](#) (p. 169). Moody Press.

Gentleness is a God-honored character trait, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). It is never bitter, malicious, self-seeking, self-promoting, arrogant, or vengeful. James has earlier admonished believers, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility (*prautēs*) receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls” (1:21). **Gentleness** or meekness is to characterize everyone in the kingdom of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). Our Lord used it of Himself, saying, “Take My yoke

upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matt. 11:29; cf. 21:5).

In his excellent nineteenth-century commentary on James, Robert Johnstone wrote:

I do not know that at any point the opposition between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of Christ is more marked, more obviously diametrical, than with regard to this feature of character. That "the meek" should "inherit the earth"—they who bear wrongs, and exemplify that love which "seeketh not her own,"—to a world which believes in high-handedness and self-assertion, and pushing the weakest to the wall, a statement like this of the Lord from heaven cannot but appear an utter paradox. The man of the world desires to be counted anything but "meek" or "poor in spirit," and would deem such a description of him equivalent to a charge of unmanliness. Ah, brethren, this is because we have taken in Satan's conception of manliness instead of God's. One Man has been shown us by God, in whom His ideal of man was embodied; and He, "when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously"; He for those who nailed Him to the tree prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know

not what they do.” The world’s spirit of wrath, then, must be folly; whilst than a spirit of meekness like His, in the midst of controversy, oppositions, trials of whatever kind, there can be no surer evidence that “Jesus is made of God to His people *wisdom*.”

...

We have here again what may be described as the central thought of this epistle, that where religion [the gospel] has real saving hold of a mind and heart, it cannot from its nature but powerfully influence the outward life; and that the more a Christian has of true wisdom and spiritual knowledge, the more manifestly will his life at all points be governed by his religion [faith]. Talk of orthodoxy and Christian experience, however fluent and animated and clever, does not of itself prove wisdom; the really wise man will “show his work.” (*A Commentary on James* [reprint; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977], 261–62; 259)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [*James*](#) (pp. 169–170). Moody Press.