

Faith Without Works is Useless

An Expository “Journey” Through the **Epistle of James**

14- The Test of Godly Wisdom

Church; June 20, 2021

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.

To the Glory of God

Now the word, “**Wisdom**” is listed 216 different times in the NASB version of the Holy Bible. So, whatever else we find out about Wisdom today- we should know that God thinks very highly about it. And that means that we should think very highly about it as well. So, just what is “Wisdom”? Well, the dictionary says:

Wisdom: *The quality or state of being wise; knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, discernment, or insight.*

... and for a person to be “*Wise*” means:

Wise: *Having the power of discerning and judging properly as to what is true or right; possessing discernment, judgment, or discretion.*

... and we all strive to be “Wise”. We want to live our lives with “Wisdom” and to NOT be “Foolish” which we see as being the opposite of Wisdom.

But the words translated in this Passage (verses 13-18) as “*Wisdom*” (v. 13, 15, &17) and “*Wise*” (v. 13) all come from the very *same* Greek word, (*sophia*; Strong’s #4678), which means: *deep knowledge; moral insight; cultivation of mind; enlightened understanding- leading to sound judgment.*

... and that tells us that- in the *biblical* Context- there are at least two different “kinds” or “types” of Wisdom:

1. godly Wisdom
2. ungodly Wisdom

Now on the surface that seems to be wrong. How could *any* kind of Wisdom be “ungodly”? Isn’t the fact that somebody is “Wise” or that somebody uses “Wisdom”- *automatically* mean that they are Godly? I mean doesn’t God *want* us to be Wise? So, doesn’t that mean that Wisdom is a good thing and something we should all strive to have?

For example, in verse 13- the half-brother of Jesus gives us a good way to understand what it means to be Wise and the fruit that comes from using Wisdom:

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

Here James says that whoever among “**you**”. Well, who is “**you**”? The “**you**” here is the saved people of the Church. So, James is addressing *whoever* among the assembly of believers- who has a reputation of being Wise. So, this is whoever has received within themselves the “Gift of Wisdom”. Or whoever has, over the years, *acquired* Wisdom. Or, whoever has *come into* Wisdom; Whoever has *learned* or *gained* Wisdom.

So, James is NOT talking to every single person in the Church in this Verse. He is addressing here- those *among the believers*- who *seem* to be “Wise” or those among the saints, who *lay claim to be wise*; or those among the members, *who have proven* that they are Wise.

And James says to those *particular* people- not everybody- but the ones who are Wise that they need to “do” something. James says these people need to “show”; they should *demonstrate; or prove; or manifest* that they are, in fact Wise.

Okay, but *how* should these people *show* or *prove* or *demonstrate* their Wisdom? James says:

... Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

Now this is a fairly complicated sentence in the original Greek- because there are two different prepositional phrases here that *modify* the main statement.

The primary Command here by James- is that he is telling those who have Wisdom, “*to show*” something. So, they are “*to prove*” something; or “*demonstrate*” something. Okay, what are they to show or prove or demonstrate? Their “*deeds*”.

Now “*deeds*” are what we “do”. And “*deeds*” are rendered as “*works*” in other English versions of the Bible (KJV). Now how are we to show our deeds? In two ways:

1. **by his good behavior**
2. **in the gentleness of wisdom**

... so, these are “good” deeds. And by James using the word, “behavior” here tells us that these “deeds” are the accumulated way that we live our daily lives. So, James is NOT talking about the great and glorious exploits that we read about, for example, in the **Book of the Acts**. He isn’t talking about performing Miracles; or casting out devils; or healing the sick. No, James is talking about the things that would never make the headlines; things that are very ordinary; very average; very common; and very mundane- yet James says they are very important. Why? Because James tells wise people to do this.

So, if you are Wise- you will *prove* your Wisdom by showing or proving or demonstrating your...

... **deeds** ...

... **by his good behavior ... in the gentleness of wisdom**

... and so, right off the bat- we can see that true, godly Wisdom is “gentle.” But this word, “**gentleness**” is NOT what you might normally think. No, the word that James used here comes from a Greek word (*prautees*; Strong’s #4240) that has NOTHING to do with: *an outward gentleness toward Man*. No, this word means: *an inward Grace of the soul- toward God; meekness*. Now, interestingly, this word is more closely associated with the “*Fear of God*” than it has with the more common type of “gentleness.”

So, there is a godly Humility involved in this Wisdom here at the end of verse 13- a “lowering of the eyes” Attitude that understands very clearly our own sinfulness and our own unworthiness. And this is something that needs to be said here. The greatest Danger involved with studying the Bible and understanding the Truth of God’s Word- is NOT that we will become dead, dry, lifeless people- who

have a head full of Knowledge but no heart. Now that is a Danger- but it is NOT the greatest Danger. The greatest Danger is that we will become Proudful of our Knowledge; that we will become Arrogant and Self-righteous about our ability to know the Truth.

And James seeks to help us avoid that here. Because the Wisdom he speaks of here in verse 13- is *bathed* in Humility. It is *draped over* with the *caveat* that- as much as we might know and understand- if it were not for God's Grace- we would spend all of Eternity in a devil's Hell. And so, all our Knowledge; and all of our Wisdom and all of our Understanding will NOT keep us from everlasting Torment. The ONLY thing that keeps you and me from burning forever- is Grace.

Beloved- we are NOT redeemed because we can understand all the Steps of the *Ordo Salutis* (the Order of Salvation). Our wicked Sins were NOT washed away because we believe in the Sovereignty of God. We have NOT received within ourselves that new, divine Nature because we are the modern heirs of the Protestant Reformation. No, we are saved BY God's Grace ALONE! And we are saved THROUGH the merciful Gift of saving Faith- ALONE! And we are saved- BY Jesus- ALONE! And we are saved- to God's Glory- ALONE! And *everything* we know to be true; and our ability to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" and our knowledge of the Bible are all precious and wonderful and gracious Gifts of God. They are Gifts! We didn't always have them. We weren't born with them. And we DON'T deserve them. God gave these Gifts to us.

And so, if we become Proudful of a Gift; if we become Arrogant of something we received from God; if we become Self-righteous because of something God gave us that we don't deserve and didn't earn- then truly- we are of all men- most to be pitied. So, we must labor and labor HARD to *avoid* what the Apostle Paul warned about in **1Corinthians 8:1b**

... Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

... so, the Wisdom of verse 13 is a "godly" Wisdom. It is a Wisdom that is meek and humble and that is NOT arrogant.

But this also tells us that engaging in good and godly deeds: 1) by a good behavior; and 2) in the gentleness that true Wisdom- that this is *better*; it is more desirable; it is more glorifying to God- than being able to cast out demons; or being Wealthy; or understanding all Mysteries.

Now "deeds" in this Context are the *outward, tangible, material, and public* "Works" or "Actions" that saved people "carry out"; or "do"; or "perform"- during the course of our daily lives. So, our "deeds" are the way we live out what we say we believe- in the normal course of our everyday life. Another way of understanding these good and godly "deeds" is that they are the "Fruit of

Salvation”. Godly fruit or good deeds are the *irrefutable* Proof that we are saved. So, saved people bear godly Fruit. And ALL saved people bear godly Fruit. If there is no godly Fruit- there is no reason to assume that Salvation has occurred. And since godly Fruit and good Deeds are the same thing- ALL saved people engage in good Deeds.

Okay, that is “godly” Wisdom- but what do I mean when I say that the Wisdom described in verse 14 is an “ungodly” Wisdom. Well, let’s read verse 14 again:

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

Now, right about now an astute person would say, “*Wait a minute, Brother Blair- James is NOT talking about Wisdom in verse 14- he is talking about four other things:*

1. Bitter Jealousy
2. Selfish Ambition
3. Arrogance
4. Lying against the Truth

... *but NOT Wisdom.*”

And my response is: “*Read the very next verse (15) that says...*”

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

... and when James uses the phrase, “**this Wisdom is not that which comes down from above...**” he is talking about the four things that he mentioned in verse 14:

1. Bitter Jealousy
2. Selfish Ambition
3. Arrogance
4. Lying against the Truth

Now it is fine if you want to call *this* Wisdom an “earthly” Wisdom; or a “natural” Wisdom; or a “demonic” Wisdom. I simply choose to call it an “ungodly” Wisdom.

Now if all James said was that this Wisdom was “demonic”- then it would be easy to say this Wisdom was bad; or wrong; or even sinful. But by including “earthly” and “natural” in his description *forces* us to say that this Wisdom is NOT necessarily sinful- at least not always.

An “earthly” or “natural” Wisdom is a Wisdom that pertains to this life and this earth. It is “natural” as opposed to “supernatural”. And it is “earthly” as opposed to “heavenly”. So, this is a “terrestrial” Wisdom- a Wisdom that pertains ONLY to this earth and this life. So, to be sure- this Wisdom would NEVER be godly. Yet it may NOT always be overtly Evil either.

So, for example, this is a Wisdom that would help you become financially wealthy. It is a Wisdom that would help you build a bridge or a boat or to start and run a business. And it is called, “Wisdom”- because it allows you to use Knowledge- properly; correctly; efficiently; and well. But it isn’t “godly”. It is ONLY “natural” and “earthly” and because it has no godly or spiritual component to it- this Wisdom is also “demonic”.

Now I can’t even conceive of a “Jealousy” that isn’t “bitter”. Every jealous person I have ever talked with- was bitter. And I also can’t conceive of any form of Ambition that isn’t selfish. To be ambitious is for a person to want to do or build or plant or succeed or win- in whatever enterprise he is involved in. And by definition that is Self-centered or Selfish.

So, I don’t really think that James was trying to make a distinction here between a Jealousy that was “bitter” and a Jealousy that wasn’t. And I also don’t think James was only addressing an Ambition that was “selfish” and leaving out some other form of Ambition that somehow wasn’t Selfish. I simply think James was using synonyms to describe both Jealousy and Ambition.

And one of the best example of what James is talking about is found with the older brother in Jesus’ Parable of “*the Man with Two Sons*” from **Luke 15**. And the older son exemplified *exactly* what James is talking about here when he said this to his father in verses 29&30:

... Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

... and this speaks about the sinful Jealousy that the Jews have toward the Gentiles- as they begin to realize that God has “set His Love” on them as well. And yet, God will use that very Jealousy to rescue many of the Jews from

perishing in the same Hell as the unbelieving Gentiles. And this is what Paul meant when he said:

Romans 11:14&15

if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Now remember that **James 3:13-18** as well as this entire Epistle was written to the people of the Church. So, this Warning here is for those IN the Church- who find themselves caught up in either Jealousy or Ambition (or both). And James warns these people to NOT be Arrogant.

But again, it isn't that ONLY jealous or ambitious people are Arrogant. Arrogance is part of the Fall. And so, ALL human beings- ALL saved people- wrestle with the normal and natural Inclination to be Arrogant, Prideful, and Self-righteous. So, that tells us that Arrogance is the natural "default" of all Humanity- saved or lost.

So, we need to know that Salvation itself does not make us to be Humble. That simply isn't true. Salvation *leads* us into Humility. Salvation *expects* and *demand*s and *command*s Humility. How? Salvation forgives us of all Sin and makes us Righteous- and that allows for God the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. Salvation also opens our eyes to the Truth of God's Word. Salvation turns God's Wrath away from us- forever. And Salvation gives us a new Nature. And the combination of all of that- along with the other "Means of Grace" like:

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Godly Fellowship
- The Sacraments
- Fasting
- Service
- Jesus interceding for us
- God the Spirit praying for us

... *weakens* our flesh while *empowering* our spirits- so we may *grow* more Humble while *decreasing* in Arrogance. But that is a process. So, on a good day- we have to fight against our fleshly tendency to be Arrogant. So, the wise Believer engages in those things (means) that feed us spiritually- on a regular and ongoing basis; while we also *dis-engage* in those things that feed our Flesh and lead us into Temptation.

But here James tells us that bitter Jealousy; selfish Ambition; and Arrogance are characteristics of an “ungodly” Wisdom that he warns us about. And when those three things are in our lives- we respond by “lying against the Truth”.

Now what does it mean to “*lie against the Truth*”? First of all, we need to know that this is different from simply telling lies. Telling lies is to say things that aren’t true. It is to deceive others. It is to say things that make something else appear to be better or bigger or more important than it really is- or it tears down; destroys or minimizes something else that is Good and Noble.

But to “*lie against the Truth*” is to say things *contrary* to the Truth- in a way that *distorts* what the Truth actually is- so others will be deceived. It is to *attack* the Truth; or to wage War *against* the Truth.

For example, when a Man divorces his Wife- he is “*lying against the Truth*” about what Marriage is. You see, the Bible teaches that Marriage is an earthly, tangible, physical, visible, and temporary representation of the Mystery of the eternal Covenant between Jesus and His Church.

And when the Man married the Woman- he made three Covenants:

1. Between himself and God
2. Between himself and his Bride
3. Between himself and the witnesses

... so, the first thing we need to know about Marriage is: *God did this*. Marriage is a Covenant that God did. And to that- God speaks *infallibly* in Scripture in **Mark 10:9** and says,

What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

... which tells you that staying married has MORE to do with “keeping Covenant” than it does with merely “staying in love”. Now I’m NOT minimizing staying in love here- I believe that love within Marriage should GROW- not diminish. But keeping Covenant is much MORE important than fleeting human love.

Secondly, that Man swore an Oath. He made Vows. He entered into Promises before God; and his Bride; and those Witnesses that he would “*love, honor, and cherish his Wife.*” That he would “*love her; provide for her; lead her; and protect her*”. And he swore that he would do those things: “*in sickness and in health; in poverty or in riches; in good times and bad times- until Death dissolves the Marriage or until Jesus comes back.*” And Almighty God spoke infallibly in Scripture about that and said,

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

21 “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you.

22 “However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you.

23 “You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God, what you have promised.

Nobody *forced* that Man to marry that Women. He didn't HAVE to get married. He *wanted* this. He also didn't HAVE to make those Vows. That Man entered into that Covenant and made those Vows- *willingly*. And hopefully- he and his Bride were fully prepared to be married.¹

Now the Bible is crystal clear that the Husband is to represent Christ in the Marriage while the Wife is to represent the Church. So, IN THE SAME WAY that Jesus loves; and feeds; and protects; and builds; and supports the Church- so too, the Husband should do these things to his Wife.

So, since Marriage represents Christ's Covenant with the Church- when a Husband divorces his Wife- he is testifying to the entire world several things:

- That the Covenant between Jesus and the Church is NOT eternal
- That there is a line, that when crossed- will result in Jesus divorcing His Church
- That Man MAY separate what God joined together
- That *some* Sins triumph over Grace- even among believers
- That God, in all three Persons; the Bible; the Church; and 2,000 years of History are NOT strong enough to salvage the Marriage
- That there are occasions when Unforgiveness triumphs over Forgiveness- even among believers
- That there are circumstances under which even Christians CAN'T love or forgive one another
- That the Oaths/Vows/Promises he made between himself and God; himself and his Bride; and between himself and the Witnesses were meaningless.

... and that is MORE than merely telling a lie. It is dishonoring; and attacking; and waging War against Marriage (**Hebrews 13:4**). It is *distorting* what the Truth about Marriage is. And it is putting forth a false narrative that radically *alters* what others think about Marriage- so that others may be deceived and follow that sinful example. It is lying against the Truth. And the Husband doesn't have the Right or the

¹ This has to do with “pre-marital Counselling”

Authority to do that- *especially* if he is a Christian.

Yet this happens every day. And everybody who enters into a Divorce ALWAYS has a reason. And most of the time they have consulted with other people. And most have engaged the use of legal experts. And, in far too many cases- they have even sought Counsel from their Pastor.

And that means there was a type of “Wisdom” that was involved in carrying this Divorce out. There was Information (Knowledge) discussed and talked about (prayed about) and used in an efficient way. And that is the definition of Wisdom.

And yet somehow- in spite of all that the Bible speaks about Marriage; in spite of all the verses that COMMAND us to forgive; in spite of all the verses that COMMAND us to love and to labor and to strive and to put forth effort to obey- believers- who entered into a Marriage Covenant; believers who made Vows to God and everyone else- lie against the Truth about Marriage and get divorced. And they do this *publicly* in Court- in front of the lost, pagan, and unbelieving world. And this is done, many times, with the help and guidance and direction of unbelievers. How could that be?

I mean **1 Corinthians 6** *forbids* believers from taking squabbles about land; contracts; and other legal matters to the lost world to settle. And yet believers go to the lost, pagan world to dissolve their Marriages? In what Universe does that make any sense? So, the epidemic of Divorces in this Country among those who say they believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of the living God- is a *distortion*- a “Lie against the Truth” about Marriage- of epic proportions. And it needs to stop.

Brothers and sisters, if the Christian Church is NOT going to uphold the Dignity and the Beauty and the Glory and the Importance of Marriage- who will? An Islamic Mosque? A Buddhist Temple? And if individual believers, who have the Power of the risen Christ in their lives, are NOT going to honor Marriage- who will? Mormons? Scientologists?

And so, *whatever* Logic or Experience or Knowledge or Information or “Wisdom” that would allow or encourage or facilitate or defend the dissolving of the Marriage Covenant- *especially* among believers- is an example of the “ungodly” Wisdom that is “earthly”, “natural” and “demonic” that James talks about here. Now look again at verse 16:

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

Now the fact that James omitted the word, “bitter” when discussing Jealousy here gives my position credibility that “bitter” is describing ALL Jealousy and

“selfish” is describing ALL Ambition and is NOT meant to distinguish between different types of Jealousy and Ambition.

Now James began verse 16 with the word, “**For**” which means: “Because”. So, how we need to understand what he said is like this:

... if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

Now *how* do we know that what James says here about this “ungodly” Wisdom is true?

[BECAUSE] where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

... and that is manifestly true.

So, James is teaching here that the Proof that the “Wisdom” that is associated with Jealousy and Ambition is “earthly, natural, and demonic” and NOT a “Wisdom” that is “godly” and that “comes down from above” is the fact that

... where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

In other words, Jealousy and Ambition are NOT Characteristics of godly Wisdom. They are Characteristics of the kind of “Wisdom” that pertains ONLY to this earth and the natural world and satan. Why? BECAUSE where these two things exist- there is two results:

1. Disorder
2. Every Evil thing

Now the word that was translated here as “**disorder**” comes from a Greek word (*akatastasia*; Strong’s #181) that has to do with: *instability; a state of disorder; confusion; and disturbance*. And this word was only used two times in the entire Bible. The other place is **1Corinthians 14:33** that says:

for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Now the phrase, “**every evil thing**” can also be understood as “every evil *work*”- signifying that evil activity flows out from a “wisdom” that is typified with Jealousy and Ambition. One of the best examples of this phrase is where the Apostle Paul said this from **1 Timothy 6:10b**:

... the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil ...

Now, of course, there is Evil in the world from different places besides Money. So not ALL evil is from a love of Money. In the same way- there are more Sins than simply that which flows out from an ungodly “wisdom” typified by Jealousy and Ambition. So, the point James is making here is that godliness will NEVER come from these things. So, to be godly REQUIRES that we NOT use the “wisdom” that is earthly, natural, and demonic.

Now in verse 17- we see the Attributes or Characteristics of the other type of “godly” Wisdom that he mentioned back in verse 13:

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

... and from this we see that there are two “types” or “kinds” of Wisdom:

1. Peaceable, Gentle, Reasonable, and Godly Wisdom
2. Earthly, Natural, Demonic, and Ungodly Wisdom

So, we have “godly Wisdom” that is *free* from hypocrisy; and we have “ungodly Wisdom” that is neck deep in hypocrisy. We have a “Wisdom” that has no connection to bitter Jealousy and selfish Ambition; and we have another “Wisdom” that is inextricably connected to both of these wicked Sins. And yet *both* are called, “Wisdom”. And *both* are used and brought forth and manifested by people.

Now the word that was translated in verse 15 as “**demonic**” comes from a Greek word (*psuchikos*; Strongs #5591) that has to do with: *Animal instinct; or animalistic brutish characteristics as opposed to human*. This word was also used in **Jude 19** when he was giving the Characteristics of Heretics:

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded [*psuchikos*], devoid of the Spirit.

... and this word was translated as “*sensual*” in the King James Version.

Now to be “*sensual*” is normally associated with sexual immorality. But literally, this word has to do with the five physical senses of human beings like: *seeing; hearing feeling; tasting; and smelling*. So, the Issue with someone being “*sensual*” is that they are NOT “*spiritual*”. Sensual people are “*of this earth*” or “*earthly*”; “*worldly*”; and “*carnal*”. And since the rebellious angels were cast out of Heaven to the earth (**The Revelation 12**)- they too are “*earthly*”; “*carnal*”; “*worldly*”- even though they are “*supernatural*” and are not flesh and blood.

So, the irony is that supernatural angels, who are immortal and can’t die- are considered to be “*earthly*”; “*worldly*”; and “*that which pertains to the five natural senses of human beings*” (*sensual*)- but NOT “*spiritual*”. Because in the Bible- being “*spiritual*” is ALWAYS associated with being “*Godly*”- and NOT merely “*above the earthly*” (*supernatural*). So, just what is James trying to teach us?

First of all, most Wisdom is *acquired*. It usually isn’t *inherent* in people at birth. People don’t normally just *have* Wisdom. Now *some* do- but the majority of people have to *acquire*; or *get*; or *accumulate*; or *gain*- Wisdom. And, normally, Wisdom is “*gotten*” or “*acquired*” from two sources:

1. Formal Education
2. Personal Experience

... and *both* of these are important. And *both* of these are deep and wide and ongoing sources of Wisdom.

But that means that Wisdom is connected to Knowledge. So, Wisdom is: *Knowledge- used properly*. So, we *acquire* Knowledge. And the way we *use* Knowledge- is either Wisdom or Foolishness. Either one. A *productive* and *efficient* use of Knowledge would be “*Wisdom*”; while a *lazy* or *unproductive* or even a *destructive* use of Knowledge would be “*Foolishness*”.

And that is how things normally work. But in this case- James speaks about two different kinds of Wisdom that aren’t normally discussed:

1. godly Wisdom
2. ungodly Wisdom

So, James is NOT simply talking about a “*smart*” or “*effective*” or “*productive*” type of Wisdom here- but a *godly* Wisdom- a Wisdom that is:

... from above [and] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy

And he also isn't talking about a lazy, unproductive, or even a destructive type of Wisdom here either. He is talking about a Wisdom that is:

... earthly, natural, demonic

... this type of "wisdom" feeds into (and is fed by) bitter Jealousy and selfish Ambition.

Now look, godly Wisdom is "smart"- but only because it is smart to love and obey God. But Godly Wisdom is NOT Pragmatism. And Godly Wisdom is NOT necessarily "Efficient" either. Pragmatism says that whatever "works" is Good. So, to be "pragmatic" is to do whatever is popular and that has shown to be effective. And something that is Efficient also has to do with whatever has proven to be productive and useful.

But a Godly Wisdom has one single Goal: to honor God; to display the Value and Worth and Importance and Beauty and Glory of Jesus Christ. So, for example, godly Wisdom would tell the individual to obey God- even if that Obedience resulted in Persecution or Death. And Pragmatism and Efficiency would NEVER do that.

So, all of the Characteristics of this "godly" Wisdom from verse 17 like:

- ✓ **Pure**
- ✓ **Peaceable**
- ✓ **Gentle**
- ✓ **Reasonable**
- ✓ **Full of Mercy**
- ✓ **Full of good Fruits**
- ✓ **Unwavering**
- ✓ **Without hypocrisy**

... are connected to this heavenly, celestial, and godly Wisdom- which is opposed to the earthly, natural, and demonic "wisdom" of Man.

So, James says, first, that this Wisdom is pure- which excludes Hypocrisy and Ambition. Secondly, he calls it peaceable, to intimate that it is not contentious. In the third place, James calls this Wisdom, "Gentle" or Kind or Humane- which is completely different from a wisdom that tolerates no weakness in our brethren. He also calls it Reasonable- which differs from Pride and Malignity. And James says this Wisdom is full of Mercy; unwavering and without Hypocrisy- because Hypocrisy is inhuman and inexorable.

But we must be careful here. Because these terms are to be understood from a biblical sense; a Christian perspective- and NOT from a carnal or worldly perspective.

For example, it isn't *reasonable* to the world that a Believer would go to jail rather than compromise the Gospel. To the pagan world- that is completely *unreasonable*. And from a worldly, carnal, earthly and natural (demonic) perspective- it is not Wise for a Christian to risk losing his job; or risk losing his material possessions- by teaching the Truth; or by opening his home to strangers; or by publicly associating with other believers, who have been executed or beaten and put in Jail. That's just stupid to the world. But it's beautiful to God. And it is wise to other saints of God.

The world considers any rebuke of a person who is engaged in sexual immorality as being unmerciful; unkind; and full of hate- thus unchristian. The pagan world says that "love" means ONLY that we tolerate Sin in others. But the Bible teaches that clearly identifying Sin and calling sinners to Repentance- is the epitome of Love. Because if that person does not repent- he will spend all of Eternity in Hell- and there is nothing loving about that.

So, the lost world has captured biblical language and, in many cases, has completely *redefined* the words and terms. And that would be bad enough. But then they seek to hold Christians to account with that new definition- that, many times, is *diametrically* opposite of what God actually said in Scripture.

So, the Characteristics and Attributes listed by James in verse 17- are NOT to be understood by the new definitions that the world has manufactured. They are to be understood by the original meaning of the word at the time that the man God used- wrote them down.

We must always understand that God the Holy Spirit NEVER takes away the difference between Good and Evil. And being "filled with God's Spirit" NEVER causes us to be so silly that we are so void of "Righteous Judgment" that we would then begin to praise Sin and regard it as Virtue.

So, by distinguishing between these two types of Wisdom- the first Pastor of the Church at Jerusalem makes it clear who is being guided and motivated (manipulated) by the lost pagan world and who is being led by God's Spirit. So, as we seek to use this godly Wisdom- we must ALWAYS take heed to ourselves that we NEVER have even the smell of Arrogance and self-Righteousness on us and that a fair examination of our use of Wisdom would NEVER associate it with either Jealousy or Ambition. Now look again at verse 18:

And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Now other than the word, “Love”- the word, “Peace” is probably understood and used more wrongly than any other word. The common misunderstanding and mis-use of the word “Peace” is an example of how far the pagan world has gone to co-op the biblical language.

The word, “peace” here has NOTHING to do with a Pacifist lifestyle. It also has NOTHING to do with never being confrontational either. The phrase, “**Those who make peace**” that James uses here refers to the genuine believer- who constantly preaches the Gospel to every creature- in the Hope that sinners will hear and believe the Gospel; repent of their Sins; and trust in Jesus Christ. Because Salvation is the only way anyone will ever “make” Peace; and Salvation is the only way anyone will ever have true and lasting Peace.

The phrase, “**is sown in Peace**” has to do with the Attitude of the one who sows the seed; or the one who preaches the Gospel. The Goal of “sowing seed” is NOT to prove somebody else wrong. It isn’t to show anyone else up; or to make them look bad; or to win an argument. The one single correct Purpose and Goal of “sowing the seed” or “preaching the Gospel”- is to see lost sinners saved. Period.

And that tells us that simply telling somebody they are lost and that they need to repent is NOT enough. Now that is true- all lost sinners need to repent; and they need to be saved. But the WAY we preach; the attitude behind *why* we preach- is equally important. Simply saying the correct words is NOT enough. We have to genuinely love the sinner and we must want them to be saved and become our brother or sister.

We must agree that it is certainly possible for saved people to come across as being Arrogant and Self-righteous when we tell others to repent and be saved. Now simply because they say we are arrogant doesn’t mean we actually are. That accusation has been used by many as simply an excuse as to why they refuse to repent and trust in Jesus. So, we are not Arrogant- unless we are.

But it is true that people really don’t care what we know- until they know that we care. People don’t care how much of the Bible we know or how they need to act- until they are convinced that we genuinely care about them and their place in Eternity.

So, as we tell the Truth about Repentance and Belief- as we sow the seed into the lives of lost people- we need to also make sure that we do so- in the words of James- “**in Peace**”; in Humility; and with a genuine Concern for them as human beings- and NOT flippantly; and NOT in an Arrogant or Prideful way.

Now the phrase, “**the seed whose fruit is Righteousness**” has to do with the Gospel. According to **Luke 8**- the “seed” is the Gospel. Jesus said in **Luke 8:11**:

... the seed is the word of God.

And the “*sower of the seed*” are those who preach the Gospel. So, as real, natural seed is sown on the ground- so too, the Gospel is sown; it is preached and taught to lost people. And when those, whom God has chosen are gifted to be able to hear the Gospel; and believe the Gospel; and repent of Sin and trust in Jesus- they are saved. And the end result of Salvation is: Righteousness. James said that the “fruit” of the seed is Righteousness. And the Apostle Paul said this from **Romans 10:9&10:**

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

... and that is why we need to cry out to God for this godly Wisdom.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.