

BOOK OF JAMES
WORLDLY WISDOM VS. GODLY WISDOM
JAMES 3:13-18

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INTRODUCTION

Before we get into our text tonight, let's go back to *James 1:5-8* and be reminded of what we've already seen concerning "**WISDOM**".

Now let's read our text for this evening *James 3:13-18*.

We know from reading the Old Testament that King Solomon, David's son, was known for his *wisdom*! Remember how the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream and said to him "*Ask what I shall give thee.*" (*1 Kings 3:5*)

Well, Solomon was a young man of about 20 years old when his father David died and he began to reign as King in his father's stead. I want you to think about how overwhelming that must have been for a 20 year old! A 20 year old hasn't really had much in the way of life experiences! No doubt he was feeling a bit overwhelmed with the task of being King of Israel! So this is how he replied to the LORD:

1 Kings 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

The Scripture says that the LORD granted his request and gave him "*a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.*" (*1 Kings 3:12*)

It is not surprising at all that the LORD used him to pen the *Book of Proverbs*, a book which deals with and doles out "**WISDOM**!"

Proverbs 2:6-7 "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly."

True **WISDOM** comes from the LORD Himself, Who is the fountain of all knowledge, and understanding and **WISDOM**!

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with

all thy getting get understanding.

This passage in *James* agrees with *Proverbs*, and focuses on the need for **having the right kind of WISDOM!** I say right kind of **WISDOM** because, as the text reveals, there is a "**WISDOM that is from above**" mentioned there in vs. 17 and there is a *wisdom "that descendeth not from above"* mentioned in vs. 15

That wisdom "that descendeth not from above", that's Worldly Wisdom!
That wisdom "that is from above", that's Godly Wisdom!

As we read the *Book of Proverbs* we find various parts of it where **Wisdom is personified and speaks!** (*Proverbs 1:20-3:35* as well as other places.)

We would do well to **listen to this Wisdom that is from above** as opposed to following after the so-called **wisdom that is NOT from above!**

If we have the Wisdom that is from above (i.e. Godly Wisdom), it will manifest itself in certain positive ways in our lives!

If we have the Wisdom that is NOT from above (i.e. Worldly Wisdom), it will also manifest itself in certain negative ways in our lives!

So, let's examine these two things that stand in stark contrast to one another! WORLDLY WISDOM VS. GODLY WISDOM!

I. WE SEE THE MANIFESTATION OF WORLDLY WISDOM!
(Vs 14-16)

A. Worldly Wisdom's Bad Conversation! ("But..." vs 14)
The things we see about **WORLDLY WISDOM stand in contrast to GODLY WISDOM!**

Understand that the word "conversation" in vs. 13 speaks of more than what we think of in our day and time.

We normally think of our "*talk*" or "*speech*" with others. We say that we are carrying on a "*conversation.*"

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But that word means so much more here. It means “*a general course of manners; behavior; deportment; especially as it respects morals.*” (From the *1828 American Dictionary Of The English Language* by Noah Webster)

So, “**good conversation**” in vs.13 speaks of “**good behavior**”! And the “**But**” of vs. 14 stands in stark contrast to that so it is speaking of “**bad behavior**” and I’ll prove my point!

1. **Bitter Envyng!**

The word “**bitter**” here is describing the kind of “**envying**”! “**Bitter**” means “*to cut, to prick, pointed, sharp, .*”

The word “**envying**” here is describing “*a type of jealousy that that is tormented by another’s good fortune and is active and aggressive to diminish the good in another; usually accompanied by petty complaining and fault finding.*” (*The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible, James Strong, LL.D., S.T.D.*)

This is talking about something that **begins in the heart** (“*...in your hearts*”) and works its way to the outside manifesting itself in **bad behavior!** That **bad behavior** most often uses the tongue as its first instrument of attack!

Bitter envying is a “**bad behavior**”! Would you agree?

2. **Strife!**

The word “**strife**” refers to “*ambitious, self-seeking, rivalry*” with **self-will** being an underlying idea in the

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word. Also, being **contentious!** Seeking to win followers creates **factions.** **Factions** are a result of **jealousy.** It is what we see in politics!

Philippians 2:3-4 “3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Again, this “**strife**” is something that **begins in the heart** and works its way to the outside manifesting itself in **bad behavior!** That **bad behavior** most often uses the tongue as its first instrument of attack!

Strife is a “**bad behavior**”! Would you agree?

3. **Glory Not!**

He says right here that if it is in your life don’t brag about it and don’t try to make it look likes its alright! “*...glory not...*”

Have you ever heard someone say something like “Let me tell you what I did...boy I gave them a piece of my mind! Ha Ha! What do you think of that?”

“**glory not**” = “*Don’t boast! Don’t brag!*”

Proverbs 11:2 “2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.”

Glorying in bitter envying and strife is bad behavior!

4. **Lie Not Against The Truth!**

“**lie not against the truth**” = With even just a cursory look at the principles from Scripture and we can know

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these things are very wrong! They go against the truth of Scripture!

WE SEE THE MANIFESTATION OF WORLDLY WISDOM!

Worldly Wisdom's Bad Conversation (Bad Behavior!)

B. Worldly Wisdom's Bad Character! (Vs 15)

"This wisdom descendeth not from above..."

(i.e. "This is not from God!" or "You didn't get that from God!") In fact, this comes from our three main nemeses!

What are the believer's three main enemies?

1. Earthly = It is Worldly or of this World!

Think about everything this world is about!
(Here is a hint...it is ALL about covetousness and ambition not caring what you have to do or who you have to hurt to get ahead!) Don't be that!

John 2:15-17 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

2. Sensual=It is of this Flesh!

Sensual means *natural* and *unspiritual*
It is the **"If it feels good...DO IT!"** mentality!

3. Devilish=It is of the Devil!

The Devil is Anti-God, Anti-Christ, and ALL about pride and self-will!

WE SEE THE MANIFESTATION OF WORLDLY WISDOM!

Worldly Wisdom's Bad Conversation (Bad Behavior!)

Worldly Wisdom's Bad Character!

C. Worldly Wisdom's Bad Consequences! (Vs 16)

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1. It Results In Confusion!

Confusion = Instability; Disorder

1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

2. It Results In Every Evil Work!

Galatians 5:19-21 "19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:..."

II. WE SEE THE MANIFESTATION OF GODLY WISDOM!

It is shown through **GOOD CONVERSATION** or **GOOD BEHAVIOR!** (Vs 12)

This isn't the kind of wisdom where you just sit under a fig tree and spout off clever sayings and quotable quotes. This kind of wisdom is very practical and translates into good behavior. It is the proper application of Biblical knowledge that brings forth good behaviour!

"But the wisdom that is from above..."

A. Godly Wisdom Is PURE! (Vs 17)

Note the word **"first"**! **Purity** is **first** in importance!
That which is **pure** is **clean!** **God's wisdom is free from fault or defilement of any kind!**

B. Godly Wisdom Is PEACEABLE!

"Peaceable" means **"to bind together; to join and weave together."** As opposed to **bitter envying** and **strife** that are full of fighting!

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Of course we know **Jesus is the Prince of Peace!** This world has been full of wars and struggles and strife ever since sin entered the world!

It will continue to be that way until the end of the Tribulation Period when King Jesus comes back with His saints and then it will all change when He takes His throne in Jerusalem for His 1000 year reign on this earth!

*Isaiah 32:17 "And the work of righteousness shall be **peace**; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."*

Romans 12:18 "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Hebrews 12:14 "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"

- C. Godly Wisdom Is GENTLE!**
"Gentle"— appropriate, i.e. (by impl.) mild:--gentle, moderation, patient.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

1 Thessalonians 2:7 "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:"

2 Timothy 2:24-25 "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"

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Titus 3:1-2

- D. Godly Wisdom Is EASY TO BE ENTREATED!**
This means *reasonable; being willing to listen to reason and to appeal; being willing to change when one is wrong.*

True wisdom is not stubborn or hard. Rather, it listens to the voice and reasoning of God and of fellow believers, and when wrong, changes his behavior.

- E. Godly Wisdom Is FULL OF MERCY!**
This means being able to have feelings of pity, compassion, affection, and kindness as necessary. It is a desire to help; to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for.

- F. Godly Wisdom Is FULL OF GOOD FRUITS!**
Philippians 1:11 "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

Colossians 1:10 "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

- G. Godly Wisdom Is WITHOUT PARTIALITY!**
Cf. James 2:1-4 It shows no partiality or favoritism to anyone.
1 Timothy 5:21 "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

- H. Godly Wisdom Is WITHOUT HYPOCRISY!**
i.e. sincere; not somebody who just play-acting, or wearing a mask.

Matthew 23:25-28 (Jesus denouncing the Pharisees for their hypocrisy)

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*Luke 12:1– "...He began to say unto his disciples first of all,
Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**."*

*John 1:47 "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of
him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is **no guile**!"*

*Romans 12:9 "Let love be **without dissimulation**. Abhor that
which is evil; cleave to that which is good."*

*1 Peter 1:22 "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the
truth through the Spirit unto **unfeigned** love of the brethren,
see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:"*

*1 Peter 2:2 "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and **all guile,
and hypocrisies**, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn
babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow
thereby:"*

*1 John 3:18 "My little children, let us not love in word, neither
in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

**I. The Effect Of Godly Wisdom Is The Fruit Of
Righteousness! (Vs 18)**

A life of righteousness that sows righteousness in peace.