



5/4/26

So... a few people have commented with some sweet words about my new picture at the bottom of the email. First of all, thank you. You're very sweet. But also, I want to give a shout out to my daughter, Megan Holt. She is a professional photographer, and she took this picture... and did her magic to make it look nice. So... thank you to Megan! And I hope you, my friend, have a wonderful day enjoying the sunshine.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

James 3:13-18

We're starting this new series on building a godly home. A lot of the passages we're going to look at are not focused on the family or marriage per se... but I believe that all the commands for believers should be epitomized in the marriage relationship. Truly, if I can follow some of the commands in my more distant relationships who don't see the real me all the time, but my husband can't see me living out these scriptures... how truly genuine is my commitment to what God calls me to?

This week the focus of the series starts with godly communication. Godly communication has to be hardest in the home... where all my good, bad, and ugly traits are obvious. So... in my home... what gets in the way of speaking truth and building relationships more than thinking too highly (or too lowly) of myself? Isn't that what causes me to build the brick wall between me and others? I think "I" or "you", but I don't think "US"? Today's passage will show me how wisdom impacts these relationships.

There are two types of wisdom, earthly wisdom and godly wisdom. Which I choose to seek makes a massive impact on my relationships. True wisdom will use understanding. It will include behavior that honors the Lord. It will be lived out in meekness. Vs. 13 says, "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom."

In saying, "By his good conduct," James is saying, "Show that you are wise and understanding by letting your behavior, your manner of life, be good, noble, honorable, excellent, and beautiful." That's a big deal. It's not just about my outward actions here and there. It's about the way I live... my regular way of life... being honorable to everyone from my heart.

What gets in the way of having this kind of wisdom? "Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in my heart." Bitter jealousy... a bubbling over of resentment like boiling water. I cannot be honorable if I'm bitterly jealous of someone. Selfish ambition... I want what I want when I want it, and I want it now. Even if I'm being kind in the way I handle it, if I'm really all about getting what I want or getting people to think highly of me, this destroys relationships.

Let me not miss this... James says... "if this is in your HEART". The heart is where my feelings, desires, and choices are made. My outward actions may not show bitter jealousy or selfish ambition... but if it's in my heart, I'm boasting and being false to the truth. It's not that I need to control my outer actions. It is that my heart... my feelings, motives, desires, and choices... need to be free of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. This only comes as I seek the Lord for help. He promises to help if I ask Him, but then I have to let Him work in me. I cannot overcome these things without His help.

Using "wisdom" to get what I want for myself is not wisdom from above. That kind of wisdom is earthly... it is of this world's mindset, and 1 John 2:17 says the world and all its philosophies are passing away. It is unspiritual... natural, not godly. It is demonic... yikes! I can't minimize how evil selfish ambition, bitter jealousy, boasting, and lying are. Nothing but "disorder and every vile practice" come from these. Disorder brings confusion and broken relationships. Every vile practice is all about evil. Don't be deceived.

How might I have bitter jealousy in my home? As a wife, being called to treat my husband with respect and submit to him as to the Lord, I have had times when I resented his position and wanted to fight for "my rights." But nothing good ever comes from that! If I truly believe that God loves me and will protect me as I submit to Him first and foremost, I will be able to respond to my husband and to all believers with the wisdom from above... which looks way different than earthly wisdom.

The wisdom from above is the antithesis of earthly wisdom. It is all about US as we pursue unity in Christ. Instead of resenting others and being all about myself, "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."

Before anything else, it is a pure, holy wisdom. Holiness is never selfish.

It is a peaceable wisdom... pursuing peace with others, seeking to encourage and support US, not me and not you... US.

It is a gentle wisdom... seeking what's fair and equitable, not just what will satisfy MY desires.

Wisdom from above is open to reason... it's reasonable. It never says, "Talk to the hand!" It is always open to understanding the bigger picture.

It is full of mercy... it's compassionate. Being compassionate doesn't mean I have to compromise what's true... but it gives me empathy even as I hold to what's true. My first loyalty ALWAYS has to be to God and His word.

It is full of good fruits... like the fruit of the Spirit... love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control.

It is impartial... not treating one person by one standard and another person by another standard, but treating all people by God's standard regardless of how they can or can't benefit me.

It is sincere... genuine, without hypocrisy.

This is the kind of wisdom God wants me to have and this is the very essence of the wisdom He has for me and for all people. God Himself does nothing from bitter jealousy or selfish ambition. He doesn't use truth to bludgeon, and He doesn't use lies for any reason. He Himself is holy, He is the God of peace, He is gentle, He is totally open to reason because He has the big picture, He is absolutely impartial, and He is fully genuine. He is so full of mercy that He gave Himself so that He could bear the fruit of many people coming to salvation.

This is what happens when I pursue the wisdom that comes from the Lord... I reap a harvest of righteousness, which is everything good... no regret. I can sow this harvest in peace because I have God's peace keeping me secure. I'm able to pursue peace with others because I no longer look to them to be my strength or answer. God is the source of my wisdom... and peace... and righteousness. James 1:5 says I can ask Him for that wisdom, and He will give it to me generously, without shaming me for asking.

I spent a lot of years missing out on the peace I could have been enjoying with my husband because I was letting the foolishness of my selfish desires stop me from being pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. It's so easy to be deceived and to think I need to fight for my rights. But the more I lay down self and pursue oneness, the more I get to enjoy the peaceful fruit of righteousness in relationship.

O Lord, please remove ALL arrogance, all bitter jealousy, all selfish ambition, all deception, all boasting from my heart. Nothing good comes from any of those!!! Please help me to be loyal to You and Your word above all things. Let me never miss the fact that wisdom comes from You because You ARE all the attributes of heavenly wisdom. Let me never take for granted that You generously provide me with Your wisdom. Let me never look for any other source than You.