

# PENTECOST

*Pentecost - worshipping with joy; inviting the Spirit to be poured out on you.*

**Devotionals for 19 - 25 September 2021**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth. During Jesus's last days on earth, He promised His followers that "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things" (John 14:26)

## **Epistle of James – Wisdom ~ James 3:13 - 4:3, 7-8a** (Adapted from <https://www.ocfusa.org>)

Background. The Epistle of James is the most Jewish book in the NT. Except for two or three references to Christ, it would fit rather well in the OT. The life to which the epistle exhorts is that of a profoundly pious Jew who is fulfilling the law in every regard. Gospel, redemption, incarnation, and resurrection are not mentioned. The interest is in the fruits, not the roots. The author is indeed a Christian, writing to believers, but the focus is not on how to become believers. It is on the second stage—on how to advance along the way of holiness and to tr. the ethical implications of the new faith into practical realities (Tasker, James, p. 11). The Gospel fulfilled the law.

Summary of chapter 3: The only One who can control our tongues is God. The only One who can give us wisdom is God. We are completely dependent on Him for wisdom, controlling our tongues, dealing with trials, being impartial, etc.

Application: Our world typically doesn't value humility, gentleness, or submissiveness. Can we carry these character traits into the wardroom setting? Can we lead from a position of humility? Yes! That's the way God designed it. God is in control. He will honor your humility. Servant leadership takes a while, and is not noticed at first. You don't have to sacrifice your personality. The charismatic guy gets all the attention initially. But over time people respond favorable to humility. What has James already said about getting wisdom? James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

James 3:13-18 ~ Wisdom - As in the previous chapters, James continues to deal with basic, everyday issues. These issues are important to God, so they need to be important to us.

Chapter 1 - trials and temptations in life, exhortation to not merely listen to the Word but do what it says

Chapter 2 - favoritism and the relationship between faith and works

Chapter 3 - verses 1-13 controlling the tongue; verses 13-18 wisdom, of controlling the mind

These issues are intended to build upon one another, not to stand alone. There is progression here. Progression to maturity is the theme of James. This is what a mature Christian looks like. (Verse 13) According to James, if someone is wise and understanding, how will we know it? It will be demonstrated in their lives. Much like James has told us about faith, wisdom will be evidenced in our works. Notice the progression. James 3:1-12 addressed controlling the tongue. It is wisdom (verses 13-18) that keeps the tongue under control. There is a direct link.

Wisdom is the source of what? Humility. Why is that? When I am truly wise, I recognize how small and unimportant I am without God. The Greek word for humility *prauteti* occurs in non-biblical literature to describe a horse that is broken and trained to submit to a bridle. It pictures strength under control. Specifically Christians needs to be under the Holy Spirit's control. It is very difficult to be in a spotlight position like a military officer and remain humble.

Application: How can you show strength under control in your life?

James goes on to talk about two kinds of wisdom. What is the first type? Earthly, unspiritual, of the devil These are strong words. Why would it be demonic/of the devil? It eliminates any focus on God, is the antithesis of godly traits, and takes God out of the picture. Wisdom can only be from one of two sources: God or humanity. What characterizes this type of wisdom? Envy and selfish ambition

What would earthly wisdom look like in a person's life? They're jealous of competitors and ruthless in dealing with them (bitter envy). They're passion in life is to advance self interests (selfish ambition). They're is proud of their wisdom that has brought success (boasting). They deny the truth in a selfish and boastful way. Where there are words without godly works, eventually there is disorder and every evil practice. This type of wisdom does not have its source in the fear of the Lord. It comes from the spirit (philosophy) of this world. Worldly wisdom always draws attention to the self.

In verse 14 James talks about selfish ambition. Are goals selfish ambition? What are some of the differences between a goal and selfish ambition? Goals are not achieved at the expense of others. Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, had some things to say about planning in Proverbs 1:7, 6:6-11, 10:4-5, 12:5, 14:15, 16:3, 20:18, 24:27, 27:23-27, 31:10-31.

Verses 17-18 - What is the source of the second type of wisdom? It is from God (heaven) as opposed to the world. What are the characteristics of this type of wisdom? Pure: free of the damages mentioned in verses 14-16. Compare this to false wholesomeness.

- Peace-loving: peace-practicing and peace-yielding.
- Considerate: open to reason.
- Submissive: willing to yield to reasonable requests.
- Full of mercy and good fruit: actively sympathetic to needs.
- Impartial: unwaveringly single-minded in its devotion to God rather than double-minded.
- Sincere: without hypocrisy, true to appearances.

Heavenly wisdom manifests itself in godly works. The character of this wisdom is wonderful. It is full of love and a giving heart, consistent with the holiness of God.

Application: People can be wise in earthly things but not wise when it comes to eternal things. What does verse 18 mean when it says Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness?

As the peacemaker sows their seed (teaching about God), the fruit grows. That fruit is righteousness (in the lives of others). People committed to preserving peace must teach the Word of God peacefully to reap a harvest of righteousness. That good fruit will not come if teachers sow it in words and ways that inflame and antagonize people. Righteousness will grow only in a climate of peace.

Summary of chapter 3: The only One who can control our tongues is God. The only One who can give us wisdom is God. We are completely dependent on Him for wisdom, controlling our tongues, dealing with trials, being impartial, etc.

Application: Our world/military doesn't value humility, gentleness, or submissiveness. Can we carry these character traits into the wardroom setting? Can we lead from a position of humility? Yes! That's the way God designed it. God is in control. He will honor your humility. Servant leadership takes a while, and is not noticed at first. You don't have to sacrifice your personality. The charismatic guy gets all the attention initially. But over time people respond favorable to humility.

What has James already said about getting wisdom? James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Consider 1 Corinthians 1:20-25 *"Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe....We preach Christ crucified....For the foolishness of God is wiser than humanity's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."*

Questions to ponder:

- Do I respect the proud person of the world more than the humble believer in the Lord Jesus?
- Do I serve the Lord without caring who gets the credit?
- Do I sometimes use questionable means in order to get good results?
- Am I guilty of flattery in order to influence people?
- Do I harbor jealousy and resentment in my heart?

- Do I resort to sarcasm and unkind remarks?
- Am I pure in thought, in speech, and in deed?

James 3:13-18 - Drawing on the perspective of the Old Testament, James defines the wise person as one who knows how to live a righteous life, not one who grasps abstract ideas. In particular, a wise person has chosen humility in contrast to 'envy and selfish ambition.' Peace making (helping others get along) is a clear alternative to self aggrandizement. Worldly wisdom is contrasted with that which comes down from heaven. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

#### Discussion Questions:

- We are surrounded by self help books, and descriptions of how to get ahead in the world. The 'humility that comes from wisdom' does not require putting ourselves down (being a doormat). Rather it acts in strength, lifting up someone else. Describe a person you know who displays such humble wisdom.
- For you, what are the most seductive voices of worldly wisdom? Where do you turn to discover the 'wisdom that comes down from heaven'?
- A peacemaker acknowledges real conflict and doesn't settle for a false pretense of getting along. He or she enters into the hostility—solving problems and helping combatants see the best in each other. What qualities make someone an effective peacemaker?

James 4:2-3; How can we get what we want? Ask God. Why don't we get what we want? We ask with wrong, selfish motives. The purpose of prayer is not to persuade a reluctant God that I need something. The purpose of prayer is to align my will with His, acknowledge my total dependence on Him, and change my heart.

How do we get rid of friendship with the world and get ourselves right with God? In verses 7-10 James tells us to do several practical things to remedy our situation:

- Submit to God. This is the heart of the issue: our willingness to confess Jesus as Lord of our lives, acknowledge our sinfulness and weakness, and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to His control.
- Resist the devil. When we submit to God and actively resist the devil, the promise is that he will flee from us. That's great news!
- Come near to God. And He will come near to you. How amazing that our Creator wants close fellowship with us!
- Wash your hands and purify your hearts. We need to admit that we are sinners and double-minded. When David was confronted with his sin, he wrote a powerful prayer we know as Psalm 51. David said, "Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin....Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow....Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me....A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."
- Grieve, mourn, and wail. (change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom) We need to have true repentance over our sin. Don't merely admit it, grieve over it.
- Be humble before the Lord. When we truly realize Who God is and who we are, we are flooded with true humility. Pride comes from refusing to recognize God in His rightful place

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise You for the truth of Your Word, and thank You for those that You put in my path, to teach me the glorious gospel of Christ. I pray that I may grow in grace, walk in spirit and truth, mature in the faith, and be ready and willing to tell others the hope that I have in You. Help me to be faithful in all I say and do, and give me opportunities to tell others about Jesus, and the joy of our salvation. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/James/3>

**Talking to Our Heavenly Father - *If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.***  
**You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You**

- Our loving condolences and sincerest sympathies are extended to Mr. Tom Calenberg on the passing of his wife, Ms. Christine A. Calenberg. A Mass of Christian Burial will be at held at 1:00PM on Monday, September 20, 2021 at

St. Frances Cabrini (1025 S. 7th Ave. West Bend, WI 53095). Visitation will be at church on Monday, September 20th from 10:00AM until 12:45PM. Cards and notes of comfort can be mailed to: Mr. Tom Calenberg, 617 South 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095

- We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Ms. Jeanne Schacht on the passing of her sister-in-law, Ms. Margaret Rose “Peggy” Schmidt. Our prayers and support are extended to Ms. Jeanne and the Schmidt family. Card and notes for condolences can be mailed to Ms. Jeanne at: 4017 W. Hemlock St., Milwaukee, WI 53209
- Ms. Marilyn Liepert, recovering from a fall. The family ask for your continued prayers of healing and renewing of strength. Ms. Marilyn Liepert, 656 Wolcott St. West Bend WI 53090
- Mr. Ethan Schnell, Ms. Dot Edison’s daughter-in-law’s nephew. Ethan has gone through his last chemotherapy. He is doing well and hopes future tests will reveal he has been cured. Continue to keep him in your prayers. We give God thanks and praise for miraculous healing. Ethan’s wife is doing well. Cards and notes of continued prayer and encouragement can be mailed to: Ethan Schnell, 500 Melrose Street, Morgan Town West Virginia 26505
- Fifth Avenue UMC, thank you for your unceasing prayers for Ms. Irina Johnson, daughter (in-law) of Ms. Barb Johnson. Ms. Irina had surgery on 16 September 2021. The procedure as of this date went well. We will continue our journey with her and her family as God see her through healing and restoration. Cards and notes (which are needed and welcomed) of healing, strength and comfort can be mailed C/O Ms. Barb Johnson, Ms. Irina Johnson, 190 Mayer Street, West Bend, WI 53090
- Mr. Ted Meilahn, return of his strength and courage as he continues to have medical concerns; Cards and notes of care and prayer can be mailed to: 1085 Fondu du Lac Ave., Box 23, Kewaskum, WI 53040
- Our deepest and warmest comforts to the family of Ms. Julia Stettler, on her passing, 16 August 2021. Cards and notes of sympathies and comfort can be sent to Mr. Don Stettler, 107 Cedar Ridge Dr. #N313, West Bend, WI 53095
- Ms. Trisha Funke, daughter of Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel. Cards of encouragement and prayers for miraculous healing can be sent to her parents. Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel, 629 Highland View Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- Mr. Roger Sacia, is requesting prayers for healing; Mrs. Nobi Sacia words of encouragement and prayers for healing. Mr. Roger and Ms. Nobi have permanently relocated to Madison with their daughter. Their new address is: 1626 Jefferson Street, Madison WI 53711
- Mr. William (Bill) & Mrs. Ginger Hornung would love to hear from you! Cards or notes of encouragement or “just thinking of you” can be mailed to: W194N16744 Eagle Dr. Room 3, Jackson, WI 53037
- Prayers of encouragement and steadfastness for Ms. Jennifer Cechvala, as she beings her Spiritual Guidance ministry ~ a place to ...breathe, be still, become. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. UMC (lower level of the church in the former children’s library area).
- Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, continued healing; [alankempf33@gmail.com](mailto:alankempf33@gmail.com); 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.
- Fifth Avenue UMC’s Laity, Accountable Leadership Board, Pastor & Bro. Martin – Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.
- Bro. Bob Krell, continued prayer for healing; 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- Ms. Nancy Whitson, healing and strength; 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095

*"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." 3 John 1:2*

Prayer: I bless you, Lord, for bringing me to this day – thank you for protecting my life and giving me what I need. Be with me, Lord, as I take up my daily tasks – help me to remember that it is in your world I live and work. You have called me to serve you responsibly in the world – help me to build a just, Christian society. Stay with me and with everyone I meet this day – let me give your joy and your peace to the world. King of heaven and earth, Lord God, rule over my heart and body this day. Sanctify me, and guide my every thought, word and deed according to your wisdom from above, so that now and forever your grace may free and save me. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. “God I Look to You “ Jenn Johnson (Bethel Church) (Adapted)

**Your humble Pastor & Servant Leaders,**

**Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin**