

Lessons From James

Heavenly Wisdom

(Ja 3:13-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From James."
 - a. Things to remember...
 - i. Context: James is writing to Jewish Christians that are outside of the Palestine area.
 - ii. Content: James is writing to Christians that are spiritually immature and of need of maturing in many different areas, mostly dealing with the need to "do the work of the Lord."
3. Wisdom is the theme of this section.
 - a. Wisdom is often confused with knowledge however they cannot be synonymies.
 - i. Wisdom is something, as we have seen, that we can pray for.
 1. **Ja 1:5** "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."¹
 - ii. Notice God will give wisdom to those that are lacking and asking.
 1. Knowledge is not something God gives us through prayer it is something He has already given us in His Word.
 - a. **I Co 2:16** "For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."
 - b. Thus wisdom is the application of the knowledge we have gained, or an understanding of the knowledge we have gained seen in our use of that knowledge.
4. What we find in our text this morning is James, inspired by God (**II Ti 2:16-17**), explaining the difference between godly wisdom and earthly wisdom as pertaining to works.
 - a. Notice James shifts from the need of works (**Ja 2:24**) to the attitude behind those works in especially dealing with those that are teachers (**Ja 3:1**).
 - i. **Ja 3:13** "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom."
 - ii. **Ja 3:13** "Are any of you wise and understanding? You should show it by living a good life. Wise people aren't proud when they do good works." (NIRV)
 - b. A persons conduct reflects who their master is thusly.
 - i. As man put, we are all like cars moving along at pretty good pace. There are things in this life that are going to happen to us both good and bad. They question though is this, "Who is driving you...the Bible tells us that there are only two possible drivers for our cars. James identifies them in the verses of our text. One driver is false wisdom, and the other is true wisdom." (Ellsworth, R. (2009). Opening up James (117). Leominster: Day One Publications.)
5. With that in mind let us examine God's Word here in **Ja 3:13-18**.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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I. Wisdom From This Old World

- A. Teachers working from bitter jealousy and selfish ambition
 1. Bitter jealousy
 - i. The word jealousy here "ζήλος" or "zelos" means zeal either in a positive or a negative sense. The context determines which it is.
 - ii. The word bitter here "πικρός" or "pikros" means pungent or bitter.
 - a. Hence this person has a pungent zeal.
 2. Selfish ambition
 - i. The word selfish ambition here "ἐριθεία" or "eritheia" "denotes "ambition, self-seeking, rivalry," self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes "party-making." It is derived, not from eris, "strife," but from erithos, "a hireling"; hence the meaning of "seeking to win followers,"" (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (220). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 3. Thus we find one with a pungent zeal who selfishly seeks people to follow him, rather than God.
- B. Teachers who are like above are not to boast about it and lie against the truth
 1. Boast
 - i. The word boast here "κατακαυχάομαι" or "kata-kauch-aomai" means "to glory against, to exult over, to boast one's self to the injury of (a person or a thing)" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (331). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 2. Lie against the truth
 - i. This is the idea of going against truth.
 3. So we find one that builds himself up at the expense of others thus going against truth.
- C. Teachers of earthly wisdom fall short
 1. Teachers are to have zeal but not bitter zeal.
 - i. **Pr 23:17** "Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day"
 - ii. **Je 20:9** "Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not."
 2. Teachers are to have ambition (win others to Christ) but not selfish ambition.
 - i. **Ro 9:3** "For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (ESV)
 - ii. Paul wanted the Jews in a relationship with God so much and loved them so much that he was willing to give his soul up if possible.

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3. Teachers who are have pungent zeal and want people to follow them more than God are going to fall into this idea that they are great (boasting) and that will lead to false teaching even if ever so slightly.
 - i. Why because their attitude towards God's Word is skewed.
 - ii. "Falsehood is not merely the hurt of some abstract virtue, or bare rule of right and wrong, but a direct blow at the living Truth (Jn 14:6) ... All faintest shades of falsehood tend to the dark one of a fresh betrayal of the Son of man. No class of persons is any more in constant danger of falling short in this category than is the group of teachers and preachers of religious truth. Such persons are accustomed to speaking and having their words accepted; and their attitude tends to become like that mentioned by Shakespeare: I am Sir Oracle, And when I open my lips, let no dog bark." (from Coffman's Bible Commentary, Copyright © 1971-1993 by ACU Press, Abilene Christian University. All rights reserved.)
- D. Teachers who find wisdom from this old world are in a world of hurt
 1. Because wisdom from the world is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.
 - i. It doesn't come from God but rather originated from the devil and manifested itself through man.
 2. There is nothing good that comes from earthly wisdom.
 - i. Why because it breeds "disorder and every vile passion" (**Ja 3:16**).
 - a. It is unstable moving with culture.
 - b. Because such it results in man following man rather than God and this leads to sin every time.
 1. **Je 10:23** "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."

II. Wisdom From Heaven Above

- A. Wisdom from heaven above has certain characteristics
 1. First and foremost it is pure.
 - i. Everything from God is pure ie free from sin especially His Word.
 - a. **Pr 30:5** "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."
 - ii. Thus godly wisdom is free from worldly lusts.
 2. Second peaceable.
 - i. God has always sought peace ie a harmonious relationship between men.
 - a. **I Co 7:15** "But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. **But God has called us to peace.**" (emphasis mine)
 - b. "has called" is in the perfect tense meaning something done in that past and continued in the present, thus God has called in the past for us to be at peace with one another and continues to the present to do so.
 - ii. Thus godly wisdom will show itself to produce peace.

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3. Third gentle.
 - i. God is the antithesis of gentle or patient.
 - a. **II Pt 3:9** "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
 - ii. Godly wisdom therefore produces patients.
4. Fourth open to reason or reasonable.
 - i. God is one that is never disobedient and thus perfect in all that He does.
 - a. **II Sa 22:31** "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him." (NIV84)
 - ii. Those that use godly wisdom will be "ready to obey" the perfect God of heaven.
5. Fifth full of mercy.
 - i. God who is merciful is one that does not give us what we deserve when we deserve it. He has mercy on us allowing repentance.
 - a. **Dt 4:31** "(for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."
 - ii. Godly wisdom is one full of mercy.
6. Sixth full of good fruits.
 - i. There is no one who has produced more fruit than our God. He is full of good fruits.
 - a. **Dt 32:7** "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you"
 - ii. Wisdom from above produces good fruit continuously.
7. Seventh impartial.
 - i. God is not one that judges on anything other than deeds, He is without partiality.
 - a. **Ro 2:11** "For there is no partiality with God."
 - ii. As such godly wisdom will not be based in distinguishing on anything other than spiritual matters.
8. Eighth sincere or without hypocrisy.
 - i. God is always free from hypocrisy and thus sincere.
 - a. **Ti 1:2** "in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began"
 - ii. Wisdom from heaven above is free from hypocrisy. It is sincere in its actions.

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- B. Teachers who practice wisdom from above
 - 1. Teachers must strive to be driving by the wisdom that is from above.
 - i. God has given us the measuring stick to see if those teaching measure up.
 - 2. One fruit sums up wisdom and is found throughout all the standards given that is peace.
 - i. Because wisdom is pure ie from God it manifests itself in peace and that peaceable characteristic produces each subsequent fruit.
 - a. **Ro 12:18** "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

CONCLUSION

- 1. The sum of this section in James is thus teachers must strive to be driven by wisdom from above and guard against wisdom from this old world.
 - a. Ellsworth put it as such, "The other side of the coin is this: with every opportunity, there is a danger. The danger is that we who know the Lord will not seize the opportunities to demonstrate divine wisdom, but will rather reflect worldly wisdom. Because that danger is always very present and real, we must each day pray, 'Lord, let me this day be driven by your wisdom.'" (Ellsworth, R. (2009). Opening up James (120–121). Leominster: Day One Publications.)
- 2. Question: "Am I seeking to use godly wisdom with every aspect of my life?"
 - a. If so continue therein.
 - b. If not why not?
- 3. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**