

**"True Faith and Wisdom"****James 3:13-18****Part 1**

**Introduction:** Today in our study of the book of James we have come to 3:13-18. In this section James is going to discuss the subject of "wisdom". **This is another test of true saving faith.** In this section James is going to present the 2 different kinds of "wisdom". He will present Godly "wisdom" and then describe its characteristics. Then James will present human "wisdom" with its characteristics.

To start with today I want to consider some of what the Old Testament says about wisdom. The reason we need to do this is because James only uses 6 verses here to talk about wisdom. So what we need to keep in mind is that James is writing to Jewish believers and they would have known the Old Testament and the teachings found in the Old Testament concerning wisdom.

**The first thing I want to do this morning is explain the difference between knowledge and wisdom. The 2 are not the same.** You can have a list of college degrees a mile long. You can read a book a day. You can consider yourself a walking encyclopedia and still lack wisdom. Here is the difference:

***"Wisdom is the ability to put knowledge into practice."***

So when James speaks of wisdom he is not talking about gaining more knowledge but he is talking about exercising the knowledge which we have.

Now I want to take you on a journey through the Old Testament today to lay a foundation which will help us to understand what James says in this passage.

**I. The Value of Wisdom**

We need to turn to Proverbs 3 to see the value of wisdom.

**Notice Proverbs 3:13**

There are a couple of points to see from this verse.

- a. **Wisdom and happiness are connected.**

This helps us to see the value of wisdom right up front. The world today is searching for happiness and contentment but in all the wrong places. From this verse we can see that the happiness which everyone is looking for is connected to wisdom.

- b. **The understanding spoken of here is the ability to have insight into a situation.**  
Wisdom and understanding go hand in hand.

#### **Notice Proverbs 3:14-15**

The word "merchandise" is means "profit". The profits or the benefits of wisdom far outweigh the profit of fine silver and fine gold.

This is exactly why it is so important that we teach our children to seek out wisdom. The "stuff" of this world will not carry anyone through a trial or a storm but the wisdom will.

#### **Notice Proverbs 3:16**

There are 2 blessings listed here that come with wisdom.

1. There is length of days. This means that when a person has wisdom the choices they make are wise choices which can keep us out of harms ways. Those who lack wisdom are prone to poor choices which can actually can a person to leave this world before their appointed time.
2. The second blessing is riches and honor. This is not worldly riches. Let me show you another verse.

#### **Proverbs 8:18**

*<sup>18</sup> Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.*

This is wisdom speaking and wisdom says the riches are durable riches. These are not riches that money can buy. They are spiritual riches and they endure through the most difficult times.

#### **Notice Proverbs 3:17**

The word "pleasantness" means "delightfulness". Her paths are the ways of peace.

#### **Notice Proverbs 3:18**

True joy comes to those who have wisdom.

Now Solomon gives us an illustration of how wisdom works.

**Notice Proverbs 3:19-20**

God created the world in wisdom and in His wisdom He has set the order of this world. In other words it is the wisdom of God that keeps our universe in order and operating perfectly.

The idea is that when we exercise wisdom in our lives there will be order.

This passage shows us the value of wisdom. This passage alone should make us desire to possess the wisdom spoken of here.

**II. The Source of Wisdom**

Now after looking at the value of wisdom it makes me ask a question:

**1. "How does a person attain this wisdom?"**

Turn in your Bibles now to the book of Job chapter 28.

**Notice Job 28:12-22**

The main point from these verses is that man cannot discover wisdom on his own and he cannot purchase wisdom with gold or silver.

**Notice Job 28:23-27**

Now here in these verses we see that God is the SOURCE of wisdom. It has been with God for all eternity past. Wisdom is of God.

**Notice Job 28:28**

Here is the key verse in this passage. Job tells us that the FEAR OF THE LORD IS WISDOM and to depart from evil is understanding.

But that raises another question:

**2. "What does it mean to fear the Lord?"**

If we can answer this question then we can understand how it is that we can obtain Godly wisdom.

Now listen to what I am about to say.

The word "FEAR" speaks of a "REVERANCE for GOD" or we could say that it is a "REVERENTIAL TRUST IN GOD".

It does not mean "to live in panic". That is not the Biblical meaning of "fearing the Lord".

If we do a search through the Scriptures we can see something very interesting and that is this, the phrase "Fear of the Lord" is often used to describe those who are saved.

Let me show you some verses that will help us to see this.

**Psalm 111:10**

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

Here we see that those who fear the Lord are those who are obedient to His commandments. If you remember back a while ago we talked about how "obedience to God's Word" is a sign of salvation.

**Proverbs 8:13**

*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

**Proverbs 10:27**

*The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened*

Here in this verse those who fear the Lord are contrasted with the wicked.

**Proverbs 14:26**

*In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*

Here we see that those who fear the Lord are those who are God's children.

**Proverbs 16:6**

*By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

This is also seen in the personal lives of Biblical characters.

**Job 1:1**

*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

**Acts 10:1-2**

*There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,*

*<sup>2</sup> A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

So let me pull all of this together and make a point which we all need to understand.

Godly wisdom comes from a personal relationship with the Lord. This really makes sense because God is the source of wisdom and the Bible is clear that man cannot find wisdom on his own.

James knew this and that is the very reason why he can place it in his letter in the midst of the tests of true saving faith. He has pointed to several tests:

- a. The test of trials.
- b. The test of temptation.
- c. The test of obedience.
- d. The test of discrimination.
- e. The test of righteous works.
- f. The test of the tongue.
- g. The test of wisdom.

We will see this next week.

**Conclusion:**

Now let me go back to the value of wisdom. Its value far exceeds diamonds, gold, silver, and rubies. You need this wisdom in this world. There are many choices that face you and you need the wisdom of God. To be straight forward with you, you need Jesus Christ. He will connect you to an endless supply of wisdom.