

**"True Faith and Wisdom"**

**James 3:13-18**

**Part 3**

**Introduction:** This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> week in James 3:13-18 and today we shall finish this section. In this section James is dealing with the subject of wisdom. James uses wisdom for a test of true saving faith in this text. As we have made our way through the book of James we have seen several tests of true saving faith.

1. Trials
2. Temptation
3. Obedience to God's Word
4. Discrimination
5. Works
6. Tongue

Then in the section we are in James uses wisdom as a test of true saving faith.

Now in our look at this passage so far we have seen several points about wisdom.

**A. The source of wisdom.**

This is really a foundational point in understanding the section which we are in. True wisdom can only be found in God. Let me show you what I mean.

**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.

**Job 28:20-23, 28**

<sup>20</sup> Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

<sup>21</sup> Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

<sup>22</sup> Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

<sup>23</sup> God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

<sup>28</sup> And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Now we talked about what it means to fear the Lord. It means to have a reverential trust in Him which is another way of describing saving faith.

The Bible describes people who are saved as those who fear the Lord.

#### **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 in order for a person to have Godly wisdom they need to have a relationship with God. It is IMPOSSIBLE to possess Godly wisdom apart from salvation. That is exactly why James uses wisdom as a test of true saving faith.

Let me review what we looked at last week.

### **I. The Works of Wisdom**

#### **Notice James 3:13**

This verse sets the stage for the verses that will follow in this section. James asks a question that I am sure many would raise their hand to.

James then answers his own question. He says the one who is wise will not need to say a word about his wisdom because the wisdom will manifest itself in 2 ways:

1. Through a good lifestyle.
2. Through a humble spirit.

The point which James is making here is that the person who possesses the wisdom of God will manifest that wisdom in a quiet humble lifestyle.

The word "meekness" does not mean weakness but it refers to power under control. In other words the person who is saved will have Godly wisdom and the Godly wisdom will cause the person to live a life of self control.

James then goes on to describe worldly wisdom.

## II. Worldly Wisdom

### Notice James 3:14-15

He uses 2 terms here to describe worldly wisdom:

#### 1. Bitter envying

To envy is to desire something someone else has and it is also a desire to see them loose what they have. It is a desire to always grab onto more and to be bitter when someone else is blessed in their life.

#### 2. Strife

The word "strife" here is a very interesting word. It means to have "*a desire to put one's self forward*". The word was often used of politics. It was used to describe a person who was seeking a political office by an unfair means.

James went on to say this wisdom was of the world. He tells us it is:

- a. **Earthly**-From this world.
- b. **Sensual**-Appealing to the flesh or sin nature.
- c. **Devilish**-It is a characteristic of the demonic world.

### Notice James 3:16

This is a connective and shows that this wisdom is from the world because it is a wisdom that causes confusion and evil works.

The word "*confusion*" means "*disorder and instability*".

## III. Godly Wisdom

### Notice James 3:17

Here James is going to give us the description of Godly wisdom. James is going to point out 8 ways that Godly wisdom will manifest itself in our lives.

Now as we look at these it is very important to notice 2 words here that describe a certain order.

1. The word "first".
2. The word "then".

These 2 words place the characteristics of Godly wisdom in 2 categories.

1. **The first category is about you and me personally.**
2. **The second category deals with all those who we encounter in life.**

Let us look at the characteristics of Godly wisdom:

- a. **Godly wisdom is FIRST pure.**

This is category #1. This deals with you and me in our personal lives.

Now we must keep this in context if we are going to understand what it is that James is saying here. The first word of this verse introduces a contrast so we must look at this word within the contrast. The contrast is between the characteristics of worldly wisdom and Godly wisdom.

Worldly wisdom is motivated by self gain. It is all about grabbing as much as it can. It is bitter when someone else is blessed and it lusts after more and more. It will do whatever is required to achieve personal gain. With worldly wisdom there are no rules and there are no boundaries. The bottom line is that worldly wisdom is focused upon self gratification and it will do whatever is needed to achieve its goal.

Now Godly wisdom is just the opposite. **Godly wisdom has pure motives.** This means it is not driven by the bitter envy, self promotion, or personal gain. When Godly wisdom does something for someone else it is done because of love and the desire to be of help.

This word PURE is also used to describe our Lord.

### 1 John 3:2-3

<sup>2</sup> *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

<sup>3</sup> *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Jesus had perfectly pure motives when He walked this earth. He had come here for the purpose of providing eternal life to us. Jesus did not have hidden motives. He was not motivated by personal gain when He came here and went to the cross. He was motivated by love for you and me.

#### **Isaiah 53:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

<sup>5</sup> *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

<sup>6</sup> *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Jesus had absolutely pure motives when He came to this earth. Now since the Spirit of God indwells us we should also manifest the very same motives.

So the first point is that Godly wisdom will produce pure motives within the believer.

#### **b. Godly wisdom is THEN peaceable.**

#### **Notice James 3:17**

This means that the person who possesses Godly wisdom loves peace. They are **not** people who enjoy seeing trouble stirred up but instead they are people who will do all they can to be sure that battles are avoided. Those with Godly wisdom will be sure to avoid confusion and disorder which is the opposite of James 3:16.

If you remember when we started this letter I told you that James had many parallels with the Sermon on the Mount. Let me show you something from Matthew 5.

#### **Matthew 5:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

<sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

#### **c. Godly wisdom is gentle.**

The word "gentle" here is a beautiful word. It refers to someone who is willing to surrender and to give up all of their rights. Those who possess **WORLDLY** wisdom are quick to claim their rights. They are quick to drag someone into court to bring them under a law suit. But those with **Godly** wisdom are the opposite. Let me show you a picture.

**Matthew 5:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

<sup>39</sup> *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

<sup>40</sup> *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

<sup>41</sup> *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

<sup>42</sup> *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

**d. Godly wisdom is easy to be entreated.**

This refers to a person who is "easily persuaded". Now don't think this means that they are easily deceived. That is not the meaning. This person is teachable. They set aside stubbornness are quick to yield to the truth when it is presented to them. This person is tender to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of God stirs their heart they are quick to soften and surrender.

**Genesis 13:5-9**

<sup>5</sup> *And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.*

<sup>6</sup> *And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*

<sup>7</sup> *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

<sup>8</sup> *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

<sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

**e. Godly wisdom full of mercy.**

Mercy is not handing out what is deserved. God showed mercy to us by not sending us to hell because that is what we deserve. This person is a forgiving person. It does not mean they are not firm on sin but when forgiveness is needed this person is quick to grant it.

The opposite would be someone who constantly seeks to beat others down with the mistakes they have made.

**f. Godly wisdom produces good fruits.**

**g. Godly wisdom is without partiality.**

It treats everyone the same.

**h. Godly wisdom is without hypocrisy.**

It is not phony but it is genuine.

**Conclusion:**

**Notice James 3:18**

This is the results of Godly wisdom. It produces FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. But notice the verse closely. It SOWS the fruits. That means those who possess Godly wisdom are farmers. When we are controlled by the Spirit we are sowing fruits of righteousness in peace. You know what that means? There will be fruit which comes from what we sow for you see the idea here is that what we sow into the lives of other people will grow.