

Get Wisdom
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- Imagine a seminar entitled: *“How To Spot Godly Wisdom In Yourself and Others.”*
- The seminar promises: *“You’ll learn to discern the difference between Godly wisdom; earthly knowledge; and demonic deception.”*
- **Would you sign up for such a seminar?** You just did by showing up for class this week!
- In the last half of James chapter three, the half-brother of Jesus tells us how to discern the difference between natural knowledge; demonic deception; and Godly wisdom from above.

James 3:13–18 (ESV)

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- Verse thirteen begins with a rhetorical question to make us think: “Who is wise and understanding among you?” Who do you perceive as wise? Is it true wisdom from God?
- Then James basically says: Let’s see it! *“By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”* **What does that description say about the conduct of someone who has Godly wisdom? What is “meekness?” How is it not “weakness?” Other translations? How is it counter to how the world spots someone with wisdom?**
- Pastor Johnny writes: “actions” and “attitudes” demonstrate whether wisdom is present.
- Attitudes and actions are an indication of the condition of the person’s heart.
- He says, *“If wisdom is going to operate in the believer’s life, then he or she must begin with a cleansed vessel.”*
- In verses fourteen through sixteen, before he shows us the signs of Godly wisdom, James shows us the symptoms of an absence of Godly wisdom. Let’s explore each “symptom.”
- **Verse fourteen: What does bitter jealousy look like in a person (consider both words)?**
- Pastor Johnny writes: *“Desiring the good (for) one’s brother or sister is replaced by desiring destruction.”* You are so jealous of their success, you want to see them fail. The sin is envy.
- He points back to the Garden of Eden and Eve’s envy of the knowledge of good and evil.
- **What is “selfish ambition?”** The Greek word gives a picture of a self-interested politician.
- **What command does James give in verse fourteen? What does boasting usually include?** If someone is boasting about how wise they are, it’s probably not Godly wisdom.

Warren Wiersbe:

“When God’s wisdom is at work, there is a sense of humility and submission, and you want God to get all the glory. You have no desire to compare yourself with any other Christian, because you see only Christ—and compared with Him, all of us still have a long way to go!”

- Verse fifteen calls it for what it really is! *“This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.”* Let’s look at the progression of those three terms.
- **What does earthly mean? Is that necessarily bad? The ESV says “unspiritual,” other translations? What does that mean?** Now James gets very strong: DEMONIC.

- To summarize: When those who claim to be wise display a lack of humility; selfish ambition; boasting; and self promotion; it's not wisdom from God. It's the working of Satan.
- Verse sixteen: **How does verse sixteen say you can predict demonic wisdom?**
- This truth applies to family, to work, anywhere. But, James was writing particularly to the church. **Have you ever seen this play out in a church setting? What was it like?**

A professing believer who goes around scheming behind the scenes may be good at earthly politics, but they don't possess GODLY WISDOM. There is no such thing as a Spiritual schemer!

- Now we know how to spot wisdom that is NOT from God, and even the schemings of Satan.
- Verses seventeen and eighteen teach us to discern when GODLY WISDOM is present.
- Some of these are fairly obvious, but let's look at each and share any thoughts we have:
- Godly wisdom is...
 - Pure - **What does that mean?**
 - Peaceable - **How does that apply to using wisdom?**
 - Gentle - **How does that fit in?**
 - Open to reason - **What does that look like when wisdom is being practiced?**
 - Full of mercy - **What about that one?**
 - **Good fruits?**
 - **Impartial?**
 - **Sincere?**
- Idea: When a group of Christ followers are seeking wisdom on a subject, someone ought to pull out verse seventeen and read it to the group to set the tone of the discussion!
- Verse eighteen tells us what Godly wisdom leads to: "a harvest of righteousness."
- **How does it say we get that kind of "crop?" What do you think that means?**
- Think of someone who genuinely seemed to possess Godly wisdom. **What was their demeanor like?**

Proverbs 3:13 tells us...

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; (NKJV)

So, What's the Takeaway?

- How do we spot Godly wisdom either in others or in ourself? If you want to discern if that wisdom is from God, turn to this passage and measure what you see.
- Is there humility, or bitter jealousy and selfish ambition? Are we relying only on earthly common sense and not asking God for supernatural wisdom? Is there self promotion or does God get the glory? Is there disorder? Or do we sense purity of motives; peaceable discussions; gentle comments; reasonableness without compromise; showing mercy to others; sincerity; impartiality? Does the way we seek wisdom feel like a harvest of righteousness or a patch of briars?
- Consider this: If an unbeliever observed Christians working to find wisdom on a situation, would they be amazed at how peacefully and reasonably it happens; or made cynical because the process was no different than the rest of the world?
- How do we get true Godly wisdom? Oh, we covered that in James 1:5...ask God.