

## Wise and Understanding; James 3:13-18

### I. Who?

- A. James opens this thought with a question
- B. This should be a rhetorical question, but I doubt it is
- C. But if James asks his readers this question, maybe we should ask ourselves
- D. Understanding - knowledgeable in a way that makes one effectual in the exercise of such knowledge, expert, learned, understanding
- E. Combined with the word "wisdom" we come up with: "the expert in wisdom will be verified by his/her quality of performance"

### II. Performance

- A. James 3:13; Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.
- B. Works shown in the meekness of wisdom
- C. Meekness - not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self importance
- D. Matthew 5:14-16; 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- E. 1 Peter 2:12; Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
- F. Philanthropy - the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.
- G. The problem with philanthropy is that it only addresses the physical needs not the spiritual (people need more than just money)
- H. We do good works to glorify the Heavenly Father and to let people know about the love that He has for us shown through His Son, Jesus the Christ

### III. False to the Truth

- A. James 3:14-16; 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.
- B. Bitter Jealousy
  - 1. Jealousy - intense negative feelings over another's success or achievements
  - 2. Bitter - hostile
  - 3. There is nothing stopping us from behaving in a Godly manner so there is no reason to be jealous of anyone else's achievements
  - 4. That would mean we are being selfish and want their success for ourselves (instead of for God's glory)
  - 5. God knows us intimately; whether or not we are the person with 5 talents, 2 talents or 1 talent (Matthew 25:15-28)
  - 6. We, who have 1 talent, should not be jealous of the ones who have 5
  - 7. We should use our 1 talent as often as we can and to the best of our ability
  - 8. To be jealous of those others would be false to the truth
- C. Selfish Ambition
  - 1. Disputes or outbreaks of selfishness
  - 2. Root: Used by Aristotle in 339 B.C. as in self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means

3. Doing God's work to achieve your own glory
4. Philippians 2:3; Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
5. But this is exactly opposite what people will tell you
  - a) Be successful for YOURSELF
  - b) Whatever makes YOU happy
  - c) You have to take care of YOU
  - d) That, my friends, is selfish ambition!
6. We shouldn't be working in the Kingdom for our own glory either
  - a) Malachi 3:6–12; 6 “For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 7 From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ 8 Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.
  - b) We rob God and receive man's praise as our reward
  - c) Matthew 6:2–4; 2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
7. “The unspirituality of worldly management, if not reigned by the wisdom from above, will dominate the church and cause it to be led into a myriad of evils”
8. To do things out of our own selfish ambition is to be false to the truth

D. Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are no way to live as a Christian

IV. Wisdom from Above

- A. James 3:17–18; 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.
- B. Qualities of this wisdom
  1. Pure - free from sin, holy, sacred, chaste
  2. Peaceable - harmonious relationship
  3. Gentle - Not insisting on every right or letter of the law, lenient
  4. Open to reason - ready to obey, obedient
  5. Full of mercy - kindness or concern for someone in need, compassion
  6. Full of good fruits - putting your kindness or concern into action, taking care of a person's needs
  7. Impartial and sincere - transparent genuineness; a theatrical term used of one who never played a part for personal gain
- C. Righteousness sown in peace
  1. The harvest is righteousness

2. We are the sowers
  3. The emphasis is on us, the givers
  4. We should be giving, not receiving!
- D. "Believers are to sow peaceable deeds that will produce a harvest of righteousness."
  - E. "The use of the words "produce" or "a harvest" in this connection is a marvelous image of the fruitfulness of a life of wisdom." New American Commentary
- V. Wise and Understanding
- A. We Must be experts in wisdom
  - B. As seen in our deeds of righteousness