

So You Think You're Wise **James 3:13-18 (NKJV)**

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

In our day we have all sorts of people who claim to have wisdom.

Medical wisdom, political wisdom, economic wisdom financial wisdom and on and on it goes.

And because they have wisdom we are to trust them.

Well James has a bit to say about wisdom this morning for us.

First he tells us that if or since we lack wisdom, let us ask it of God.

James 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.

God is the source of all wisdom. We see it all around us as we look into His creation.

Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is the repository of all wisdom.

Colossians 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

But yet Jesus was so humble, so meek.

We glorify and praise God for our salvation but not by a mighty show of force over His enemies.

But by sending Jesus to die in meekness that He might deliver us from all judgment and condemnation.

In the short of it what James is telling us here is that the wisdom that comes from God is not boastful or condescending.

Instead the wisdom that comes from God is meek.

So there you have it in a nutshell so if you fall asleep at least you have the basics.

But let us see what James is telling us here.

- I. A message to the wise. "Who is the wise"
 - A. He not asking for a show of hands but he is going to tell them how they can know if they have the true wisdom or not.
 - B. Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

1. If one is truly wise, he will conduct his life in a certain way.
2. Many man has great advice to give out but they live like a fool.
3. Who would listen to such a person.
4. Would you go to a bankrupt financial adviser.
5. That's why I like fat doctors, they never want to put you on a diet.
6. So James is saying whoever among you is wise and understanding let them look to how the conduct their lives.
7. It kind of goes along with last week where he say the teacher needs to be living what he teaches.

C. In the meekness of wisdom.

1. That is a strange set of words.
2. I could find no other quote for those words in any literature unless it was referring to James 3:13
3. Does it seem that for the world that meekness has nothing to do with wisdom nor wisdom with meekness.
4. They seem to be polar opposites.
5. True wisdom is meek but knowledge makes us proud.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 8:1 We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.
6. But the idea is that true God given wisdom recognizes that that wisdom didn't come from you but from God.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who makes you differ [from another]? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive [it], why do you boast as if you had not received [it]?
7. And if you have wisdom that God did not give you then verse 15 is for you.

II. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

- A. That is the wisdom that the world offers.
- B. That is what most of the professors in college have.
- C. That is what most of the politicians have.
- D. I would suggest that you not listen to most of them.

III. The two types of wisdom contrasted.

- A. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.
 - 1. Worldly wisdom consists of envy
 - 2. Worldly wisdom consists of self-seeking
 - 3. Worldly wisdom results in confusion and every evil thing.
- B. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.
 - 1. The wisdom from above is first pure
 - 2. The wisdom from above is peaceable
 - 3. The wisdom from above is gentle
 - 4. The wisdom from above is willing to yield
 - 5. The wisdom from above is full of mercy and good fruits
 - 6. The wisdom from above is without partiality and without hypocrisy.

IV. We are known by our fruits.

- A. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

A preacher once received a letter with a pathetic story of a muddled and disordered life which ended: "It just beats me. A doctor of philosophy and unable to solve my own troubles!" It takes more than a friend of wisdom to help us in our troubles; it takes Wisdom personified, the Lord Jesus Himself. When everything goes wrong and troubles abound and the Christian can still go about his duties in life without revolting against God, against Wisdom, then he is possessed with this wonderful meekness of wisdom. *Ruth Peters, Bible Illustrations – Illustrations of Bible Truths, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "460. Meekness of Wisdom".*