

Personal Study

JAMES PART 7 FALSE WISDOM / TRUE WISDOM

"IN LIVING OUT OUR LIVES, WE CAN FOLLOW WORLDLY WISDOM THATS FALSE OR GODLY WISDOM THATS TRUE. WE MUST EXAMINE EVERY THOUGHT AND DEED BY THE TRUTH OF THE WORD AND NO OTHER STANDARD".

To re-watch this weeks message visit our website



James part 7.

Read and reflect on James 3:13-18

Introduction:

Have you ever done the **right thing** in the **wrong direction**? Here is what I mean: We can tell the truth but in a way that is selfish. We can evangelize but with wrong motives and ambitions. We can serve one another but with a heart full of pride. We can talk about important things but in a way that is divisive and damaging.

Simply put: The words or actions that we may choose to use may be good and true on the surface – but the motives behind them can be selfish, prideful, and even bitter.

In this installment of the book of James, James speaks to the direction of our lives. He gives us two options:

1. Our lives can be guided by False Wisdom
2. Our lives can be guided by Godly wisdom.

Here is the big idea: Eventually, our direction dictates our destination. We can either live into the direction of False Wisdom which leads to division and demise, or we can live into the direction of Godly wisdom which leads to life.

What is wisdom?

From the beginning, we must first define wisdom: Lets draw a key distinction here. Some of us may think of wisdom as something intellectual in nature. Someone who knows a lot about life, the world, good vs. evil, etc. While this is partially true, the Bible defines wisdom as something a bit deeper than “knowing”.

Simply put, the Biblical definition of wisdom is “applying what we know”. This has been the theme of James thus far. We know the Word, so we must live the Word. Wisdom is putting “feet” to our faith.

1. False Wisdom

Since James begins with defining what False Wisdom looks like, so will we. James gives two key descriptors here of the marks of a life lived under the pretense of false wisdom:

- Bitter Jealousy/Envy
- Selfish ambition

The mark of a life lived in the direction of false wisdom looks like a life where we put “me” at the center as opposed to Jesus.

Think about this: When we are the center of our lives, we are no longer free to love, serve, give, etc. in a way that brings glory to God, because we are always preoccupied with our desires. When our chief focus in life is to be “right”, served, satisfied, praised, etc. then we are living in the direction of false wisdom.

To take this a step further, we can say true things, and perform good actions, but the motives behind them can be selfish, bitter, angry, divisive, and damaging. As mentioned in the introduction, this is doing “right” things, in the wrong direction. This is the heart of false wisdom.

James tells us that this lifestyle of selfish ambition and bitter envy is what is natural to sinful people (**“earthly” vv. 15**). Apart from Jesus, this is the direction of our lives. We can fool ourselves into thinking that we are “spiritual” (**vv. 15**) for the “right” things we say or do. But if they are done with self-centered, idolatrous motives, then it is damaging and even “demonic” (**vv.15**).

James continues this idea in **verse 16**; the longer we live in the direction of false wisdom, motivated by selfish ambition, the fruit of our life will result in disorder and “every vile practice” (sinfulness).

2. True Wisdom (Godly Wisdom)

James then switches gears in verses **17-18** and juxtaposes false wisdom with true (Godly) wisdom.

The fruit of a life lived in the direction of Godly Wisdom places Jesus at the center of everything, as opposed to placing “me” at the center of everything. This allows us to be free to worship Jesus in every situation we may experience in our lives. The life of Godly Wisdom looks like:

- Pure**: Our motives underneath of our words and actions are not selfish, but selfless, God-honoring and loving.
- Peace**: Our aim is to be at peace with everyone, despite our differences or disagreements.
- Gentle**: When our motives are pure, our approach is gentle. When we have nothing to gain (selfishly), then we are free to love people well.
- Open to reason**: We have not perfected the Christian life. We are humble, and continuing to learn and receive correction.
- Mercy**: When facing conflict our first response is mercy instead of anger. The mercy we received flows toward other people.
- Impartial**: We do not value or show favoritism to some more than others.
- Sincere**: Our faith and our actions are genuine.

Personal Reflection:

When honestly examining both false and true wisdom, which side do you more closely align with? Our aim this week is to pray that we would be a people that exemplify the wisdom of Christ in everything that we say, think, and do.

Take some time to reflect on the following checklist questions in light of James 3:13-18.

A Wisdom Checklist

(1) ***Am I PURE in my motives and actions?*** Matthew 7:1-5/ James 1:27 & James 3:1/ Proverbs 9:10

(2) ***Am I looking for COMMON GROUND?*** Matthew 5:9/ Proverbs 17:19 & Proverbs 10:12

(3) ***Am I RESPECTFUL?***
Proverbs 16:21/ Daniel 1-6/ 2 Timothy 2:14-26/ Proverbs 11:12

(4) ***Am I TEACHABLE?***
James 1:19/ Proverbs 12:1/ Proverbs 18:2

(5) ***Am I MERCIFUL?***
1 Corinthians 13:5/ James 2:13/ Matthew 5:7 & Matthew 18:21-35

(6) ***Am I producing good FRUIT or just stirring up CONFLICT?*** Proverbs 9:7-8/ James 3:18/
Proverbs 16:26/ Proverbs 17:9

(7) ***Am I FAIR?***
James 2:1/ Leviticus 19:15/ Exodus 23:3

(8) ***Do I WALK my TALK?***
Matthew 7:1-5/ 1 John 1:6/ Proverbs 11:3

