



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

GODLY WISDOM: PART 5 JAMES 3:18
TO: COLORADO LEGISLATORS, SPOUSES AND THE GOVERNOR
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Dan File, PO Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235 dan.file@capitolcom.org Hm- 970.944.2551 Cell- 303.345.8830 Office- 970.944.1088 www.capitolcom.org

*Worldly wisdom is evidenced by jealousy, selfish ambition and pride. It is a wisdom rooted in Satan's lies rather than God's truth. James 3:14-16 describes a wisdom that's characterized by the world, the flesh and the devil. It stands in direct contrast to "wisdom that comes from above" characterized by humility and gentleness that's heavenly, spiritual and from God. James 3:17-18 reveals what **godly wisdom is and what it does**. Remember, true godly wisdom will affect the way we live.*

I. GODLY WISDOM: PART 1- JAMES 3:17-18

James 3:13-18: "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

In these verses from James 3:13-18, we see two kinds of wisdom contrasted. A distinct difference is revealed between a false, worldly wisdom and that of true godly wisdom that comes from above. Those who practice envy, possess a harsh zeal coupled with selfish ambition may seem to be speaking truth but their lives reveal a blatant denial of that truth. This is the character of the world; and the sad outcome of this worldly wisdom is disorder, an impure heart and unrighteousness.

And yet, there is a true godly wisdom that comes from above. The character of a wise person who possesses a wisdom from above will be consistent, stable, trustworthy, and transparent. Their life will overflow with words and works of good deeds. They will be willing to extend mercy giving what is needed rather than what is deserved. They will be ready to cooperate when a better way is shown, approachable and willing to listen. They will be equitable and fair, courteous and considerate, pursuing peace but never at the expense of purity. They are not given to anger and strife, dissention and dispute but rather seek peace and cooperation. And as we conclude this section with James 3:18, James will sum up the virtuous qualities of a godly wisdom which are revealed through the results of that wisdom.

A. "AND THE SEED" - JAMES 3:18A

James 3:18: "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

James' conclusion begins by talking about "seed." By referring to "seed", James points to what is sown and the bountiful harvest that results from the

seed planted. Based on context of what we have studied here in James, the "seed" then represents godly wisdom that comes only from above.

B. "WHOSE FRUIT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS" - JAMES 3:18B

James 3:18: "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

The "seed" that is planted results in "fruit". "Fruit" is a noun that implies a result from the "seed". So seed that is planted in the ground grows slowly after being watered and cultivated. In time, it results in a harvest of what? James says that seed results in a harvest of "righteousness". And righteousness essentially is right living. It is conduct that is pleasing to God. It is the opposite of "every evil practice" in James 3:16, which results from worldly wisdom. It is 2 Corinthians 5:9, "Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

This is an observable cycle giving us a word picture of what results from godly wisdom in the life of a believer. True godly wisdom is a seed resulting in fruit which is righteousness in the life a true believer. And keep in mind, the fruit is both an end and a beginning for the next harvest. It is a cycle that repeats itself and continues. The fruit that righteousness yields possesses in itself seed that, when planted produces a crop of similar kind. The seed of godly wisdom results in an ongoing harvest of fruit as it matures in the life of a believer. That fruit which is righteousness is, "first pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good deeds, unwavering and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)

C. "IS SOWN IN PEACE" - JAMES 3:18C

James 3:18: "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

What is the soil that the "seed" is sown in which results in "fruit", a harvest of righteousness? James clearly states that the soil is "peace". How is righteous conduct that is pleasing to God sown and brought to fruition or maturity? It is sown in the soil of peace. What are the circumstances needed for a crop of righteousness in the believers life? James says this righteousness grows and flourished in the soil and atmosphere of peace. This points to the harmonious relationships that true wisdom from above produces.

The circumstances needed for godly, righteous conduct to grow and flourish would be in the atmosphere of peace. But how can that really happen in a world where strife and division is cultivated, fracture and envy result at every turn and there is little or no regard for peace? Keep in mind, this is in a world where the wisdom is earthly, natural and demonic resulting in disorder and every evil practice. Are we bound to suffocate in this worldly wisdom

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and the soil of dissention and selfish ambition? No, for James does not stop here with lofty words that do not work.

D. “BY THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE.” - JAMES 3:18D

James 3:18: “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

James here identifies the sowers of the peace. While not specifically mentioned, the sower of the seed is implied with “*by those*.” How are these sowers distinguished? They are recognized by “*those who make peace*”. James identifies the sowers by their activity; which is peace. They are peaceful themselves and practice promoting peaceful relationships with others. Motivated by this wisdom from above, they aim at reconciling quarrels and bringing men into peaceful relations with each other as brothers and sisters. In so doing, they themselves share in the blessing of peace and fellowship that they promote.¹ So, godly wisdom produces a continuing cycle of righteousness which is planted in the soil of peaceful, harmonious relationships between God and man. This righteousness grows and flourishes in the soil or the atmosphere of peace. Those who created such an environment are guaranteed by our Lord of their reward for Matthew 5:9 says, “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*” What a distinct contrast to the selfish result of worldly wisdom born out in the lives of those driven by it.

Think about it! A true believer will be evidenced by a life of growing righteousness that is sown in peace and is sowing in peace all while living in the midst of a turbulent, strife filled world. James addresses his key concern in these passages. His emphasis is on a peace that is genuine wisdom and what that can bring to any circumstance or situation. Isaiah 32:17 says, “*And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.*” Is this what your life brings to the table?

Are you peaceful and do you promote peaceful relationships within your home, your church, your community and here in the Capitol? Is that how you are known? Remember, true wisdom from above that results in righteousness and peace will never be at the expense of purity. You don’t have to compromise on the truth for the sake of “*peace*” for that is not godly peace. It means you are ready for peace, desiring and fostering peace, restraining discord and turbulence, promoting right relationships. Godly wisdom never pursues peace at the expense of purity. It will not compromise with sin to maintain peace but yearns to heal all division with wise counsel.² This is how we must live.

Do you, in the midst of turmoil bring peace or do you stoke the fire? James will continue with this emphasis in James 4:1-5 addressing the dissention and disputes amongst believers and his rebuke of it. What would be said of your life?

One who possesses a real and genuine faith will possess a wisdom from above that will be revealed through a righteous, selfish and peaceful life. In Ephesians 5:15 we are called to walk as wise, “*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise.*” And heavenly wisdom is promised as a gift to all who ask in faith, “*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach and it will be given to him.*” (James 1:5)

The character of a believer will be marked by peace and cooperation rather than strife, for godly wisdom seeks peace and promotes peace. Could that be said of you?

Remember, the character of a wise person who possesses a wisdom from above will be consistent, stable, trustworthy, and transparent. Their life will overflow with words and works of good deeds. They will be willing to extend mercy giving what is needed rather than what is deserved. They will be ready to cooperate when a better way is shown, approachable and willing to listen. They will be equitable and fair, courteous and considerate, pursuing peace but never at the expense of purity. They are not given to anger and strife, dissention and dispute but rather seek peace and cooperation. And to sum it up, the true believer will be revealed through a righteous life that pursues peace and promotes peace.

¹Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 213.

²Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 210.