



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Wisdom: What it Looks Like in Action (James 3:17)

APRIL 2, 2014

Dave DePue / PO Box 1775, Topeka, KS 66603 / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

*A leader is continuously handling challenges, often some that seem insurmountable. How do you refill your capacity to create solutions?*

### INTRODUCTION

Have you asked God for breakthroughs as you face the current demands in your life? Solomon was thrust into high office as a young man. This new King asked God for wisdom, a discerning heart to lead His people (1Kings 3:9). God blessed Solomon, giving him wisdom, wealth, and honor. The Scriptures invite us to ask for wisdom. “**If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you**” (James 1:5). Have you prayed for more wisdom? What does wisdom look like in practice?

### DISPLAYING WISDOM

*James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

Scholars throughout history have acclaimed wisdom to be the most noble and valuable of all possessions. Solomon wrote, “**Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding**” (Proverbs 4:7). The Scriptures seem to use the terms “wise” and “understanding” synonymously. Author-Pastor John MacArthur, points to a subtle difference.<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *Sophos* (wise) is a general word used to communicate knowledge, theory, or philosophy. Jewish writers in the New Testament used the word *Epistemon* (understanding) to specify the specialized knowledge of a skilled tradesman or professional. The Apostle James challenges those who possess wisdom to demonstrate it in their behavior. **How are your deeds or activities revealing the wisdom that you have gained?** A person with great wisdom has the ability to act meekly or with humility. Moses was trained as a warrior but was described as “very meek”, under the sovereign control of God (Numbers 12:3). **Are you referred to as one who displays power under control? Can you give an example of this?**

### CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE WISDOM

*James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.*

John MacArthur adds detail to list given by James.<sup>2</sup> **Peaceable** is the first characteristic in the list. This is the seventh of Jesus’ Beatitudes (Matthew 5:9). A wise person does not cause conflict by their selfishness, but produces peace through their humility. **Have you seen this in practice?**

A person with wisdom is **gentle**. This is displayed as patience, courtesy, being able to handle dishonor, even abuse (Matthew 5:5). **Jesus was called “gentle”**.

**Reasonable** is a third attribute of a person with wisdom. This is reflected in the first Beatitude as teachable, compliant, and not stubborn. Military discipline typically produces a leader who meets the demands of any situation. Consider: Cornelius (Acts 10:4) and Naaman (2Kings 5:13).

Wisdom is displayed by one who is **full of mercy**. We see this in a person who is forgiving, reaching out to help others in difficult situations (Matthew 5:7). **Have you seen this in action? Consider the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:37).**

**Good fruits**, good works are examples of a person with godly wisdom. This clearly demonstrates the character that is within a person with wisdom. Dorcus’s life was fruitful (Acts 9:35). **Can you think of a leader who is being fruitful?**

Wisdom is evident in a person who is **unwavering**. There is no uncertainty, indecision, inconsistency or doubtfulness. **George Washington Carver was unwavering in his life and work**

Finally, James shows that a person with wisdom is **without hypocrisy**. There is no deceit, envy, or slander (1Peter 2:1). Jesus was confronted by those who tried to trick Him, slander His Name, and were envious of His popularity.

### A PRAYER

Aba Father, help me to find examples of those living in wisdom so that I may sharpen my practice. Guide me in the way. Give me a wise and discerning heart so that I can provide leadership in the settings that You place me in. Bless me with a breakthrough in this, my present situation. I pray in the Name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, (Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 2006. p1900.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary. (Moody Publishers) 1998. pp176-180.