



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Wisdom: Above Vs. Below

DECEMBER 14, 2011

Tom McCullough/PO Box 503, Granville, Ohio 43023/tom.mccullough@capitolcom.org /www.capitolcom.org/ohio

The Epistle of James' (AD 45-50) likely author was James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, the leader of the Jerusalem church, the leader of the Council of Jerusalem and a humble man. While James is addressing the twelve tribes that had scattered to all parts of the world and attempts to be encouraging to the believing Jews who were struggling with trials and tribulations, he confronts the issue of the testing and fruit of a faithful Christian's walk and the wise Godly righteous reactions of him when grounded in total faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. James shares that wisdom's foundation is either from man or from God. (James 3: 13-18 NASB)

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.” (cf. 3:13)

Wisdom is the skillful application of knowledge. The Holy Spirit will use the believer's mind and will provide guidance for practical living. Similar to the use of the tongue for praise and destruction, wisdom is either from above and God or from below and demonic. What are examples of wisdom from below?

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.” (cf. 3:14-16)

Earthly wisdom results in disorder and evil. Earthly, natural and demonic wisdom exhibits itself in self-focus jealousy and selfish ambition. A person with a dead faith will focus his actions and apply his knowledge base to efforts that are self-serving and disruptive to others. What are examples of wisdom from above?

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (cf. 3:17-18)

Godly wisdom is first pure. The driver of wisdom from above is not self focused but God focused. The motive of a believer with a living faith will first seek God's will and skillfully apply the truth found in His Word. Subsequent to the pure motive, the living faith of a believer will exhibit genuine peace, gentleness, mercy, and good fruits that will result in righteousness exhibited to others.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (cf. Pr 1:7)

Testing Wisdom, if from below:

- Does not seek God's will through His Word.
- Does not glorify God or bring Him honor.
- Motive is jealous, selfishly ambitious, self-serving.
- Exhibits disorder and evil.
- Is a dead faith.

Testing Wisdom, if from above:

- Seeks God's will through His Word.
- Glorifies God and bring Him honor.
- Motive is pure and serves others.
- Exhibits genuine peace, gentleness, mercy, and good fruits exhibited to others.
- Is a living faith.

For Your Consideration:

- Are you discerning and allow the Holy Spirit to guide your decisions to serve God.
- Do you struggle with jealousy and selfish ambition?
- Are your motives first pure?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS (SESSION OR HEARING DAYS) AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44

STATE STAFF AND LOBBYISTS: WEDNESDAYS AT 12:10PM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44