

HHBC



James

3: 17, 18

WISDOM PART II

James 3: 13-18



13 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.



But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

James 3:17

The Wisdom that comes from above:

1. Wisdom from above: is heavenly wisdom— it comes down from heaven. As James says in 1:17: *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”*
2. is first and foremost: **PURE**: the adjective *hagnos*, being free from defilement, not contaminated, same root as ‘Holy’ - *hagios*
 - a) First: *protos*, not numerically, but as to the inner quality/ essence of purity. All that follows flows from its first essence of purity
 - b) Note: from Wuest: God is called *hagios* (Holy) but never *hagnos* (Pure). Christ is *hagnos* (pure) because of His human experience. [by Him attaining an absolute perfect sinless, cleansed and undefiled life attained while on earth]
 - c) So first: heavenly wisdom is free from the defilement of a sinful character, a sinful motivation, the Old Man. Cleansed from all sin and unrighteousness is the thought [I Jn 1:9]
3. Second: it is **peaceable**- free from strife, disorder. Contrasted to v. 16’s the character of earthly/natural wisdom: *“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing”*



James 3:17

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

The Wisdom that comes from above:

4. Heavenly wisdom from above is **gentle** and **reasonable** – free from harshness, sternness, docile. Reasonable is easy to be entreated (Wm. Kelly). You can with ease, make petitions of one with heavenly wisdom. Never stern, proud, impatient.
 - a) James in context: *“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* [1:5]. (God won’t clap back at you or find fault with you for asking)
5. Heavenly wisdom from above: is full of **mercy**: **eleos**: [Wuest, quoting Trench,] gives that mercy has to do with the ministry of Christ in mitigating or assuaging and removing our **misery**, e.g. the misery of the consequences of sin/sinfulness
 - a) As in I Peter 3:9 – *“not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”*
 - b) Not giving us what we truly deserve on account of our sinfulness
 - c) Kelly: exhibiting compassion towards wrong doers & returning good to the ungrateful and evil.
6. Heavenly wisdom from above is full of: **Good fruits** – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control* [Gal. 5]



James 3:17

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

The Wisdom that comes from above:

7. Heavenly wisdom from above is **unwavering** and **without hypocrisy**
 - a) KJV: has without partiality
 - b) But: unwavering seems better as it is heavenly wisdom's **counterpoint** to James 1:6's asking for wisdom without doubting, **"for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind."** and further in 1:8: **"being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."**
 - c) Unwavering: without ambiguousness, without uncertainty [Strong's definition]
 - d) Jas. 1:7 again: every good thing comes down from the Father of Lights, in whom there is no variation or shifting of shadow (unwavering- immutable)
 - e) Without hypocrisy = true to appearances
 - In other words: Heavenly wisdom comes with 'Walking in the spirit' in Gal. 5:22,23 and the wisdom that is earthly, demonic in James 3:15— seems to line up well with the deeds of the flesh in Gal. 5:19-20
 - Or: what spring source is producing the wisdom? Is it from a fresh spring or bitter spring? Is it from the olive tree or the fig tree (Jas. 3: 11,12). Obviously it's: Old Nature v. the New Nature



James 3:15,17 & Elsewhere: Only 2 Biblical types of Wisdom

Heavenly Wisdom: is from above, is first: pure, then peaceable, reasonable, full of mercy, full of good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy, the mind of Christ, the Things of God, the depths of God, Treasures of wisdom & knowledge, only revealed through the Spirit, desirable- *more than jewels, gold, silver.* Gives life



Earthly Wisdom: natural, demonic; philosophy, empty deception, enslaving, the traditions of men, the principles of the world, boisterous; likened to a temptress calling out to the naïve, a harlot, leads to death

Compiled from Jas. 3 plus a survey of various Proverbs 7-9, Col. 2, 1 Cor. 2

What is Wisdom?

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- I have always defined it as ‘applied knowledge’
- Miles: in last week’s lesson had: ‘knowledge applied’ and ‘skill in living’
- It is **sophia** in greek
- Wisdom vs. knowledge is very well defined secularly... And the secular definitions conform very well to how Wisdom is personified in Proverbs 7, 8 and 9 . . .
- “**Knowledge** is gathered from learning and education, while most say that **wisdom** is gathered from day-to-day experiences and is a state of being wise.
- Knowledge is merely having clarity of facts and truths, while **wisdom is the practical ability to make consistently good decisions in life.**”
- Good too: “Wisdom is the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting, while knowledge is the accumulation of information gained through experience, reasoning, or acquaintance.”
- **Knowledge** can exist without wisdom, but not the other way around. **Wisdom** involves a healthy dose of perspective and the ability to make sound judgments about a subject, while knowledge is simply knowing.”
- One thing these web definitions leave out is: **understanding**... Very important in biblical uses of wisdom. Knowledge leads to understanding, which goes on with experience to form wisdom.
- **Insight** is a good synonym

Amer. Herit. Dictionary of English Language, 5th ed.// differ.com/difference/Knowledge_vs_Wisdom // gotquestions.org/wisdom-knowledge.html

What is Wisdom?



Question: where does wisdom begin?

Answer: the 3 texts below:

- ***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever Psa 110:10***
- ***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Pro 1:7***
- ***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Prov 9:10***

CHARACTERISTICS OF WISDOM:

Wisdom: is desirable and vitally connected with understanding & learning from God:

- ***Prov 8:11: “For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her.”***
- ***Prov 8:12: “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion”***
- ***Prov 8:14: “Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine.”***
- ***Prov 14:33: Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, But in the hearts of fools it is made known.***
- ***Pro 16:16: How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.***
- ***Pro 17:24: Wisdom is in the presence of the one who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.***

What is Wisdom?



“There are 2 cries on the earth from man- two invitations either of which man accepts.

What is called folly in the sight of God is thought of a great gain in the world. God designates her cry as that of a foolish woman, because it has qualities of natural (physical) attraction, and is subtle in its influence.

It is of tremendous importance which cry we attend to and are led by; and every honest person knows how often he turns aside from the voice of wisdom and listens to the voice of folly.

The foolish woman (Folly) cries out to only to those who go right in their ways , and only to them (who are on a right- righteous path)

[The wisdom of the world is a harlot, and cries to passers-by *‘in the streets, now in the squares, lurking by every corner’* (Pro. 7:12)]

The world is not inviting the world, there is no occasion of it to do so; the intention is only to lead the upright astray.

Wisdom: on other hand gives her cry/ invitation from the very highest places of the city; she sends it out to everyone

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And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

James 3:18

1. **James 3:14-16** it said: the fruit of earthly, demonic, natural wisdom is... *'bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth... Disorder and every evil thing...'* James is now making a direct contrast of that to: the Wisdom from above
 - a) Recall in vs. 17 that heavenly wisdom is (1) pure, then flowing from that— **peaceable**: *peace-loving, peace-practicing, and peace-yielding. (Constable)*
 - b) Peace-making is a good work [which we are **TO SHOW**] flowing from being justified (declared righteous): *"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* Rom 5:1
 - c) *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men..."* Rom 12:18
 - d) We have both: the peace **of** God (Phl 4:7) and peace **with** God (Rom 5:1)

2. What is our resource in outwardly showing this work of peace in our lives?

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, **was first of all**, by the translation of his name, **king of righteousness**, and then also king of Salem, which is **king of peace**. [Heb. 7:1-2] FROM WM. KELLY EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

3. And who do we take the king of Salem to be.....?

James 3:17, 18



Final Thoughts:



Earlier in the study: the question was asked: *‘Where does Wisdom begin?’* and it is with the fear-
(Psa. 110, Prov. 1, 9)

But finally: *“Where does Wisdom end?”* is a question I asked during this study

Paul gives us a homily of heavenly wisdom in I Cor. 2, the entire chapter:

Ending with: “For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.” but right before this, in Chap. 1:, the Spirit has:

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption

And what’s more: the *“true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* Col. 2: 2c.- 3