

## James 3:13-18

It appears that while we have grown exponentially in knowledge, we have digressed in the area of real wisdom. If we desire wisdom, we need go to the Scriptures. **James 1:5-6** “<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting ...” **Proverbs 2:6a** “For the Lord gives wisdom...” **Proverbs 4:7a** “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.” **Proverbs 9:10** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” **Colossians 2:3** “in whom [Jesus] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Knowledge by itself (without love and wisdom) can be harmful. **1 Corinthians 8:1b** “...Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up.” [Adrian Rogers]

Knowledge is needed to pass the test in school	Wisdom is needed to pass the test in life
Knowledge is learned	Wisdom is given (James 1:5)
Knowledge comes by looking around at the world	Wisdom comes by looking up to God
Knowledge comes by study	Wisdom comes by time with God

The simplest definition is that wisdom is the ability to see everything from God’s perspective. Wisdom may also be defined as the ability to know the right goals and the right means of reaching those goals, in the appropriate timing.

In verses 13-18 James shows us that there are two kinds of wisdom. There is worldly wisdom (which pales in comparison to God’s wisdom), and there is wisdom from God (Godly wisdom). Evidence of two kinds of wisdom in **1 Corinthians 2:6-7** “<sup>6</sup> However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the **wisdom of this age**, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> But we speak **the wisdom of God** in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.”

The Bible repeatedly establishes that true wisdom originates from God and **only** from God. **1 Corinthians 1:30a** “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God...”

### I. The Evidence of Wisdom (Vs.13)

James’ burden that has been repeated throughout the book is that what is real, what is from God, will be evidenced in our works, our pattern of life. True wisdom from God manifests itself by good works done in meekness.

The Greek word used here for “meekness” means to be humbly submitted to something. Meekness is not weakness. This word actually come from military usage and refers to power that is under the control of another.

### II. Worldly Wisdom (Vs.14-16)

The wisdom that is worldly approaches life as though God does not exist. An example of this is Freudian psychology.

#### A. The Operation of Worldly Wisdom (Vs.14) – (Two primary characteristics that distinguish worldly wisdom)

##### 1. Bitter Envy

From the Greek, these two words put together give the idea of a harsh, bitter, self-centeredness that produces a resentful attitude toward others.

##### 2. Self-Seeking

The person who leaves God out and operates through worldly wisdom is always seeking to promote himself. **Philippians 2:3** “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

#### B. The Origin of Worldly Wisdom (Vs. 15)

##### 1. Earthly

Worldly wisdom does not have its origin with God; it is tied to this world system, and is tainted by the fall of man into sin.

## James 3:13-18

### 2. Sensual

The word “sensual” can be translated “unspiritual.” It literally means “of the natural mind, subject to its appetites and passions.” It’s the same word as “natural” in *1 Corinthians 2:14* “*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” *Jude 1:19* “*These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*”

### 3. Demonic

Worldly wisdom is demonic in its origin. “*This word “demonic” is “such as Satan breathes into the soul.”* [John Wesley]

### C. The Outcome of Worldly Wisdom (Vs. 16)

#### 1. Confusion

The root of this word translated “confusion” is interpreted “unstable” back in chapter 1 verse 8. The word literally means “disorder” that is caused by open defiance of authority or “to revolt. The world’s wisdom brings confusion / instability.

#### 2. Every Evil Thing

The word “evil” here means “pertaining to being evil in the sense of moral baseness.” It can also be translated “worthless” or “useless.” Worldly wisdom results in a life given to worthless, useless pursuits that are all vanity or empty.

### III. Godly Wisdom, the Origin of Wisdom (Vs. 17-18)

#### A. The Incarnate Word of God – Jesus! (Vs. 17a)

*1 Corinthians 1:24b* “*...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*”

#### B. The Written Word of God – The Scriptures

Our standard, our measuring stick, our grid through which we run everything is the written Word of God. *Colossians 3:16a (NKJV)* “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...*”

#### C. The Operation of Godly Wisdom (Vs.17b)

##### 1. Pure

That means unmixed with evil; free from contamination. When we operate through God’s wisdom, there will never be evil associated with it.

##### 2. Peaceable

The peace wisdom brings is always based on purity and not compromise to avoid offending the natural man.

##### 3. Gentle

Since Christ is the source of wisdom, when we are walking in wisdom we will look like Him and that includes gentleness.

##### 4. Willing to Yield

This military term means one who is willing to take instructions. A wise person submits to the authority over them.

##### 5. Full of Mercy and Good Fruits

“Full” means to be controlled by. A wise person is controlled in relationships by mercy.

##### 6. Without Partiality

This literally means without wavering. Standing on conviction, not shifting with what is socially acceptable.

##### 7. Without Hypocrisy

The hypocrite gives the appearance of being someone he is not. That’s how worldly wisdom operates.

### C. The Outcome of Heavenly Wisdom (Vs.18)

Godly wisdom is righteousness. The righteousness (fruit) is sown and then multiplies.