

“Living Wisely”
James 3:13-18
Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. Does your Christianity work?
 - 1. Rejoice in trials?
 - 2. Resist temptations?
 - 3. Be a doer of God’s Word?
 - 4. Tame your tongue?
- B. James is the epistle of applied Christianity
 - 1. Today in our text, James says, “The Christian life means living wisely”
- C. The question, “Who is a wise man?” (v. 13)
 - 1. We live in a world full of knowledge but not much wisdom
 - 2. “Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (Proverbs 8:11).
 - 3. What is wisdom, and how does it differ from knowledge?
 - a) Wisdom is living with a proper sense of values. It is living considering what is true, right, and lasting.
 - b) The Hebrew idea of wisdom is practical. It is the ability to make the right choices in life
 - c) “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom” (Proverbs 4:7)
 - 4. Where do we get this wisdom?
 - a) “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10)
 - b) We need this kind of wisdom today in our homes, churches, communities, and nation
- D. James issues a command (v. 13)
 - 1. “Let him show...” (v.13)
 - 2. Show meekness and wisdom
 - 3. Show me your faith by your works
- E. James paints a contrast between false wisdom and true wisdom in three areas:
 - 1. Origins
 - 2. Operations
 - 3. Outcome

II. False Wisdom (James 3:14-16)

- A. It’s origin (v. 15)
 - 1. It is not “from above” (v. 15)
 - 2. Living life without God is foolish
 - 3. James gives us three sources for this false wisdom
 - a) It’s earthly (v. 15)
 - 1) The world
 - 2) Its motives, methods, and aims are earthly and temporal
 - 3) The Rich Fool
 - 4) Living for the world

- a. (1 John 2:15-17)
- B. Its sensual (v. 15)
 - 1. The flesh
 - 2. Natural or “life” or “soul”
 - a) It’s the wisdom of the natural man
 - b) (1 Corinthians 2:14)
 - c) The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto him, neither can he know...
 - d) Illustration- Like a blind man in an art gallery
- C. It’s devilish (v. 15) or demonic
 - 1. The Devil
 - 2. World, flesh, Devil
 - 3. The unsaved person:
 - a) Lives for the world’s approval
 - b) Lives to satisfy the flesh
 - c) Lives under Satan’s control
 - 1) Lust of the eyes, pride of life
- D. Its operation (v. 14)
 - 1. Bitter envying (v. 14)
 - a) It’s a discontent with the good fortune of others
 - b) It’s a jealous anger
 - c) Illustration- Cain and Abel
 - d) “Envy brings rotteness to the bones” (Proverbs 14:30)
 - 2. Strife (v. 14)
 - a) Selfish ambition
 - b) Used by a politician seeking an office
 - 1) Not in the church
 - 2) “Let nothing be done through strife” (Philippians 2:3)
 - c) If it’s in your hearts, lie not against the truth (v. 14)
 - 1) Your life contradicts the truth
- E. Its outcome (v. 16)
 - 1. Confusion or disorder (v. 16)
 - a) The same word for “unstable” (1:8) and “unruly” (3:8)
 - b) Application- Marriage, family, and relationships
 - 2. Every evil work (v. 16)
 - a) Some translations render it “anarchy”
 - b) Marriage and divorce
 - c) Don’t be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2)
 - d) How?
 - 1) By the Word of God and Spirit of God

III. True Wisdom (James 3:17-18)

- A. Its origin (v. 17)
 - 1. “But the wisdom that is from above” (v. 17)
 - a) It’s from God
 - b) It’s heavenly wisdom
 - c) Not the world, the flesh, or the Devil

2. God's wisdom is found in the Bible
 - a) "...the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7)
 - b) Everything we need for life and godliness
 - c) The Bible is God's instruction manual for life
 3. True wisdom starts with God
 - a) Fear Him
 - b) True wisdom comes from God. Look to Him!
- B. Its operation (v. 17)
1. First pure (v. 17)
 - a) It is undefiled and free from self-interest
 - b) By the word "first," James means purity is wisdom's primary and most fundamental quality above all else
 - c) A wise person lives a pure life
 - d) Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8)
 2. Peaceable (v. 17)
 - a) Peace loving
 - b) "Blessed are the peacemakers..." (Matthew 5:9)
 3. Gentle (v. 17)
 - a) It's making allowance for the feelings of others
 - b) It's not insisting on one's own rights
 - c) Like Jesus
 4. Easy to be entreated (v. 17)
 - a) Submissive
 - b) It's the opposite of stubborn
 - c) Willing to yield
 - d) It is easy to live with or reasonable
 - 1) Illustration- Old Testament- Abigail's husband
 5. Full of mercy and good fruits (v. 17)
 - a) "Blessed are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7)
 6. Without partiality (v. 17)
 - a) Unwavering
 - b) A person who stands on his principles
 - c) Does not vacillate
 7. Without hypocrisy (v. 17)
 - a) Sincere
 - b) Without show
 - c) No pretense
 - d) Straightforward
 - 1) Illustration- Actors wearing a mask
- C. The outcome of true wisdom (v. 18)
1. Verse 18 is the counterpart of verse 16
 - a) Verse 16 is the outcome of false wisdom
 - b) Verse 18 is the outcome of true wisdom
 2. It's a picture of a farmer sowing seeds
 - a) If we sow peace, we will reap righteousness
 - b) Living by God's wisdom brings peace and righteousness

IV. Conclusion

- A. How to live wisely
 - 1. Know Christ personally
 - a) (1 Corinthians 1:30)
 - 2. Read the Bible obediently
 - a) (James 1:22)
 - 3. Pray to God humbly
 - a) (James 1:5)
 - 4. Fear the Lord reverently
 - a) (Proverbs 9:10)