

TWO KINDS OF WISDOM

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JAMES 3:13-18; 5:7-12

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JAMES 3:13-18; 5:7-12

Key Verse: *The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. James 3:17*

James 3:13-18; 5:7-12 (NRSV)

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.

15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.

16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

5:7-12

7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the

Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

12 Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

VOCABULARY

- **Gentleness** – Mildness, kindness.
- **Envy** – Jealousy.
- **Selfish** – Concerned with one’s own interests, needs, and wishes while ignoring those of others.
- **Hypocrisy** – To pretend to be what you are not.
- **Peace** – A state of security and tranquility.
- **Patient** – Capable of waiting without becoming upset.
- **Endurance** – Ability to bear prolonged hardship.
- **Compassionate** – Showing feelings of empathy for the suffering of others, often with a desire to help.
- **Condemnation** – Being without faith in Christ and judged guilty of committing sin.

INTRODUCTION

Carmen and Carla sat outside on their front steps because there was a nice summer breeze. Carla was braiding Carmen’s hair. They started singing a new song the youth choir learned during choir practice. Carmen and Carla felt very happy. Across the street, they noticed two girls who went to their school. Vera and Jasmine disliked them but they never understood why. Vera screamed from across the street, “Hey, ugly girls!” Jasmine yelled, “Carmen, your hair is a mess! Just cut it off so you will look like your ugly brother!” Before Carmen and Carla could say anything, Vera and Jasmine ran down the street.

“What is their problem? Just wait until you finish my hair, I’m going to go find them. And when I do, I’m going punch both of them in their face.” Carmen motioned with her fist how she was going to hit them.

“Carmen, they’re just jealous. You have to ignore people like

Vera and Jasmine. Remember dad was talking to us about how there will always be someone who is jealous and envious of us. If we go after them, it will not change the way they feel about us. We have to pray for them.”

“You pray, Carla. I’m not going to let them disrespect me again.”

Which person is acting wise, Carmen or Carla? How can jealousy lead to more problems and issues? In today’s lesson, we discover the importance of using heavenly wisdom when interacting with others so we can live peacefully.

BIBLE STORY

During last week’s lesson, we discussed the importance of controlling our tongues (vs. 3:1-12). James continues in this chapter by helping us to understand the difference between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom. We have to choose which wisdom will control our lives, earthly or heavenly.

If we are allowing earthly wisdom to control our lives, it produces bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, boasting, and disloyalty to the truth (vs. 3:14-16). Earthly wisdom leads us to disobey the Word of God and disregard the truth about the need for salvation through Jesus Christ. This wisdom is not from God or the Holy Spirit, but demonic and from Satan. It causes people to yield to the flesh without regard to the effects. Earthly wisdom produces nothing but confusion and excessive evil works.

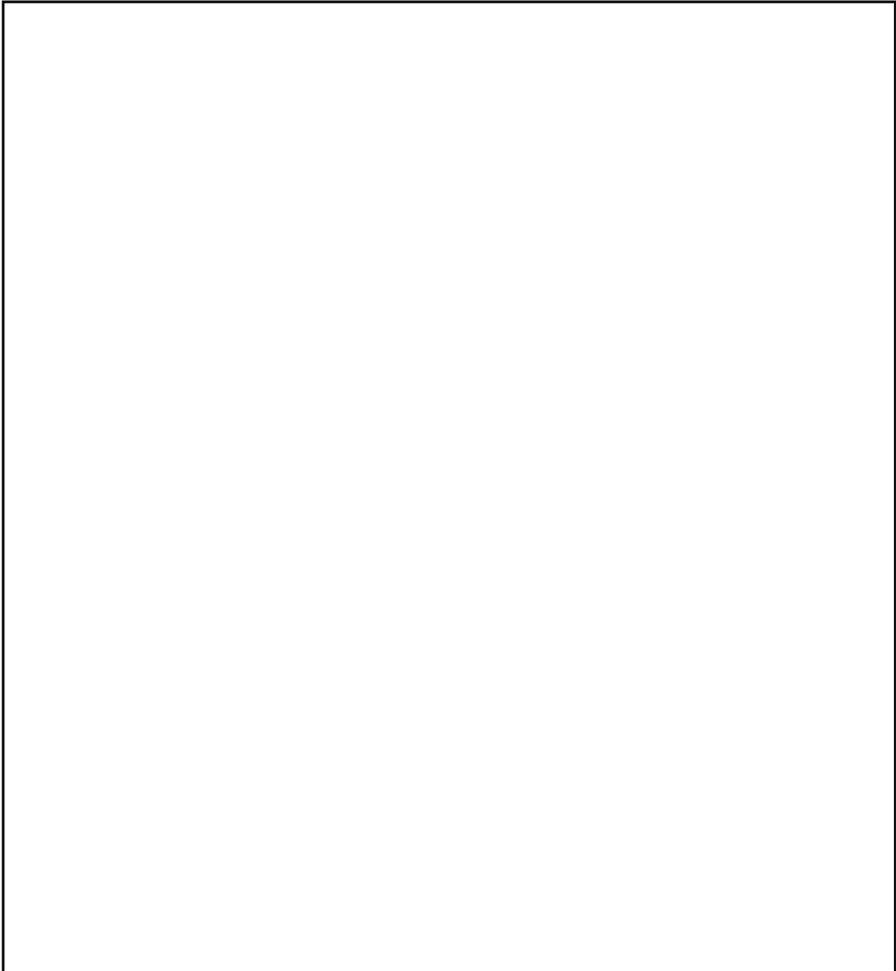
Heavenly (godly) wisdom is from above. It is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits (v. 3:17). Godly wisdom does not show prejudice or favoritism. Those who are peacemakers also receive a harvest of peace for themselves. Furthermore, those who have godly wisdom exhibit patience during suffering and trials.

When Jesus returns, Jesus will judge all wrongs, and right all inequalities (vs. 5:7-9). We can expect to be rewarded for our

patience and endurance. The prophets and Job are examples of endurance and patience (vs. 5:10-11). God desires for us to be honest, and avoid swearing or cursing. Our word is our oath and reveals we are trustworthy.

Life Application

James 3:17 mentions the good that comes from a life filled with heavenly (godly) wisdom. Draw seven different fruit and under each one write a characteristic that is produced from godly wisdom.



James mentions the farmer as an example of an occupation that requires patience and endurance. What occupations can you identify that require patience and endurance? In the Bible, Job had to have patience and endurance as he suffered. What lessons can we learn from Job when dealing with suffering and trials?

SUMMARY

We have to practice godly wisdom when enduring suffering and trials. It demonstrates to others that we have faith in God to help us. We should not turn back to earthly ways to resolve our issues. Those who are yielding to earthly wisdom will not receive the reward Jesus shall give to those who patiently wait and trust in Jesus. Jesus is the One who has the power to judge all persons in the end. His faithfulness is what sustains us until we see Jesus face-to-face.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: Good and gracious God, thank you for this day. We are praying for patience and endurance as we go through suffering. Guide us as we rely on your word as a comfort. We desire to be peacemakers for your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "My Hope Is Built" (#364 - *AME Church Hymnal*)