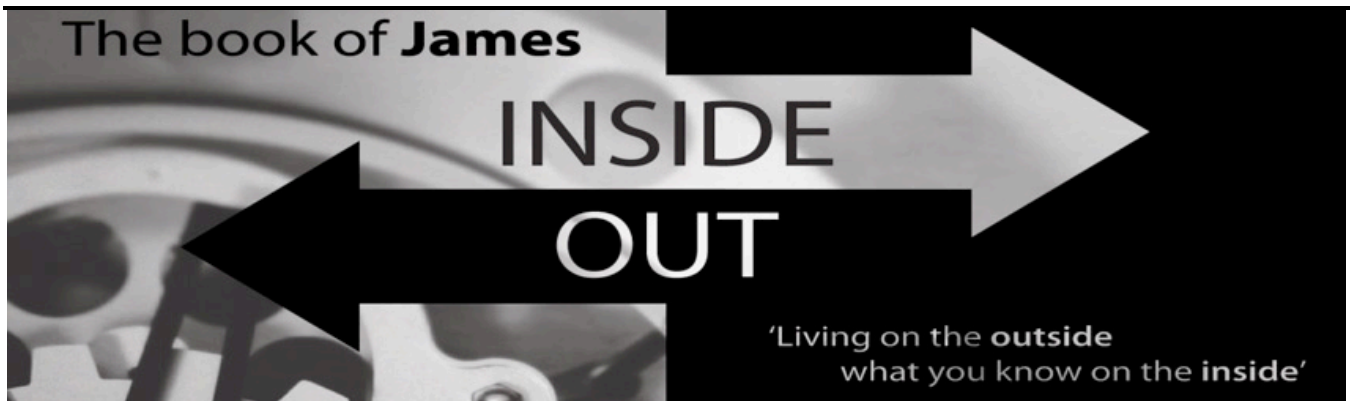


## James 3:13-18 Inside Wisdom Outside Submission



If there is ever something that makes you realise you don't know everything it is having a baby. When your wife falls pregnant there is no shortage of information that comes at you about pregnancy and parenting. By the time the baby comes you think you've got a good idea of what to do but then the baby comes home and you realise you have very little idea. There has never been a time when I thought I know about something but in fact I didn't.

The same is true of wisdom from God. You may think you have wisdom until you read James 3:13-18. Knowing isn't everything it is doing it that really counts.

***James 3 is saying a person of wisdom is characterised by good deeds done in humility.***

The theme for the book of James is :-**Living on the outside what you know on the inside.**

We are saved by faith but saving faith is never alone it always produces works. James has been highlighting what some of those crucial works are. Like helping those in need. Like how you use your tongue. Tongue is the way it is because of the source. How do you fix the source? Wisdom.

### **1. You know wisdom when you see it**

Read: 13

Wisdom is not some hidden character trait. James says if someone thinks they have wisdom let him show it. We think wisdom has something to do with intelligence, with being clever, with being shrewd maybe, always knowing the right thing to do in a particular situation, being influential, having a strong opinion.

Or it comes with age but this is not necessarily the case. You can be old and foolish.

True wisdom is based on knowledge, but it is more than knowledge. It is the ability to live in a manner pleasing to God because you understand His truth and you live in constant submission to His Spirit, applying that truth to all of life.

Wisdom is not just knowing but doing what you know. Not just talking about it but doing it. Doing with humility. Doing good without wanting recognition. Doing good in secret. Doing good with an audience of one. God.

We all like to think we are experts about lots of things. Cooking is a good example. You hear plenty of people speaking as if they are expert cooks. The proof of a good cook is in the eating of their food. So the proof of a person with wisdom is in their life.

My dad had a saying if I had done something he asked. He called me 'laziness personified.' James is saying a person with true wisdom is wisdom personified.

If you want to call yourself wise - make sure it is characterised by a good life, and deeds done in humility. But that seems pretty vague doesn't it? What exactly does it look like to live a good life? And what do deeds done in humility look like?

James is going to tell us in two parts - firstly, he's going to tell us what it doesn't look like (false wisdom), and then he's going to tell us what it does look like (true wisdom).

## 2. False Wisdom

### Read: 14-15

This is earthly wisdom. It is not from above.

This is also recognized by someone's life. James says in two things:

1. **Bitter Jealousy**
2. **Selfish Ambition**

Paul helps us define two by saying:- "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4

Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition is thinking of yourself as more significant than others. Looking to your own interests and not the interests of others.

It is being more ready to fight for your rights. It is being easily threatened by others. Selfish ambition and bitter jealousy leads you to use unworthy and divisive means to promote your own interest. Like tearing others down in order to lift ourselves up.

James is saying we are all greened eyed. We all envy and we all have selfish ambition. This is a display of false wisdom.

### 3 Characteristics of "false wisdom" (vs.15)

#### 1. Earthly

Earthly way of thinking, earthly motives and earthly purposes. The here and now is what shapes and determines this wisdom. Don't think of others is the basic principle. Just think of yourself.

#### 2. Unspiritual

Of course if it is earthly if it is not spiritual. Being spiritual is to consider God. People who display false wisdom do not consider God.

#### 3. Demonic

In his usual confronting direct way James says false wisdom comes from hell. As much as we get up in arms about Halloween because of its source and what it promotes James says we should be as worked up or more concerned about bitter envy and selfish ambition that we all harbor.

### The results of "earthly wisdom" (vs.16)

1. **Disorder** – this is the opposite of peace. It is relationship disorder.
2. **Every evil practice** - Every kind of sin comes from earthly wisdom.

James is saying that you lack wisdom when we show a sharp, antagonistic spirit of self concern, whatever leads to a faction and divides us we are showing wisdom from the devil.

And the longer you stay around church circles, the more you hear of the problems within churches through internal division. If you spoke to the people involved, they're never going to say that they did it out of bitter envy and selfish ambition, are they? Yet, when you're standing on the outside looking in, you can often sense what it is that is driving people by the way they relate to others. They desire never to let others get the better of them in a conversation. They fight tooth and nail for things which everyone else considers insignificant. They don't speak face to face with a brother or sister with whom they have a problem. They gossip and slander people behind their back.

James stomps on all of our toes! He is not a nice, polite man who beats around the bush in a mealy-mouthed manner! He is a doctor of the soul who speaks the truth plainly, even when it hurts. But you should prefer a doctor who speaks the truth over one who is nice, but never tells you what is wrong. If you will heed James' straightforward analysis, your relationships will improve dramatically!

## 3. True Wisdom

### Read: 17

**This is heavenly wisdom. It is from above.**

8 Characteristics of Heavenly Wisdom (vs. 17):

1. **Pure** - free from any jealousy or selfish ambition.
2. **Peaceloving**. Pursue peaceful relationships. If you are always stirring up controversy over petty issues, you are not acting with godly wisdom.
3. **Considerate** – thoughtful about others needs.
4. **Submissive** – being willing to give in to others. Not a walk over but willing to concede on things that don't eternally matter.
5. **Full of mercy** – always aware of others needs and so then helping them.
6. **Good Fruits** – I take this to mean good works.
7. **Impartial** – the opposite to favoritism
8. **Sincere** – the opposite of hypocritical. Being something different on the outside to what you are on the inside. The original word has the idea of someone who wears a mask to hide who they truly are.

When cancer gets into marrow, a doctor has to all but kill his patient in order to save him. he destroys the bone marrow with radiation, then replaces it with healthy marrow to get it growing again. If the patient survives, he has a long way back from the brink of death. But he is healed.

We must kill what is killing us ie the sin of bitter envy and selfish ambition. At the same time we must replace it with humility.

**Results – v.18**

What will result is peace that genuine wisdom brings to the community.

If you sow peace, you will reap peace. If you sow selfishness and strife, you will reap conflict.

One of the tensions for me as I preach is that my life is to match with the words I preach but I know it doesn't. There is a gap between my words and my life. As your pastor I am meant to be an example to you of what I preach. My life is not free from envy or selfish ambition. My life is so far from matching up to these 8 characteristics. My life is often not characterised by these things.

Your only hope is to look beyond me to the one I follow – JESUS.

Jesus is wisdom.

“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” 1 Corinthians 1:30

***James 3 is saying you think you are wise well show me your life characterised by good deeds done in humility and tell you if you are wise or not.***