

# “Wisdom That Is From Above”

James 3:17

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James a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ writes to Christians. He identifies himself in James 1:1. Those who received the book were, “...brought forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruit so forth (the Father, verse 17) creatures.” They were born again, or Christians. (See also 1 Peter 1:22-25).

In James 3:13-18, the question is raised, “Who is wise and understanding among you?” Since this question was posed to Christians, I believe that it would be a good question for us to contemplate about ourselves as God’s children now. ☐

When we read James 3:13-18, we see that the question is answered by our conduct as our works reflect meekness or humility (verse 13). The meekness which is from above, that is the wisdom which God wants His children to have, is also said to be “pure, peaceable, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (verse 17). So, these characteristics should also be seen in the lives of God’s children.

The wisdom from God, is not seen when we live with bitter envy and self-seeking in our hearts, nor is it seen when we boast and live contrary to the truth, (verse 14). True wisdom does not bring forth the fruits of confusion and evil, (verse 16). James says that this wisdom is earthly, sensual, demonic (verse 15). You and I can read those verses and in applying the word to our hearts and lives we will begin to answer for ourselves, “Am I wise?”

What is wisdom? In Deuteronomy 4:1-5, Moses instructed Israel to listen to and obey God’s word. In verse 6, he adds, “Therefore be careful to observe them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding...”. Later, in Proverbs, God’s word is given so that His children would “...receive the instruction of wisdom..” (Proverbs 1:3). In Proverbs ☐ 9:10, we read, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” What we see from those verses, and others not mentioned, is that wisdom is an understanding of God’s position of authority to ☐ command mankind through His word and then with reverence from the heart we should humbly obey all that God said for us to do.

In James 3:13-18, I believe that we can use this definition. A lead y in the book of James it has been taught that we are to receive the word of God with meekness and to obey the word, (1:21, 22). We are not wise just because we think that what we are doing is good – but rather we are wise when we are challenged by God’s word to really see things as He sees them and then change what we do to conform to His will. Consider James 1:26, I may give little thought to the words I speak, am I wise just because I can speak? No, for what I say may be boasting (3:14; 4:13-16). I am wise when I realize that my words reflect my heart, (1:19; 1:23-25), so I must not speak what is contrary to

God's will concerning my words (see James 4:11, or 5:9, for examples). I then will be wise when I bridle my tongue as James said in this verse, James 1:26).

Who is wise? The one who learns from God's word what God expects and then that one humbly conforms to God's will. This will cause much prayerful study of God's word in order to learn His will (see Colossians 1:9; Matthew 7:21-29). To attain wisdom, we will concentrate our minds on God and His speaking to us through Jesus (see Colossians 3:1-4). We will also give much attention to the example of Jesus Christ and always in faith attempt to be like Him, (see 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 3:1-3). Do we understand that our lives are not guided by thinking that it is shaped by the world's desires, pleasures, or expectations, (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)? Our faith, conduct, and hope are shaped by God's word! (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). This is wisdom.

Wisdom produces not self seeking but good consideration of others, (see Matthew 20:26-28; Philippians 2:1-4). Wisdom does not envy others, either their physical blessings or their attainments in the minds of others. Wisdom does not boast of our deeds in order to build ourselves up (consider Matthew 6:1-6; Luke 14:7-14). Wisdom does not divide brethren because things are not done my way, but wisdom is willing to yield in matters that come from my judgment. Wisdom does not condemn one for a practice and accept it in another (even in myself), (1 Timothy 5:21). Wisdom does not show partiality in judging some to be more valuable and others less valuable in the church or in the possibility of sinners hearing the truth, (James 2:1-13; Luke 19:1-9). In fact, when one with wisdom worships God, that one never forgets the amazing grace, mercy, and love of God shown in the gift of Jesus Christ from your sins! (Ephesians 2:1-10). That same wise person never looks down at others as though they cannot be saved! (See Luke 18:9-14).

Who is wise? The above has been written as a reflection on James 3:13-18. It is inadequate, there is more to be considered from God's word. However, is it enough for us to begin to really see ourselves, and our walk with the Lord, as He sees us? Will we look into the mirror of His word and see ourselves and then begin to come closer to what He wants us to be? (James 1:21-27). May God, our Father, help us to become wise in His sight and it will be shown from our hearts through our conduct as we walk in the light of Christ Jesus our Lord.

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