

# The book of James

3:13-18

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of James.  
This week we will study worldly wisdom verse Godly wisdom.

✠ **James 3:13** *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

**Who is wise and understanding among you?** Good question, and when you read it you may think of a few people that you think are wise. Maybe someone you admire at work that is a hard worker and seems to know everything about your job. Maybe it's a family member that everyone asks advice from or they seem to know so many things. It could be a friend or friends who you think would win on Jeopardy.

What about yourself, have you ever thought yourself as wise or having wisdom? Maybe after you stop laughing you would answer no.

But what are you basing your wisdom on, the world's wisdom or God's? What's the difference? That's what we are going to look at this week. After you are done with this study you may feel different about how wise you really are.

First off, the first question may be; what does wisdom really mean according to the bible?

According to Strong's it means:

1) wise

1a) skilled, expert: of artificers

1b) wise, skilled in letters, cultivated, learned

1b1) of the Greek philosophers and orators

1b2) of Jewish theologians

1b3) of Christian teachers

1c) forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution

I personally like the last one "*forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution*"

Have you ever planned a vacation and when it was all over with, it seemed nothing worked out the way you planned?

What about plans for a relationship with someone, but you found out later that this wasn't the right person for you?

Here is one we all have done. Have you ever planned a weekend to spend at home just relaxing and doing nothing, but come Sunday night you feel just as tired as you did on Friday because of all the things that came up that you had to do?

We all make plans and we all have had those plans never work out. Why does this happen? It's called worldly wisdom, or trying to do things by our own strength.

If you read throughout the bible, God says to always seek Him and His will and all things will work out fine.

- † **Prov 8:17-19** *I love those who love me,  
And those who seek me diligently will find me.  
Riches and honor are with me,  
Enduring riches and righteousness.  
My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold,  
And my revenue than choice silver.*
  
- † **Jer 29:13-14** *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.*
  
- † **John 6:26-29** *Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

Maybe you have had a desire to do for the Lord, wanting to win the Lotto thinking of how much good you could do with all that money and free time. When we seek the things of this world, we are seeking wisdom based on what we have in this world.

A lot of people try to use God as a Santa Claus or a genie thinking that God will supply all that they want in this world. A nice home, nice car, good job or money so they don't have to work etc.

But the bible does not teach this, Paul wrote to the Philippians:

- † **Phil 4:19** *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

We read this and use it to try to get what we want from God. But notice it says, "**All your need**" not "*All the things I want*".

Our children want chocolate cake and chocolate milk for breakfast, lunch and dinner. But they don't get it. We feed them with good food to keep them healthy and strong. It's the same way with God, we desire things of this world, but God always supplies what we need, not what we want.

We do give our children the chocolate cake and milk for dessert once in a while; it's a treat for them. God also gives us certain things in this world, not because we need them but because He loves us and he gives us treats in a sense.

So what does all of this have to do with wisdom?

To be wise is not to desire the things of this world, but the things of God.

We don't need worldly riches to accomplish the things of God, or to do His work.

Jesus wasn't rich (according to the world's standards). He didn't have a home or a new chariot or horse to ride around on, but God supplied all His needs and Jesus did more than any of us could imagine doing for the Lord.

It doesn't cost a penny to share Jesus with your co-workers or family or friends. And isn't that what ministry is all about anyway? Sharing Jesus with others!

To help put this into more perspective, let's look at our opening verse again in the NLT.

✠ **James 3:13 (NLT)** *If you are wise and understand God's ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise!*

So again the question is, what is wisdom?

In our studies on the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit we got this example from pastor Chuck Smith.

**Knowledge** tells you that little black animal with a white strip down it's back is not a cat.  
**Wisdom** tells you to stay away from it.

You may know a lot of things, which we learn as we go on in life. But the wisdom comes with what you do with that knowledge.

We know drinking and getting drunk is bad (Knowledge), but do you do it (Wisdom)?

We know drugs hurt our bodies, us and even others (Knowledge), but do you do it (Wisdom)?

We know adultery will destroy a marriage and many lives (Knowledge), but do you do it (Wisdom)?

We know we are strengthened by reading God's word and being in prayer (Knowledge), but do you do it (Wisdom)?

We know that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and the sins of others (Knowledge), but do you tell others (Wisdom)?

✠ **Romans 10:9-10** *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Maybe you do know all these things and even do them, but do you brag about it. Are you quick to tell others the things you have done? If so you have your reward!

We know this by the end of verse 13: ***And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise!***

So how do you know if you have worldly wisdom versus Godly wisdom?  
James first gives us the example of worldly wisdom.

✠ **James 3:14-16** *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

The things you do and the things you ask God for, why do you do them and why do you ask for them?

Do you ask from God because someone has something and you want what they have or even better so you can shove it under their noses?

Do you want a big ministry of teaching or sharing the gospel so others will see how great of a Christian you are?

Earthly wisdom desires the things of this world or to be noticed by the world.

If you look at Jesus' prayers in the bible, He never says "God I need this" or "Give me that so I can do Your will". No, Jesus knew that God would, and did supply everything He needed to fulfill what God had for His life.

So is it wrong to ask from God to supply for the ministry He has given you, or to even ask God for things?

Once again the answer is, what are your motives for asking?

Look what James says about this in chapter 4.

✠ **James 4:3 (NLT)** *And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong--you want only what will give you pleasure.*

I have told you in the past that I have a desire to do a web site of total worship to God. Now there could be one of two reasons why. First off, it could be that I want a web site that others would come to and say how great it looks and to receive recognition for having such a great web site.

On the other hand, I could desire this so that others would truly worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

If it is the first reason, then I should not, and will not do it, because it would be led by me and not bring glory to the Lord.

✠ **Matt 23:12** *And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

† **Ob 1:4** *"Though you ascend as high as the eagle,  
And though you set your nest among the stars,  
From there I will bring you down," says the LORD.*

Even this web site, I do desire for many to come here, but not to see how great of a site it is, but to learn God's word and to be strengthened spiritually, and for the lost to be saved.

So what if your motives have been all wrong and you have been doing it for self-glory and not really God's glory, should you stop it and get out of your ministry?  
If this is you, I would encourage you to pray and ask forgiveness from the Lord, asking Him to change your heart and to allow you to decrees and God to increase in your ministry.

If it's something you can't do, then I would say yes, you should stop it until you have a repentant heart.

So what is true Godly wisdom?

✠ **James 3:17-18** *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

First off Godly wisdom is **pure** which means: *"pure from defilement, not contaminated"*  
Not contaminated by the things of this world. In any ministry, once you start adding the things of this world to it, it is no longer pure.  
They advertise Dove soap as 99.9% pure, which means that there is 0.1% of impurity in it. It's the same way with wisdom, once you add even a small amount of the world to it; it is no longer pure no matter how little it is.

Next Godly wisdom is **peaceable**: *"which is produced in communion with God the Father, through His chastening"*

*"Chastening, that sounds like a bad thing or something that hurts?"*

It's not a bad thing but something to help us grow and mature in Christ.

† **Heb 12:11** *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

When you have Godly wisdom, you have a peace about what you are doing or planning on doing, knowing that it is from the Lord. When you have doubts you are relying on your own wisdom and there is no peace.  
Think of Moses, according to the bible the humblest man (next to Jesus). This is the one who led millions of Israelites out of Egypt into the promise land. But it wasn't always

like this. At the beginning Moses was reluctant to lead God's people out of Egypt, because he was relying on his own resources and ability to do it. But once Moses knew that it would be God doing it all, he had a peace about what God had asked him to do.

† **Ex 3:11-12** *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."*

Next Godly wisdom is **gentle** meaning that it does not force itself upon anyone. This is something we must remember when we are sharing Jesus with others. We tend to want others to accept Jesus so much that we force Jesus upon others, which draws them away from Jesus and not to Him.

† **2 Tim 2:24-26 (NLT)** *The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.*

Next Godly wisdom must be **willing to yield**: "to adopt a way of expressing by act the thoughts and feelings. It stands for a number of such acts, chiefly "to make, produce, create, cause,"

Which means:

† **1 Cor 9:19-23** *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

Next Godly wisdom is **full of mercy and good fruits**.

1) mercy: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them

1a) of men towards men: to exercise the virtue of mercy, show one's self merciful

1b) of God towards men: in general providence; the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ

1c) the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life

- 2) fruit: that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result
- 2a) work, act, deed
- 2b) advantage, profit, utility
- 2c) praises, which are presented to God as a thank offering
- 2d) to gather fruit (i.e. a reaped harvest) into life eternal (as into a granary), is used in fig. discourse of those who by their labors have fitted souls to obtain eternal life

Mercy in Godly wisdom will desire to help others and the effect is the fruit that comes from that mercy which is praises, which are presented to God as a thank offering. When you have Godly wisdom you will see fruit and will praise God for the fruit that comes from this wisdom.

Finally, Godly wisdom is *without partiality and without hypocrisy*.

Godly wisdom does not say that I will do only for a Christian or friend of mine, but will profit all, not being hypocritical towards others.

*“We sure spent a lot of time on Godly wisdom, how come?”*

We need to understand that all these elements are Godly wisdom not just part of them. If the wisdom you have is willing to yield but is not pure then it is not 100% pure wisdom from God, but you have mixed Godly wisdom with the things of this world. Remember our example of the Dove soap, which is 99.9% pure? When you take all of these elements of Godly wisdom and leave one out, then you must add something else to it to make it 100%, this something else is from the world and it is no longer pure wisdom from God.

Now you may have been given the pure wisdom from God, but when you try to take that wisdom, and do it the world's way, it's now defiled wisdom, tainted by the world. This is something that Christian musicians and worship leaders have to have caution with, because they will first have Godly wisdom and totally praise and worship the Lord, but then they think they need to add worldly things to this worship to cause others to join. This is totally wrong and should not be done.

Even pastors and teachers can run into the same thing wanting the church to grow, so they will have certain events to draw others to the church. This is also something that should be done with much prayer and fasting, seeking the Lord on what He would have the church to do.

After all, aren't we to share Jesus and draw people to Jesus and not our events?

Ministries will also have campaigns to get money, some even asking for money and offering a love gift in return for people giving. If you look at the definition of love in the bible, it doesn't say anywhere that it's a gift in return for a deed done.

The bible makes it clear that if a ministry is in need, that it should ask the body, and if they give then it is from the Lord, and if not, then God may have something else to do in the church or the ministry.

Pastor Chuck Smith says; *“Where God guides, God provides.”*

If God does not provide, don't try to use worldly wisdom to supply where God is not directing you to go.

Maybe God does want this ministry to happen, but God wants to provide in His way. I would encourage you to pray and seek the Lord and ask for His provision and guidance and to show you if you are doing the right thing. And if you are not, to show you what God would have you to do.

Once again it's seeking God's will and not trying to make God conform to our will!

Finally, to end this week's study, James adds this last verse.

✠ **James 3:18** *Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

✠ **James 3:18 (NLT)** *And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.*

Remember in the beginning of this study, I asked if you had wisdom? Do you feel different about your answer now?

Sure, your friends may seem to have wisdom, but in reality they have knowledge, which you can tell by what they do with that knowledge.

Maybe you now see that you are wiser than you thought and even wiser than your friends are. First off, do not boast in this wisdom or be puffed up (Full of pride). This wisdom that you now have discovered is from God, and He can take it from you just as quickly as He has given it to you.

Maybe you have discovered that you have much knowledge but not wisdom. You know a lot of things but never have used it for the good of others, but maybe for your own self-gain and profit.

I would encourage you to ask the Lord to fill you with His wisdom that you may do His will and no longer be self-seeking.

I know that there is a lot of information here and I would encourage you to read through it a few times taking notes on what God may be speaking to you.

Next week James addresses “Pride and Humility”

May God richly bless you with the wisdom that comes from above, that the Lord will be glorified in your life!