

22S30 James 3:13-18 (Part 7) God's Wisdom

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 3:13-18. God's Wisdom.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 3:13-18 (NAS) *¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Before we take a closer look at these verses, I hope you heard what James was saying. Wisdom can only come from God. Our selfishness, bitterness, jealousy, hypocrisy is evil.

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, James 3:13 (NAS) *¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom* James is setting us up a little bit here with this question, who among you think you are wise or have knowledge and understanding. This is a loaded question because if we think so highly of ourselves, then were are the actions that show

this wisdom. Actions that show our gentleness. I think I like the way the NIV and NLT translate this. "humility that comes from wisdom" or I personally like the KJV which uses meekness. You can get this idea that true wisdom exposes us for who we really are. God is God and we are not. Only God is truly wise and without God we can do nothing.

Let's read on, James 3:14 (NAS). *¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.* I really like the way the NLT translates this. "don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying" or NIV which says "do not boast about it or deny the truth. Our selfish ambitions and jealousy is evil. It is a corruption of our heart that is like a disease which if not treated will eventually destroy us. Not matter our excuses, we cannot deny the truth.

Then James says in James 3:15 (NAS). *¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.* Wow, did you hear that. Our Selfishness and our jealousy is demonic, earthly, human. It is not the Wisdom of God, which means it is not wisdom at all. We are lying to ourselves, remember you can't deny the truth, no matter how many times and ways you try. No excuses, get right with God.

Then James says in James 3:16 (NAS). *¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.* James is stating a fact here. These is not place in the life of a Christian for jealousy and selfishness. But we all struggle with this. I know I do. But when we put ourselves first, ahead of God, then our lives become more of a struggle. James uses the word disorder and every evil thing. NKJV uses envy and self-seeking. When we give in to this lie, the lie of envy or selfishness, we miss out on what God wants for us. The good things of God turn into the chaos and disorder of the evil one.

But then James brings us back to a positive place in James 3:17-18 (NAS). *¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.* If we choose true wisdom, God's wisdom, then our actions are peace-loving, impartial, free of hypocrisy, full of mercy, reasonable, gentle, good fruits and on and on. God's wisdom results in good things, positive things, things that give life instead of suck the life out of us and everyone around us. When we exercise God's wisdom we feel better and those around us fell better. This is one of the ways we are the salt and the light to the world. Showing Jesus, in our actions, in our behaviors.

Let's review.

- 1) Are you Wise? Well James says no. If you think you are wise, then you are probably not. Only God is wise.
- 2) Deny the truth? What truth. For starters, you are not the most important person in the world. Jesus is. We need to remember that. How would Jesus respond in your situation. You know the truth, you can't deny the truth. And when we do, our selfishness and jealousy with make our situations horrible and everyone around will feel it too. Miserable people make other people miserable.

- 3) God's Wisdom? God's wisdom results in actions which are peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, impartial, free of hypocrisy and produce good fruits.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this, James is making a great point. When we follow God's wisdom and do things the way God wants us to do things. Everything is better, starting with our attitude. No matter our circumstances, our attitude and actions breath life into the people around us. Positive actions just make us feel better. But on the other hand, if we follow what our selfishness and jealousy want us to do, then it is very very bad for us and for everyone we are around. Choose the truth, God's wisdom in action in our lives.

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.