

Pure Religion

The Tale of Two Wisdoms – James 3:13-18

April 8, 2018

ONE PRINCIPLE OF WISDOM—Wisdom is *displayed*...it's shown forth in knowledge practically applied according to the will of God in a spirit of humility and gentleness.

- Who is wise or has understanding (v. 13)?
 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of both knowledge and wisdom (cf. Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10).
 - The one who is wise and has understanding demonstrates this truth in their character and their conduct.

TWO TYPES OF WISDOM—There is true wisdom that is from above, and there is a pseudo-wisdom, a false wisdom, that is from below.

- Wisdom from below (vv. 14-16).
 - This is a pseudo-wisdom, a false wisdom.
 - It is characterized by bitter jealousy and selfish ambition (vv. 14,16).
 - Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition produce disorder and every vile practice, and this is contrary to the order and purity of God and his people (cf. 1 Cor. 14:33).
 - It is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic (v. 15).
- Wisdom from above (vv. 17-18).
 - This is true wisdom, and it comes from the Lord (cf. Prov. 2:6).
 - True wisdom (v. 17) is described as:
 - Pure (cf. Ps. 12:6)
 - Peaceable, gentle, and open to reason
 - Full of mercy and good fruits (cf. Jas. 2:8-13)
 - Impartial and sincere (cf. Jas. 1:6; 2:4)
 - True wisdom (v. 18) produces:
 - Peacemakers
 - Peaceful soil
 - A harvest of righteousness

THREE POINTS OF APPLICATION RELATED TO WISDOM:

- Let's pursue God's wisdom in his Word... let's be "creatures of the Word."
- Let's pursue God's face in prayer and ask that he might give us wisdom.
- Let's pursue Christ, who became for us wisdom from God, and rejoice in him.

Recommended Reading:

The Christ of Wisdom by O. Palmer Robertson

God's Wisdom for Navigating Life (a devotional) by Timothy Keller

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read James 3:13-18

1. What comes to your mind when you think about wisdom? Is it consistent with what James and the rest of the biblical witness describe as wisdom?
2. Discuss the relationship between good conduct, works, and meekness/humility, and how together they display wisdom to the world.
3. How do the characteristics of wisdom from below produce "disorder" and "every vile practice"? Do you see this type of wisdom and fruit in your own life?
4. How do the characteristics of wisdom from above relate to peace, peacemaking, and righteousness? Do you see this type of wisdom and fruit in your own life?
5. Of the three points of application mentioned this morning, which do you find to be most difficult to apply? How might you go about addressing this difficulty in your own life, or maybe even in the community of your Life Group?
6. How does our pursuit of wisdom intersect with our pursuit of Christ? Do you believe that we could spend all our efforts in pursuing wisdom and yet be foolish if we miss Christ?
7. Spend some time as a Life Group thanking God for sending his Son to be wisdom for us, and then discuss the many wonderful ways that Jesus Christ became for us wisdom from God...and then rejoice!