



Title: Wisdom Displayed

Date: October 29, 2023

Scripture Text: James 3:13-18

Series: The Behavior of a Believer

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Morningside Church

If you have a need or a prayer request, contact the church office.

850.878.5503

office@morningsidetlh.org

We are continuing the series The Behavior of a Believer, a study of the book of James. Today we finish up chapter 3 with a focus on wisdom. In today's text James distinguishes godly wisdom from worldly wisdom. The distinction is in how each presents themselves. James has already said that faith is evident in our works. In today's sermon we'll see how wisdom is evident by works as well. The type of works indicates the source of wisdom, God or the world.

I. The Exhortation to Wisdom (James 3:13)

James starts this section on wisdom with a question, which is really a challenge. If you claim to be wise, 'show me'. Wisdom is not the accumulation of knowledge, but the appropriate application of knowledge. Wisdom is not intellectual pondering but requires action. These actions are expressed as good behavior and more specifically, gentleness. Gentleness is included as an aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)), and in the Beatitudes ("Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." ([Matt. 5:5](#))).

- How would you define 'gentleness'?
- How is gentleness a part of good behavior?
- What are examples of the opposite behavior of gentleness?
 - How many of these are you guilty of?
- We've already seen how James tells us what to do if we lack wisdom ([James 1:5](#)).
 - How do we ask God for wisdom?
 - According to [James 1:5](#), how much wisdom will God give?

Godly wisdom is available, all that must be done is to ask. No one has an excuse to not possess and exercise godly wisdom.

II. The Description of Wisdom

- Wisdom of the World ([James 3:14-16](#))

James describes the motive, source, and results of worldly wisdom. The motivation is *bitter jealousy*, *selfish ambition*, and *arrogance*. The source is *earthly*, *natural*, and *demonic*. The result is *disorder* and *evil*.

[OVER]



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- Define bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, and arrogance.
- What do the three of these have in common?
- How are these motives reflective of their source (earthly, natural, and demonic)?
- Describe what the results of worldly wisdom look like?
- How can you avoid falling into the trap of pursuing worldly wisdom?

- Godly Wisdom ([James 3:17-18](#))

The characteristics of godly wisdom are purity, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. The source is from above (heavenly Father ([James 1:17](#))), and the results are peace (“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” ([Matt. 5:9](#))).

- Define the various characteristics of godly wisdom.
- What do they have in common?
- How are these characteristics reflective of the source?
- What are ways you can foster the characteristics of godly wisdom?
- How might a spirit of humility contribute to growing in godly wisdom?
- How might pride hinder godly wisdom?
- Going back to [verse 13](#) where James describes godly wisdom by its deeds. What are examples of deeds that would reflect godly wisdom?
- How can you better practice those deeds?
- If you have challenges demonstrating godly wisdom, what does [James 1:5](#) say to do?