

August 30, 2020

“Two Kinds of Wisdom”  
Lesson 5 of Unit

James 3:13-18  
James 5:7-12

### **Intro**

Our final lesson about wisdom from James (and for our Summer Quarter) deals with topics James has been writing about throughout the epistle: trials and wisdom (the third, wealth, does not get discussed in this section).

We don't suffer much obvious persecution in America at this time. But more subtle forms may reach us, such as being ridiculed for our beliefs, or being ostracized at work or in our neighborhoods. Part of today's study is James' answer to our heart's questions of “How should I handle persecution when I encounter it?”

Remember James' advice from our first lesson this month, where he encourages us to have perseverance in the face of trials and temptations (James 1:2-4). We are able to do this by seeking God's wisdom (1:5). In today's concluding lesson, James brings up two very different situations, but both require wisdom on the part of believers to deal with them successfully.

### **Read James 3:13-18**

1. What are some ways that we can tell if someone is wise and has understanding, especially if that person is a Christian? What identifiers does James use in vs. 13? What two traits does James say show a “good life”?
2. If you choose to focus this week on working on one of these two qualities, which will you choose: gaining wisdom so that gentleness will follow, or the other way around? Why that choice?
3. What things does James say in vs. 14-16 constitute “early wisdom”? In what ways would those qualities be considered “wise” from an earthly standpoint? What is the source of earthly wisdom?
4. What is the end result in vs. 16 of applying earthly wisdom instead of Godly (spiritual) wisdom?

5. What are the qualities of the wisdom from heaven (God) in vs. 17? For a fuller thought, look up multiple translations to see how “submission” is rendered. What does it mean to you for someone to be “impartial” and “sincere”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What does it take to be a peacemaker (vs. 18)? What is the value of being a peacemaker (see Matt. 5:9 as well)?

**Read James 5:7-12 (Read 5:1-6 as well for context)**

1. What does James ask Christians to do in vs. 7 about the economic oppression they’ve suffered in vs. 1-6? (Keep in mind that the 1<sup>st</sup> Century world is different than the one we live in today.) What analogy does he use to encourage this response? How will the Lord’s return address the suffering they’ve gone through?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why do you think James essentially repeats his advice in vs. 8 from what he said in vs. 7?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What similar phrases does James use in vs. 8-9? How might what he says in that phrase help people’s response to the problem at hand in this chapter? How might it help you in tough situations you are in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is James’ warning in the first half of vs. 9? Why might these actions be occurring within the body? What do the following verses say about the Bible’s recommended action(s) toward fellow believers? I Pet. 4:8-9; I Cor. 16:14, 22; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:26.

5. In vs. 10-11, who does James refer his readers to in dealing with suffering? What and how do they instruct us about dealing with suffering? (Heb. 10:32-38 and Ch. 11 may be a good resource)
6. What might James' purpose be in finishing vs. 11 with the phrase, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy"?
7. In vs. 12, what does the phrase "above all" suggest about what James says here? Whose ideas is he echoing (see Matt. 5:33-37)? What is the danger of swearing an oath? Why is a simple "Yes" or "No" better?

Application: The two things this week's study focused on were the trustworthiness of wisdom from God, and the need for that wisdom in multiple different situations. If we have God's wisdom, then whatever we suffer is seen through the lens of God's working in and through us, and not from the worldly viewpoint of being treated unfairly. Having that correct view allows us to persevere until Jesus returns or we join Him in heaven. It's important for us to remember that we need to heed God's wisdom; failing to do that has both earthly and eternal consequences.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for providing us with Your wisdom through Your Word. We need it every day. Help us to seek this wisdom daily, so when we face trials, it will our first response to turn to You and Your wisdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.