

Wisdom for Living in a Fallen World Pt.2

James 3:13-18

James 3:13–18 (NKJV)

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Introduction:

The last few years have been a vivid example of what a culture looks like without the wisdom of God. More and more, we see what it looks like when the seed of secularism and atheism take hold and

produce the deadly fruit a people that have no fear of God.

The Apostle Paul, states the summation of the depravity of man in these terms.

Romans 3:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

This is the root cause of society’s decline and the root cause of the practice of evil by men.

Psalms 36:1–4 (NKJV)

- 1 An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked:
There is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes,
When he finds out his iniquity *and* when he hates.
- 3 The words of his mouth *are* wickedness and deceit;
He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.
- 4 He devises wickedness on his bed;
He sets himself in a way *that is* not good;
He does not abhor evil.

A person who has no fear of God has no fear of sin.
A person who has no fear of God will see no need to shun evil.

A society what has abandoned all fear of God will plunge head first into every form of evil and debauchery that the depraved mind can imagine.

Where there is no fear of God, there is no wisdom and where there is no wisdom there is no salvation and where there is no saved people there is no purity and holiness..... only evil.

Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ “The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom.....

Job 28:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ And to man He said,
‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.’ ”

Proverbs 8:13 (NKJV)

¹³ The fear of the Lord *is* to hate evil;

Proverbs 16:6 (NKJV)

6And by the fear of the Lord *one* departs from evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

Martin, Albert N.. *The Forgotten Fear: Where Have All the God-Fearers Gone?*

“The fear of God is a massive and dominant theme in Scripture. It is also a theme that was very prominent both in the thinking and in the preaching of our spiritual forefathers. When our spiritual forefathers desired to describe someone who was characterized by genuine godliness, they would often call him a “God-fearing man.” This designation reflected the fact that men realized the fear of God was nothing less than the soul of godliness. Take away the soul from the body, and all you have left in a few days is a stinking carcass. Take away the fear of God from any profession of godliness, and all

that is left is the stinking carcass of pharisaism, barren religiosity, or calculated hypocrisy.”

Martin, Albert N.. *The Forgotten Fear: Where Have All the God-Fearers Gone?* (p. 7). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.

Jeremiah testified, “Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due! For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You.... It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens” (Jer. 10:7, 12). In the words of Hosea, “Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth” (Hos. 6:3).

In the Old Testament, the phrase “fear of the Lord” was equivalent to “trusting in the Lord,” and referred to saving faith, as is made clear in Hebrews 11. Moses wrote, “You shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.... Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 8:6; 10:12; cf. 14:23; 17:19).

Even in New Testament times, the term “God-fearer” was used of Gentile converts to Judaism, who trusted in the Lord to the extent that their knowledge and understanding of revelation from God allowed. Luke refers to the Roman centurion Cornelius as “a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews” (Acts 10:22). In Athens, Paul “was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles” (17:17). Like Jews whose faith was truly in God, Gentiles who were genuine God-fearers inevitably recognized the truth of the gospel when they heard it and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 167). Moody Press.

The Bible teaches that the only ones who truly fear God are believers. Not those that believe in a God of their own imaginations, but rather those that believe in the God of Bible, revealed in Jesus Christ. In other words, Christians. True believers, True worshipers. Saints. The Redeemed. The Born again, raised from the dead, transformed new creatures in Christ.

Christianity starts with a healthy fear of God.

Remember the thief on the cross,

Luke 23:39–40 (NKJV)

³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?”

The Bible identifies occupants of heaven as God Fearers.

Revelation 11:15–18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power and
reigned.

¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be
judged,

And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

The ones who fear God, believe in God and trust Christ!!

[Matthew 7:24–28](#) (NKJV)

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

[Matthew 24:42–46](#) (NKJV)

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not

allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Matthew 25:1–2 (NKJV)

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

It is the consistent testimony of Scripture that the wise and the one who possesses wisdom is the Christian.

LESSON

- I. The Singularity of Wisdom
- II. The Sense of Wisdom
- III. The Source of Wisdom

I. The Singularity of Wisdom

13 Who *is* **wise** and **understanding** among you?

wise

⁴⁶⁸⁰. σοφός **sophós**; fem. *sophé*, neut. *sophón*, adj. The meaning of *sophós* in the NT and its Hebr. equivalent, *chōkmah*, differs from the classical meaning in at least two ways. First of all, the biblical concept of wisdom is theocentric rather than anthropocentric. It denotes a fear of God and an understanding of His ways. Lastly, wisdom signifies the possession of a certain adeptness or practical ability. It does not necessarily imply brilliance or scholastic training; rather, *sophós* indicates adroitness, the ability to apply with skill what one knows (especially religious truth). In some instances, however, particularly in the Pauline writings, the word is used of one who has acquired special information, secret doctrine (*mustérion* [3466]). Here the noetic aspect of the word is prominent in its meaning. Hence, the following meanings:

(I) Skillful, expert (1 Cor. 3:10; Sept.: 2 Chr. 2:7; Is. 3:3).

(II) Skilled in the affairs of life, discreet, judicious, practically wise (1 Cor. 6:5; Sept.: Deut. 1:13; 2 Sam. 13:3; Is. 19:11).

(III) Skilled in learning, learned, intelligent, enlightened, in respect to things human and divine.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

understanding

1990. ἐπιστήμων *epistēmōn*; gen. *epistēmonos*, masc.–fem., neut. *epistēmon*, adj. from *epístamai* (1987), to know thoroughly, understand. Endued with knowledge, understanding, expertise epistemology (James 3:13; Sept.: Deut. 1:13; 4:6), the equivalent to the Eng. “scientist.”

Syn.: *gnōstēs* (1109), one who knows, an expert.

Ant.: *idiōtēs* (2399), a person without professional knowledge, an unskilled, unlearned person;

13 Who *is wise* and *understanding* among you?

We would conclude, Christians, specifically those who are diligent to apply God’s Word, because even

as a christian, you can know the facts of God's Word and not necessarily apply them.

I. The Singularity of Wisdom

II. The Sense of Wisdom

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that his works are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

The sense of wisdom, or the perception and evidence of wisdom is seen in the conduct, just like the works show the faith, so wisdom is seen in its works.

v. 13....Let him show by good conduct *that his works are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

His question does not imply that none is wise but challenges to self-examination those who rashly assume that they are.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 204). BMH Books.

v. 13....Let him show

James demands that the possession of wisdom, like faith (2:14–26), must be proved by conduct. The aorist imperative “let him show” (*deixatō*) calls for an effective demonstration. The proof must be given, not through victory by a clever argument, but “by his good life.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

good conduct

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

391. ἀναστροφή *anastrophḗ*; gen. *anastrophḗs*, fem. noun from *anastréphō* (390), to turn up, to move about. A turning about. In the NT, mode of life, conduct, behavior, deportment

v. 13....Let him show by good conduct

that his works are done in the

meekness of wisdom.

The attractiveness of his life must be established “by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.” His deeds, which are the acid test of his wisdom, must be wrought by his personal faith, providing external evidence of God’s transforming power within.

His deeds must be “done in the humility that comes from wisdom.” The emphasis is on “humility” (*prautēti*),

more commonly translated “meekness” or “gentleness.” Such “meekness” is a characteristic of true wisdom and is the opposite of arrogant self-assertiveness (cf. 1:21*b*). It is that attitude of heart that produces gentleness and mildness in dealing with others—not weakness (Matt. 11:29) but power under control. The meek man does not feel a need to contend for the recognition of his rights or acceptance of his personal views. His life will be characterized by modesty and unobtrusiveness. “This Christian meekness,” Moo notes, “involves a healthy understanding of our own unworthiness before God and a corresponding humility and lack of pride in our dealings with our fellowmen.” Understandably, such an attitude of meekness was not prized or appreciated in the non-Christian world.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 205). BMH Books.

I. The Singularity of Wisdom

II. The Sense of Wisdom

III. The Source of Wisdom

There are two kinds of wisdom because there are two sources of wisdom

1. There is a wisdom that comes from below
2. There is a wisdom that comes from above.

The first in our list is stated in verse. **15** This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic....

so this wisdom would be defined as,
wisdom — how one's life is lived.

The principles, beliefs or philosophy or lies that is applied to everyday life in thought, action and attitude.

The second is stated in verse

17 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.

wisdom —-how one's life is lived

based on the principles, beliefs, theology and truths of Scripture as defined in the Bible.

One is from the earth

The other is from heaven

One is from demons

The other is from God

One is based on lies

The other is based on truth.

One leads to sin and death

The other leads to righteousness and life.

One is a proof of your lost condition

The other is a proof of your conversion.

So James tells us that there are 2 sources of wisdom and where it comes from directly affects what kind of wisdom it is!

1. There is a wisdom that comes from below
James tells us 3 things about this kind of wisdom.

1. Its Motives

2. Its Marks

3. Its Manifestations

1. Its Motives

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter

envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

The key here is what is in the heart. Here we are talking about what moves you. What motivates you to do the things you do. What motivates you to think the way you think and what motivates you to act and react the way you do.

The unregenerate heart is evil, as Jeremiah says desperately wicked. It can be and often is evil all the time.

Genesis 6:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

And here James identifies the heart of the lost man as one that has bitter envy and self-seeking. In verse 15, he identifies this as the wisdom that is from below. From Hell. Its source is demonic.

1. Bitter envy

Bitter—-basic meaning of pointed, sharp, prickly, or pungent, and James has just used it in that literal sense in relation to bitter water coming out of a fountain (v.

11). Here he uses it metaphorically to describe the worst sort of **jealousy**, that which is harsh, sharp, cutting, and destructive, having no concern for the feelings or welfare of those who are its objects.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 171). Moody Press.

πικρός *pikrós*; fem. *pikrá*, neut. *pikrón*, masc. adj. Bitter. In the Sept., it was used as a neut. or fem. pl. to indicate the fruits of the wild vine or bitter gourd which are so excessively bitter and acrid as to be a kind of poison (see 2 Kgs. 4:39). In the NT, used of taste, meaning bitter, acrid, brackish (James 3:11). Metaphorically it means bitter, cruel, malignant (James 3:14, indicating bitter, harsh, cruel feelings).

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

2205. ζήλος *zēlos*; gen. *zēlou*, masc. noun from *zéō* (2204), to be hot, fervent. Zeal, used in a good sense (John 2:17; Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 7:7, 11; 11:2; Col. 4:13; Sept.: Ps. 69:9; 119:139) and more often in an evil sense, meaning envy, jealousy, anger (Acts 5:17; 13:45; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 3:6; Heb. 10:27, “fiery wrath” [a.t.]; James 3:14, 16; Sept.: Zeph. 1:18; 3:8). Unlike *phthónos* (5355), envy, when used in a good sense, *zēlos* signifies the honorable emulation with the consequent imitation of that which presents itself to the mind’s eye as excellent. According to Aristotle, *zēlos* grieves, not because another has the good, but that he himself does not have it and seeks to supply the deficiency in himself. However, *zēlos* may degenerate into a jealousy which makes war upon the

good it sees in another, thus troubling that good and diminishing it. This is why we find *zélōs* joined together with *éris* (2054), contention (Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

It has two basic senses: a neutral or even positive sense, “zeal,” “jealousy”; and a negative sense, “envy.” The former meaning is seen in those many texts that describe God as “jealous”: demanding that his people serve him alone, renouncing allegiance to any other god or “idol.” This meaning, then, is applied to human beings who display a similar concern to protect God’s people or institutions from any hint of compromise or defilement.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 171). Eerdmans; Apollos.

Particularly, as the context suggests, he is thinking of the kind of jealousy or envy that people display when other people challenge their own ideas and gain some hearing for them (this sense is evident in the NT in Acts 5:17 and 13:45).

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 171). Eerdmans; Apollos.

It ties in with James 3:1, where James warned them not to be ambitious for spiritual offices. The wisdom of the world says, “Promote yourself. You’re as good

as the other candidates, maybe better! The wheel that squeaks the loudest gets the grease.” Sad to say, there is a great deal of selfish, carnal promotion among God’s people. Even the Apostles argued over who was the greatest in the kingdom.

It is easy to go on an ego trip under the guise of spiritual zeal. The Pharisees used their religious activities to promote the praise of men (Matt. 6:1–18). We ought to be zealous in the things of the Lord, but we must be sure that our motives are right. The wisdom of this world exalts man and robs God of glory. In 1 Corinthians 1:17ff, Paul discussed the wisdom of God and the wisdom of this world, and he explained why God works as He does: “That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:29). He concluded the section with the admonition, “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31).

Is our zeal for the Lord spiritual or carnal? Do we rejoice when others succeed, or do we have secret envy and criticism? Do we feel burdened when others fail, or are we glad? When the wisdom of the world gets into the church, there is a great deal of fleshly promotion and human glorification. Beware!

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 363–364). Victor Books.

2. Self-seeking.

A second and closely related motive behind human wisdom is **selfish ambition**, which is typically the motive on which bitter jealousy is based. **Selfish ambition** translates the single Greek word *eritheia*, which connotes strife, contentiousness, and extreme selfishness. The term originally referred to spinning thread for hire, then more broadly to sewing for hire, then more broadly still to any sort of work or undertaking that was done for personal gain. The idea of **ambition** is implied here by the context.

ἐριθεία *eritheía*; gen. *eritheías*, fem. noun from *eritheúō* (n.f.), to work for hire, usually in the mid. voice, used in a bad sense of those who seek only their own. Contention, strife, rivalry. It represents a motive of self-interest, mercenary interest (Phil. 1:16; 2:3). It also meant canvassing for public office, scheming. (Rom. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; James 3:14, 16.)

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

Understandably, the word became closely associated with those who sought high political office or other positions of influence and power. It was used of personal gratification and self-fulfillment at any cost, which are the ultimate goals of all fleshly endeavors. It has no room for others, much less

genuine humility. It is that ultimate self-elevation rampant in the world today which is the antithesis of what the humble, selfless, giving, loving, and obedient child of God is called to be.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 171). Moody Press.

This word means “party spirit.” It was used by the Greeks to describe a politician out canvassing for votes. The world’s wisdom says, “Get all the support you can! Ask the people in the church if they are for you or against you!” Of course, this spirit of self-seeking only creates rivalry and division in the church

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 364). Victor Books.

The basic thought of the term seems to be that of one who, for personal advantage, works to promote a definite cause in an unethical manner. It thus denotes a party spirit, or factiousness. This meaning makes good sense in all its New Testament occurrences (Rom. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3; James 3:14, 16).

In the final judgment, salvation will be determined by,
[Romans 2:8](#) (NKJV)

⁸ but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath,

Paul make it clear that this is a work or product of our sinful flesh.

[Galatians 5:19–20](#) (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Paul warned us not to have the attitude or motivation of selfish ambition in

[Philippians 2:3](#) (NKJV)

³ *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

And then when on to illustrate it by one who set all rightful glory aside to humbly seek the lowest to save others.

[Philippians 2:5–8](#) (LSB)

⁵ Have this *way of* thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

- 7 but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men.
- 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Thus it denotes a willingness “to use unworthy and divisive means” to promote one’s own views or interest. It is a temper tragically injurious to Christian fellowship.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 206–207). BMH Books.

These two motives of “Bitter envy and selfish-ambition” are a perfect description of the world’s wisdom. Get all you can get while you can get it and if someone is in the way, run over them. Self promotion base on envy of position, power and material things is the goal of much of our culture. We are are self absorbed people.

I was told this past week that there is a Barber shop here locally that has a “selfie station”, where you can pause for a moment and take a selfie picture. Incredible.

We have been able in the last few years, to take the already self-centered nature of fallen man and add

fuel by the gallons to cause an explosion of love of self. We are truly one of the most narcissistic cultures in history.

“Psychology Today” website states

“Here is a shortlist of social damage that narcissists are likely to cause:

- Cheating, deception, and lying have become a new normal, most notably in education, business, politics, and the media.
- Crime is rampant and growing in all major cities.
- Riots motivated across a range of left-to-right ideologies seem to be increasing.
- Fathers in large numbers abandon their children.
- Marriage is in decline; more couples are deliberately childless.

- Widespread alcohol, drug, sex, and other addictions increase the number of people who contribute little to society and require support services from others.
- Narcissistic hostility leads to calling people who believe differently vile names and shunning, magnifying social alienation.
- The divisive diminishing of others for "bad" beliefs and behaviors is aggravated when narcissists hypocritically do the same bad things and excuse the wrongdoing of those in their own in-group.
- People are making more and more unrealistic demands on society and government to cater to their perceived needs.

What the world needs is less self-centeredness and more personal emphasis on gratitude, work ethic, accomplishment, moral standards, character, and helpfulness to others.

Selfishness is our god. We worship ourselves. It causes suffering for everyone, including the narcissists.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/memory-medic/202105/our-narcissistic-culture>

This is hard for me to say, but they are right. But what is worse, is that much of this self-love and self-centeredness is at the core what our culture believes. There were billboard signs recently promoting abortion by telling you to love your self first.

And these self-centered love of self principles are the governing forces of our society. This is what is at the core of our culture.

Those whose lives are based on and motivated by human, ungodly wisdom are inevitably self-centered, living in a world in which their own personal ideas, desires, and standards are the measure of everything. Whatever and whoever serves those ends is considered good and friendly; whatever and whoever threatens those ends is considered bad and an enemy. Those who

are engulfed in self-serving worldly wisdom resent anyone or anything that comes between them and their own objectives.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 171). Moody Press.

bitter envy and selfish ambition are contrary to humility. If, then, humility marks the wise person, these negative qualities exclude a person from being considered wise.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 171). Eerdmans; Apollos.

v. 14

But if you have— — if is a 1st class conditional that assume the potential reality of the motive. **“Have”** is a present tense verb, meaning that this may have been a on going problem among some he was writing to.

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

(*kauchaomai*). The simple form of this verb is also translated “boast”—probably the best translation of a word that usually has the dual sense “take pride in” and “put confidence in.” Its sense is best gained

from the OT verse that provides a key background for its use in the NT, Jer. 9:23–24

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 172). Eerdmans; Apollos.

Jeremiah 9:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ Thus says the Lord:

“Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might,
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;

²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness,
judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

The word for “boast” (*katakauchaomai*) is a compound form of a verb used especially often in Paul (*kauchaomai*

The compound form of the verb that is used here usually has the sense of “boast over against” something or somebody

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 172). Eerdmans; Apollos.

Romans 11:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ do not **boast** against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

boast —conveys the picture of gloating over another on the ground of assumed superiority

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 207). BMH Books.

Do not lie against the truth— or better exult your belief above there truth as if your understanding is better than Gods—-hence deny the truth.

Your self exaltation, and belief in human wisdom is a lie and is opposite the truth. Your self promotion is but a shell game for what you really are.

Someone once said,

“Don’t get upset when someone says hateful things about you, because you are far worse”.

The world has its own set of values that it promotes as wisdom.

The world says,

We understand man, he evolved from an ape and is just an advance animal and is no different than any other clump of cells and has no more value. You can kill them if they are an inconvenience

before they are born and you can euthanize them if they inconvenience you when they are old.

God says

I understand man...he was created by Me and in My image and fell into sin and is devolving into more sin but is redeemable by My sacrifice on the Cross to be freed from his sin. His life is created by me at conception and is valuable and his life is to honor when he is old because I decreed his days.

The World says,

You can live together and have sexual relations without being married so that you can determine if you are compatible and can live together.

God says,

You must be married before you have sexual relation or you sin against God and each other and distort the purpose and plan God has for a man and woman to be married.

The World says

Marriage can be between a man and woman or a man and man or woman and a woman, and that it is a great thing for 2 men to act as if they are married and raise children.

God says,

Marriage has always been between one man and one woman for life and in that context children are produced and raised in the admonition of the Lord. Men with men and women with women is not marriage but is an abomination in his sight and will be judged.

The World says

Worship who ever you want to worship and believe in what ever god you want to, but just don't force your god on me.

God says

Love the Lord your God and worship Him only. He is the only true God and must be worshipped as such and must be preached to all the nations to repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

The World says

Man is basically good, with a few exceptions.

God says

Man is sinful and there are no exceptions.

I could go on and on showing you the contrast. You get the point. Those in the world who claim to be wise boast of the knowledge and wisdom but are at the very same time denying and lying against the truth.

1. Its Motives

2. *Its Marks*

15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

So this wisdom is not from above, where the good gifts come from according to James 1:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Hence not from God, not from His Word.

You don't ask God for it like you do in James 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

This wisdom has its own place, product and person behind it.

But it is

1. Earthly
2. Sensual, natural
3. Demonic.

1. Earthly— --

ἐπίγειος *epígeios*; gen. *epigeíou*, masc.–fem., neut. *epígeion*, adj. from *epí* (1909), upon, and *gḗ* (1093), the earth. Earthly, being upon the earth (Phil. 2:10; 3:19). Earthly, belonging to the earth or wrought in men upon the earth (John 3:12

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

But when used in the sense of thinking or behavior, “earthly” has a negative nuance, suggesting a narrow perspective that fails to consider God’s realm and will (cf. Phil. 3:19): “earthbound” is a good rendering

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

As “earthly” it springs out of and is limited to the frail and finite life of unregenerated humanity and associated with its turbulent affairs.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 208). BMH Books.

it is limited to the present, material world of time and space. By definition, it is restricted to things that man can theorize, discover, and accomplish by himself. It has no place for God or the things of God. It has no place for spiritual truth or illumination. It is a closed

system, a circumscribed box, as it were, of man's own making and choosing under satanic prompting.

As James has just noted, this wisdom is motivated by pride, selfish ambition, arrogance, self-centeredness, self-interest, and self-aggrandizement. It spawns a society whose watchwords are "Do your own thing," "Have it your way," and "Look out for number one." It pervades philosophy, education, politics, economics, sociology, psychology, and every other dimension and aspect of contemporary human life.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 172–173). Moody Press.

2. Sensual, natural

ψυχικός *psuchikós*; fem. *psuchikḗ*, neut.

psuchikón, adj. from *psuchḗ* (5590), soul, the part of the immaterial life held in common with the animals, as contrasted with spirit (*pneúma* [4151]), only in man, enabling him to communicate with God.

Natural, pertaining to the natural as distinguished from the spiritual or glorified nature of man. 1 Cor. 15:44 refers to a body *psuchikón*, a body governed by the soul or natural and fallen instinct of man, and a body *pneumatikón* (4152), spiritual, governed by the divine quality in man, the spirit.

Rendered as “natural” in 1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44, 46 and sensual in James 3:15; Jude 1:19. The term *psuchikós* is not a word of honor even as *sarkikós* (4559), carnal, is not.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

the word always has a negative sense in the NT, in all five of its occurrences being placed in explicit opposition to “spirit” or “spiritual” (see also 1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44, 46; Jude 19). It has to do with that part of man “where human feeling and human reason reign supreme.”

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

James has arranged his three descriptions of false wisdom in ascending order of strength:

“earthbound,” “unspiritual,” and, climactically, “demonic.”

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

denotes that which is essentially human, life apart from God as contrasted to life imparted by God, devoid of the Spirit of God, hence “unspiritual.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 208). BMH Books.

Thus the term here describes a wisdom that springs from the mental and emotional impulses of fallen humanity and is marked by its depraved concepts, desires, and aspirations

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 208–209). BMH Books.

It relates only to the fallen, unredeemed man, who is wholly corrupted by the Fall and separated from God

Those who rely on this wisdom are “worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit” (Jude 19). All of their feelings, desires, appetites, standards, and impulses are grounded in a humanistic view of the world and of man, who, understandably, becomes the measure of all things. Such wisdom not only feeds the flesh but also is foolish (1 Cor. 1:20).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 173). Moody Press.

1 Corinthians 2:4–16 (NKJV)

⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your

faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But as it is written:

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who
love Him.”*

¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. ¹⁶ For “*who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?*” But we have the mind of Christ.

3. Demonic.

δαιμονιώδης *daimoniōdēs*; gen. *daimoniōdous*, masc.–fem., neut. *daimoniōdes*, adj. from *daimónion* (1140), devil. Demon–like. in NT demonic, devilish (James 3:15; Sept.: Ps. 91:6, *daimonίου*). See *daimonízomai* (1139), to be possessed by a demon; *daimónion* (1140), demon; *daímōn* (1142), demon, devil.

Syn.: *ponēros* (4190), evil, wicked.

This latter word (Gk. *daimoniōdēs*, lit. “pertaining to demons”) occurs only here in the Bible. It may mean that the wisdom is demonic either in nature or, more probably, in origin

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

this false wisdom, which does not lead to good works and humility (v. 13), is characterized by “the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Satan has always promised wisdom to those he tempts, asserting that God’s Word should be doubted and his own accepted, which was the essence of his temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Contradicting what the Lord had told Adam, Satan said to her, “God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be

like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). In other words, that archdemon said that if she did what God had forbidden, she not only would not die but would actually become like God. Thus was born the lie that man can be his own god. To the world’s philosophers, religion in general and biblical Christianity specifically are relics of a superstitious, prescientific age that relied on fantasy to explain what had not yet been discovered by man’s own efforts.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 173). Moody Press.

1. Its Motives

2. Its Marks

3. Its Manifestations

16 For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, **confusion** and every evil thing *are* there.

16 With the “for” that connects this verse to v. 15, James indicates that what he now says justifies the

harsh verdict about false wisdom that he has issued
in v. 16

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 173). Eerdmans; Apollos.

confusion

181. ἀκαταστασία *akatastasia*; gen. *akatastasiás*, fem. noun from *akatástatos* (182), unstable.

Commotion, tumult (Luke 21:9; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 6:5, “uncertainty of residence” [a.t.], i.e., exile [kjv, “tumults”]; 2 Cor. 12:20; James 3:16; Sept.: Prov. 26:28).

Syn.: *súgchusis* (4799), confusion; *thórubos* (2351), noise, tumult; *tarachḗ* (5016), disturbance.

Ant.: *eirḗnē* (1515), peace, tranquility; *hēsuchia* (2271), quietness; *apokatástasis* (605), restoration; *táxis* (5010), order.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

James 1:8 (NKJV)

⁸ he is a double-minded man, **unstable** in all his ways.

James 3:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an **unruly** evil, full of deadly poison.

evil thing

5337. **φαῦλος** *phaúlos*; fem. *phaúlē*, neut. *phaúlon*, adj. Vile, evil, wicked, foul, corrupt, good–for–nothing, depraved, worthless, mediocre, unimportant. In the NT, used of evil deeds (John 3:20; 5:29; James 3:16), statements (Titus 2:8). See Sept.: Prov. 22:8.

Syn.: *kakós* (2556), bad, *ponēros* (4190), malevolent.

Ant.: *kalós* (2570), good; *agathós* (18), good, benevolent.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

thing

πρᾶγμα *prágma*; gen. *prágmatos*, neut. noun from *prássō* (4238), to do, perform. A thing done or to be done.

(I) Past: thing done, deed, act, fact, matter (Luke 1:1; Heb. 6:18; 10:1; 11:1; James 3:16; Sept.: Judg. 6:29).

(II) Pres. or fut.: thing being done or to be done, matter, business, affair (Matt. 18:19; Acts 5:4; Rom. 16:2; 2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Thess. 4:6; Sept.: Eccl. 3:1). In a judicial sense it means to have a matter at law, a lawsuit (1 Cor. 6:1).

Deriv.: *pragmateúomai* (4231), to trade.

Syn.: *érgon* (2041), work; *ergasía* (2039), a work or business; *ousía* (3776), goods; *hupóstasis* (5287), concrete essence.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

Pragma (**thing**), from which we get the English *pragmatic*, is variously rendered “work,” “deed,” “event,” “occurrence,” “affair,” and such. The idea is

that absolutely *nothing* of any ultimate good results from human wisdom

Both **disorder** and **every evil thing** are obviously broad terms that cover a multitude of specific bad results, which there is no need to delineate in detail. But they certainly include anger; bitterness; resentment; lawsuits; divorce; racial, ethnic, social, and economic divisions; and a host of other personal and social disorders. They also include the absence of love, intimacy, trust, fellowship, and harmony

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 175). Moody Press.

Man's wisdom is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 1:20), and God's wisdom is foolishness to man (1 Cor. 2:14). Man's wisdom comes from reason, while God's wisdom comes from revelation. Man's worldly wisdom will come to nothing (1 Cor. 1:19), while God's wisdom will endure forever.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 363). Victor Books.

If a person professes saving faith in Jesus Christ and claims to have wisdom from God, but has a heart that is proud, arrogant, and self-centered and lives a life that is worldly, sensual, and self-serving, his claims to salvation are false. He is lying against the truth (v. 14).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 176). Moody Press.

2. The Wisdom that is from above is

1. Pure
2. Peaceable
3. Gentle
4. Willing to Yield
5. Full of Mercy
6. good fruits
7. without Partiality
8. without hypocrisy.

¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

