

# James 3:13-18

1. Three themes of James:
  - a. 1:2-4; 1:12-18; 5:7-12 → trials or temptations
  - b. 1:5-8; 1:19-26; 3:1-18 → wisdom
  - c. 1:9-11; 1:27; 2:1-26; 5:1-6 → Riches and poverty
2. James 3:13-18 continues the theme of wisdom
3. James is pointing to a wisdom that is more than doctrine (“demons believe” in 1:19), more than faith (2:14) and more than words (2:14-15) (“faith apart from works is useless” in 2:17, 20)
4. James wants fresh water to flow (3:11) from the Word that has brought us forth (1:18) and implanted in us (1:21).
5. James 1:5 told us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach.”
  - a. This wisdom comes to us from God
  - b. This wisdom is identified in 3:13-18 as “wisdom that comes down from above” and is the wisdom of 1:5 that comes from God
  - c. God sends us good things that then produce good things (1:16-18).
    - i. Good seeds do not produce corrupt actions (1:13-18)
    - ii. Trees produce fruit (3:11)
    - iii. Springs produce water (3:12)
    - iv. Wisdom produces works (3:13-18)
6. These verses 3:13-18 is setting up James’ rebuke in 4:1-12 to the believers who are acting as “friends of the world” with their fruits of worldly wisdom: fights, quarrels, jealousies, passions, speaking evil, judging, murder, covet.
  - a. Worldly wisdom is “proud” (4:6)
  - b. Wisdom from above is “humble” (4:6)
7. Good fruit (ultimately - purity and peacefulness) demonstrates wisdom from God in the believer that has received the Word.
8. The wise person will be humble and act in a way that benefits others.
9. The worldly-wise person will boast about and accept evil which is a manifestation of the fallen human nature or demons. This worldly wisdom is self-centered which creates jealousy and rivalry among people (believers).

James 3:13 – **“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.**

5101 [e]	4680 [e]	2532 [e]	1990 [e]	1722 [e]	4771 [e]	1166 [e]	1537 [e]	3588 [e]	2570 [e]	391 [e]	3588 [e]
Tis	sophos	kai	epistēmōn	en	hymin	deixatō	ek	tēs	kalēs	anastrophēs	ta
13 Τίς	σοφός	καὶ	ἐπιστήμων	ἐν	ὑμῖν	; δεῖξάτω	ἐκ	τῆς	καλῆς	ἀναστροφῆς	τὰ
Who	[is] wise	and	understanding	among	you	let him show	out of	the	good	conduct	the
IPro-NMS	Adj-NMS	Conj	Adj-NMS	Prep	PPro-D2P	V-AMA-3S	Prep	Art-GFS	Adj-GFS	N-GFS	Art-ANP

2041 [e]	846 [e]	1722 [e]	4240 [e]	4678 [e]
erga	autou	en	prautēti	sophias
ἔργα	αὐτοῦ	, ἐν	πραῦτητι	σοφίας
works	of him	in	[the] humility	of wisdom
N-ANP	PPro-GM3S	Prep	N-DFS	N-GFS

1. How to identify the “wise” and “understanding” among the believers:

- a. “wise” – *sophos* – meaning “skilled” and “wise”. This is used to say “learned, cultivated, skilled, clever”
    - i. Faith combined with works; doctrine producing action
  - b. “understanding” – *epistemon* – meaning “knowing” and “skilled”. This is used to say “skillful, experienced, knowing”
    - i. Having knowledge that can be effectively applied
  - c. This could be translated as “a wise person who also has experience, knowledge and ability”
2. This wise person will need to know about God but also be able be like God.
    - a. They will need to have received the seed of the Word and produced the fruit of that seed.
    - b. They will need to know right and do right.
  3. James answers his own question with the answer he is looking for. The wise and understanding person among you will have these works:
    - a. “good conduct”
    - b. “meekness”

James 3:14 – **“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.”**

1487 [e]	1161 [e]	2205 [e]	4089 [e]	2192 [e]	2532 [e]	2052 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	2588 [e]	4771 [e]	3361 [e]
ei	de	zēlon	pikron	echete	kai	eritheian	en	tē	kardia	hymōn	mē
14 εἰ	δὲ	ζῆλον	πικρὸν	ἔχετε	, καὶ	ἐριθείαν	ἐν	τῇ	καρδίᾳ	ὑμῶν	, μὴ
If	however	jealousy	bitter	you have	and	self-interest	in	the	heart	of you	not
Conj	Conj	N-AMS	Adj-AMS	V-PIA-2P	Conj	N-AFS	Prep	Art-DFS	N-DFS	PPro-G2P	Adv

2620 [e]	2532 [e]	5574 [e]	2596 [e]	3588 [e]	225 [e]
katakauchasthe	kai	pseudesthe	kata	tēs	alētheias
κατακαυχᾶσθε	καὶ	ψεύδεσθε	κατὰ	τῆς	ἀληθείας
boast [of it]	and	lie	against	the	truth
V-PMM/P-2P	Conj	V-PMM-2P	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS

1. Worldly wisdom or false wisdom is described in 3:14-15:
  - a. Bitter jealousy –
    - i. “jealousy” is the word *zēlon* or “zeal” in the Greek
    - ii. This matches the political group known as the Zealots
    - iii. It is character that advances one’s self and one’s political party or worldview
    - iv. It is described here with the negative “bitter” – *pikron* – meaning “bitter”, “sharp”
      1. Fierce desire
      2. Unreasonable
  - b. Selfish ambition –
    - i. Self-centered or group-centered
    - ii. sectarian rivalry and partisan politics
    - iii. creates winners and losers from the competition
    - iv. This is not the humility that wisdom produces

- c. Boasting
  - i. Promoting this wrong application of this false wisdom
  - ii. So blind to wisdom that they are actually proud of their blindness
- d. False to the Truth
  - i. They are sinning against the Truth by not acting inline with wisdom that comes from the Truth.
  - ii. They are promoting their ways above the ways of Truth....while calling their lie the Truth
- e. Not wisdom from above
- f. Earthly – *epigeios* – meaning “of the earth” and refers to the “world” (*kosmos*) or the fallen system of man that is in rebellion
  - i. This would match secular humanism
- g. Unspiritual – *psychike* – meaning “natural” or “of the soul (mind)” which refers to the naturally dark soul of man that is totally depraved and function with the fallen world system. This is called “the flesh” (*sarx*) by Paul
  - i. This is contrasted with “spiritual” that when used positively refers to the work of the Holy Spirit
- h. Demonic – *daimoniodes* – meaning “demon-like” which aligns this with the behavior and goal of the demonic, Satanic forces
  - i. Demon inspired
  - ii. Matches the tongue being “set on fire by hell” in 3:6
  - iii. Anticipates “resist the devil” in 4:7
  - iv. These last three are:
    1. The World
    2. The Flesh
    3. The Devil

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” – Ephesians 2:1-3

2. “If” is first class condition which likely means James is describing the believers he is writing to, and also, to the many who claim to be “teachers.”
3. The “not” in this verse – *me* in the Greek – can carry with it the idea of “stop doing this” which means the readers are doing these very things. And, calling themselves followers of Christ.

James 3:15 – **“This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.**

3756 [e]	1510 [e]	3778 [e]	3588 [e]	4678 [e]	509 [e]	2718 [e]	235 [e]	1919 [e]	5591 [e]	1141 [e]
ouk	estin	hautē	hē	sophia	anōthen	katerchomenē	alla	epigeios	psychikē	daimoniōdēs
15 οὐκ	ἔστιν	αὕτη	ἡ	σοφία	ἄνωθεν	κατερχομένη	, ἀλλὰ	ἐπίγειος	, ψυχική	, δαιμονιώδης .
Not	is	this	the	wisdom	from above	coming down	but	[is] earthly	unspiritual	demonic
Adv	V-PIA-3S	DPro-NFS	Art-NFS	N-NFS	Adv	V-PPMP-NFS	Conj	Adj-NFS	Adj-NFS	Adj-NFS

James 3:16 – “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

3699 [e]	1063 [e]	2205 [e]	2532 [e]	2052 [e]	1563 [e]	181 [e]	2532 [e]	3956 [e]	5337 [e]	4229 [e]
hopou	gar	zēlos	kai	eritheia	ekei	akatastasia	kai	pan	phaulon	pragma
16 ὅπου	γὰρ	ζήλος	καὶ	ἐριθεία	, ἐκεῖ	ἀκαταστασία	καὶ	πᾶν	φαῦλον	πρᾶγμα .
Where	for	jealousy	and	self-interest [exist]	there [will be]	disorder	and	every	evil	thing
Adv	Conj	N-NMS	Conj	N-NFS	Adv	N-NFS	Conj	Adj-NNS	Adj-NNS	N-NNS

1. “Jealousy” and “selfish ambition” → “disorder” and “vile practice”
2. Wisdom of this age produces chaos
3. “disorder” – *akatastasia* – means “instability” and is translated “disturbance, upheaval, revolution, anarchy”. This occurs in the political and the moral centers.
  - a. Used in 1:8 – “For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
  - b. Used in 3:8 – “no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless (or, “unruly”) evil, full of deadly poison.”
4. “vile” – *phaulon* – meaning “worthless”, “bad” and is translated “wicked” and “base”.

James 3:17 – “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

3588 [e]	1161 [e]	509 [e]	4678 [e]	4412 [e]	3303 [e]	53 [e]	1510 [e]	1899 [e]	1516 [e]	1933 [e]
Hē	de	anōthen	sophia	prōton	men	hagnē	estin	epeita	eirenikē	epieikēs
17 Ἡ	δὲ	ἄνωθεν	σοφία	πρῶτον	μὲν	ἀγνή	ἔστιν	, ἔπειτα	εἰρηνική	, ἐπιεικής ,
-	But	the from above	wisdom	first	indeed	<u>pure</u>	is	then	<u>peaceable</u>	<u>gentle</u>
Art-NFS	Conj	Adv	N-NFS	Adv-S	Conj	Adj-NFS	V-PIA-3S	Adv	Adj-NFS	Adj-NFS

4

5

1

2

3

2138 [e]	3324 [e]	1656 [e]	2532 [e]	2590 [e]	18 [e]	87 [e]	6	505 [e]	7
eupreithēs	mestē	eleous	kai	karpon	agathon	adiakritos		anypokritos	
εὐπειθής	, μεστή	ἐλέους	καὶ	καρπῶν	ἀγαθῶν	, ἀδιάκριτος	, ἀνυπόκριτος .		
<u>reasonable</u>	<u>full</u>	<u>of mercy</u>	<u>and</u>	<u>of fruits</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>impartial</u>		<u>sincere</u>	
Adj-NFS	Adj-NFS	N-GNS	Conj	N-GMP	Adj-GMP	Adj-NFS		Adj-NFS	

1. Wisdom from above has seven attributes listed by James:
  - a. **Pure** – *hagnos* – meaning “free from ceremonial defilement, holy, sacred”
    - i. No defects like a pure virgin or sinless person demonstrated in life and the presentation of the Gospel (2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Tim. 5:22; 1 Peter 3:2 )
    - ii. Free from moral pollution thus remaining sincere and devoted to the concept
  - b. **Peaceable** – *eirenikos* – meaning “peaceful”
    - i. This is not a feeling or a post-modern concept.
    - ii. This includes shalom which is the relationship with God, others and self.

1. This is the alignment of your whole being with God’s righteousness
2. This is NOT self-zealous or worldly ambitions that muddy the waters with worldly wisdom
3. In James so far “peaceable” has been:
  - a. James 1:19-27 – Christian living
  - b. 2:1-12 – treatment of others
  - c. 3:13-4:12 - tongue
  - d. 4:1-2 – community life
  - e. 4:13-5:6 – rich interaction with poor
  - f. 5:13-20 – believers caring for each other
- c. **Gentle** – *epieikes* – meaning “seemly, equitable, yielding” and is used to say “gentle, mild, forbearing, fair, reasonable, moderate.”
  - i. Plutarch (46-119 AD), a Greek philosopher, shows *epieikes* (“gentle”) referred to moderation of passions which made this a virtue saying, “so in the soul moral virtue is produced when equity (*epieikeia*) and moderation are engendered by reason in the emotional faculties and activities.”
  - ii. Paul
    1. 2 Corinthians 10:1 –
    2. Philippians 4:5 – “Let your reasonableness[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.”
- d. **Open to reason** – *eupeithes* – meaning “constantly attendant” and is used to say “compliant”, “ready to obey.”
  - i. “willing to yield”, “compliant”, “persuadable”
  - ii. *Eu-Peithes* –
    1. *Eu* – “good, well”
    2. *Peitho* – “persuade”
  - iii. Not angry, self-defensive, hot-headed zealots of 4:1
- e. Full of mercy and good fruits –
  - i. James, as seen in the Greek with the use of *kai* (“and”) combines these two into one concept
  - ii. **Mercy** – *eleos* – meaning “mercy, pity, compassion”
  - iii. **Good** – *agathos* – meaning “good” and is used to refer to intrinsically good, good in nature, good whether it be seen to be so or not.”
- f. **Impartial** – *adiakritos* – “indistinguishable” and “without uncertainty”. It is used to say “without uncertainty, Unambiguous, undivided, whole-hearted”
- g. **Sincere** – *anupokritos* – meaning “unhypocritical, unfeigned” and is used to say “without hypocrisy and sincere”

James 3:18 – “**And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**”

2590 [e]	1161 [e]	1343 [e]	1722 [e]	1515 [e]	4687 [e]	3588 [e]	4160 [e]	1515 [e]
karpos	de	dikaiosynēs	en	eirēnē	speiretai	tois	poiousin	eirēnēn
18 καρπὸς	δὲ	δικαιοσύνης	ἐν	εἰρήνῃ	σπείρεται	τοῖς	ποιοῦσιν	εἰρήνην .
[The] fruit	now	of righteousness	in	peace	is sown	by those	making	peace
N-NMS	Conj	N-GFS	Prep	N-DFS	V-PIMP-3S	Art-DMP	V-PPA-DMP	N-AFS

1. OT references:

- a. Isaiah 27:9 – “Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing.
  - b. Amos 6:12 – “Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the **fruit of righteousness** into wormwood.”
  - c. Isaiah 32:17 – “the **effect of righteousness** will be peace, and the **result of righteousness, quietness and trust** forever.”
  - d. Proverbs 11:30 – “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”
2. NT references:
- a. Hebrews 12:11 – “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
  - b. Matthew 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
3. Peace among the believers (church, community, synagogue) is the goal of James’ words. James is attempting to redirect the believers from their application of “worldly wisdom” to the Godly way of application of “the wisdom from above.”
- a. At this time, according to 4:1-10, the believers and their leaders are applying worldly wisdom and repeating a harvest of chaos, fights and murder.
    - i. 1:20 – “for the anger of man (or, “worldly wisdom”) does not produce the righteousness of God”
4. *Karpos* is translated “fruit”, but is also translated as “harvest”, “yield”
5. The “fruit of righteousness” can be parallel to “justice” and includes “discipline”.
- a. This would include judgment with mercy as in 2:13 – “For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”