

Worldly Wisdom Verses Heavenly Wisdom James 3:13-18

Introduction:

In this passage, James compares the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of God. Today, we will look at the characteristics of both types of wisdom, and then discuss how we can obtain this wisdom.

I. Notice some basic facts about worldly wisdom (3:13-16).

- A. In this passage, we are given the symptoms of worldly wisdom (3:14).
 1. Bitter envy
 - a. According to Nelson's Bible Dictionary, envy is "A feeling of resentment and jealousy toward another person because of his possessions or good qualities.
 - b. When we envy someone, we want something that they have, whether possessions or money or anything else (it is very similar to jealousy).
 - c. Notice some examples of envy and how that envy was never good.
 - 1) (Joseph after his dreams, which eventually lead to him being sold) Gen. 37:11 - And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.
 - 2) (Moses is envied by the children of Israel on the way out of Egypt) Ps. 106:16-18 - When they envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD, {17} The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan, and covered the faction of Abiram. {18} A fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.
 - 3) (Jesus was killed because of envy) Mt. 27:18 - For he (Pilate) knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.
 - d. Worldly wisdom says that you should have what everybody else has (and you are envious when you do not get it).
 - e. Envy leads us into grievous sins.
 2. Self-seeking
 - a. To be self-seeking is to be constantly looking out only for yourself.
 - 1) There is no regard for others.
 - b. God has never wanted us to look out only for ourselves, but rather for the best interest of others.
 - 1) Phil. 2:4 - Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
 - 2) Worldly wisdom suggests that we ourselves should be first in our lives with no regard for others.
 - c. However, God says there is a punishment for those who are self-seeking.

- 1) **Rom. 2:8-9** - but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness-- indignation and wrath, {9} tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;
- B. We are also given the **origin** of worldly wisdom (**3:15**).
1. It does not come from above (from God).
 2. It is earthly, sensual, and demonic.
 - a. **I Jn. 2:15-17** - 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. {16} For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - b. **James 4:4**
 3. The things that are of the world are evil in the sight of God.
- C. We also know the **results** of worldly wisdom (**3:16**).
1. Confusion and every evil thing are there.
 2. There is nothing good that can come out of bitter envy and self-seeking.
 3. There is no profit in worldly wisdom (notice what Solomon says in **Ecc. 1:13-18**).

II. Notice some characteristics about heavenly wisdom.

- A. Notice what this wisdom is.
1. It is first pure.
 - a. There is nothing that can defile this wisdom.
 - b. **Mt. 5:8** - **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**
 - c. **I Jn. 3:3** - **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**
 2. Then peaceable
 3. Gentle
 4. Willing to yield
 5. Full of mercy
 - a. God does not give us that which we deserve.
 6. Full of good fruits
 7. If we are going to have these qualities, we must reside in the wisdom of God.
- B. Now notice what this wisdom is not.
1. Godly wisdom does not show partiality.
 - a. **Rom. 2:11** - **For there is no partiality with God.**
 - b. **Eph. 6:9** - **And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.**
 - c. God demonstrated that lack of partiality by giving Gentiles the same salvation that was offered to the Jews.
 - 1) Peter took that word to the house of Cornelius.

- 2) **Acts 10:34-35** - Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. {35} But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."
 - d. If God does not show partiality, neither should we.
2. It also does not show hypocrisy.
 - a. The origin of the word literally means "an actor."
 - b. The wisdom of God is not fake in any way.
- C. This wisdom that is from above is greater than any wisdom that we could have here on this earth.
 1. **Is. 55:8-9** – "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. {9} "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.
 2. **I Cor. 2:6-8** - 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.
 3. **I Cor. 3:18-20** - Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. {19} For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; {20} and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."

III. We must make sure that we obtain that heavenly wisdom.

- A. The beginning of wisdom is in the fear of the Lord.
 1. **Ps. 111:10** - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.
 2. **Pr. 9:10** - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
 3. **Pr. 15:33** - The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility.
- B. We obtain that wisdom through prayer.
 1. **I Kgs 3:9** - (Solomon to God in asking for wisdom) Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?
 2. **James 1:5**

Conclusion:

Today, do you have the wisdom of the world, or the wisdom of God? Are you wise in your own eyes, or in the eyes of God? Notice what God considers to be a wise man:

Mt. 7:24 - 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: