

Book of James



LESSON 6

Scripture

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

The Big Idea

James explains what wisdom is, where it comes from, and how to judge what kind of wisdom it is. “Who is wise in understanding?” James wants to pinpoint that real wisdom is demonstrated by a good life - a life that does good works with meekness, not for show, but from a pure heart. If someone is contentious, arrogant, or self-assertive, the essential qualities of wisdom are lacking. A true teacher realizes how much he doesn’t know, so his wisdom must come from the fear of the Lord. The Bible says that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

How can one have real wisdom from God if they have bitter envy and selfish ambition? Those things are governed by the flesh and demon spirits rather than God, the results of which are twofold: confusion and instability. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says that “God is not the god of confusion, but of peace.” James describes wisdom as pure - “Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall see God.” Wisdom from above is also peaceable - “Blessed are the peacemakers”, those who promote peace rather than strife between people. It is gentle - “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” A wise person is easily entreated or open to reason. And lastly, wisdom is full of mercy and good fruit - “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Wisdom that comes from above produces true righteousness and is reflected by peace.

Conversation

1. What are the 6 attributes of wisdom?
2. How do you know if you have wisdom?
3. When you have conflict, how can you resolve it?

Take Away

Attitudes have a profound effect on the things we say. You can say all the right things, but if your attitude is wrong, it will cause the truth to be turned into something false. Our lives demonstrate what we believe to be true even though our mouths may say something different. We should reflect the true wisdom of God by having correct attitudes and must not allow ourselves to become jealous or selfish. James 1 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."