

# "LIVING WISELY"

## James 3:17-18 (Part Two)

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### I. WORLDLY WISDOM. James 3:14-16

*Worldly wisdom (1) comes from hell, (2) is motivated by self-centered ambition, and (3) results in disorder and evil.*

#### A. Its Origin. 3:15.

1. Earthly.
2. Natural.
3. Demonic.

#### B. Its Operation. 3:14.

1. Jealous Anger.
2. Selfish Ambition.
3. Proud Arrogance.
4. Deceitful Actions.

#### C. Its Outcome. 3:16.

1. Confusion.
2. Every Evil Work.

### II. HEAVENLY WISDOM. James 3:13, 17-18.

*Heavenly wisdom (1) comes from heaven, (2) is motivated by God-centered humility, and (3) results in peace and righteousness.*

#### A. Its Origin. 3:17a.

In the middle of the real conflicts, troubles, and temptations that come into all of our lives, we cannot afford to forget these identifying marks of "the wisdom from above." Note, also, James 1:5, 17.

#### B. Its Operation. 3:17b.

1. **Pure.** To the extent that our wisdom comes from God, it will not be polluted with the toxins of envy and selfish ambition (James 3:14-16). Nor will its insight leave us double-minded about whether we want God's help in the troubles and conflicts of our lives (1:5-7).
2. **Peaceable.** This is not a desire for peace at any price. Because it is a wisdom rooted in pure motives, it longs to draw others into a harmony that has its source in God. James is asking for truth-and-love-based peace as he responds to conflicts that are dividing the family of God.

3. **Gentle.** To further express a wisdom that loves peace, James uses a word that carries the meaning of being gracious and patient with others. It is a strength under control that enables us to make allowances for one another. It is a reasonable, fair, and equitable gentleness that helps us to show our love and the goodwill of Christ in the face of real or potential conflict.

4. **Willing to Yield.** Because of the preceding conditions and qualifiers, this is not a surrender to evil. It reflects a willingness to give up our own rights, when doing so will express the strength of our concern for others. Such yielding also gives us a chance to show by our actions that we believe our own well-being is found not by winning or by getting our own way, but by entrusting ourselves to God.

5. **Full of Mercy and Good Fruits.** The wisdom that comes from God is discerning, but not judgmental. Nor does it callously assume that those who are suffering deserve their pain more than those who are blessed with good circumstances. Attitudes that add to the troubles of hurting people reflect the "wisdom from below." The wisdom from above seeks to relieve their misery.

6. **Without Partiality.** Worthless wisdom teaches us to flatter and indulge those who have something to offer us. It causes us to ignore and disrespect those whose problems could cost us time, money, or effort. True wisdom sees all people as those for whom Christ died.

7. **Without Hypocrisy.** Being wise in our own eyes prompts us to cover up motives that show our real nature. The wisdom of God enables us to be real and transparent in our love and respect for others.

#### C. Its Outcome. 3:13, 18.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. God values humility, peace, and righteousness more than self-centered zeal and ambition.
2. Do not treasure your goals and ambitions so much that you become prideful and deny God's truth.
3. Cultivate an outlook that treasures the viewpoints and considers the needs of others.
4. Ask God to help you develop true wisdom as the dominating characteristic of your life.