

Heavenly Vs Earthly Wisdom (James[7]; 3:13-18)

Michael L. Riddle

1. Continuing the section beginning in 3:1 “Let not many become teachers”
 - a. Receive a greater judgment
 - b. The need to control the tongue
 - c. :13-18 – on wisdom (relates directly to our teaching and the warning to those who would teach – if the wisdom we possess is not from God – don’t teach!)
2. We should understand the importance of wisdom
 - a. **Prov. 3:13-18; 4:7-9** – seek after wisdom
 - b. Walk in wisdom – **Eph. 5:15-17**
3. A distinction is made between earthly and heavenly wisdom
4. **James 3:13-18.**

Discussion:

I. WHO IS WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOU? (James 3:13)

- A. Pointing out the need to search oneself, esp. before teaching
- B. Let him show... – be doers, not hearers only (**Js. 1:22-25**)
 - Show wisdom through our conduct, not by teaching
- C. Recognize if we lack wisdom, God will provide (**1:5**)
 1. Through His word (**1:17-19**)
 2. If we receive it with meekness (**James 1:21//3:13**)
- D. Before teaching - reflect if we are fit to teach, do we have the proper wisdom, or are we filled with earthly wisdom?

II. AVOID EARTHLY WISDOM (James 3:14-16)

- A. Some who claim wisdom, but aren’t truly wise (:14)
 1. Bitter and self-seeking in the heart – teaching not to glorify God, but themselves
 2. Zealous, but with selfish ambition – **Gal. 4:16-17**
 3. Desire to be teachers, but without knowledge – **1 Tim. 1:7**
 4. Teach others, but don’t live by it – **Rom. 2:17-24**
- B. This wisdom is NOT from God (:15)
 1. Earthly – its origin with man and not with God (**1 Cor. 1:20-21**)
 2. Sensual – appeals to the flesh, what *feels* right to man
 3. Demonic – from Satan and his angels, or shared with
- C. The fruit of this wisdom (:16)
 1. Where envy and self-seeking exist... confusion/every evil thing
 2. IF earthy wisdom is in our heart – our teaching will result in confusion and evil things
- D. If this is the wisdom you possess, DON’T become a teacher!

III. SEEK AFTER HEAVENLY WISDOM (Js. 3:17-18)

- A. But (in contrast to the earthly), there is a wisdom from above (From God – **Js. 1:5-8; Prov. 2:3-9**)
- B. Characteristics of this wisdom:
1. Pure – it is from God and conforms to His will (**1:26-27**) it has not been altered by our thoughts and desires
 2. Peaceable – it does not lead to chaos and confusion (like selfish ambition – earthly wisdom) – it comes from God, the author of peace – it benefits the hearer
 - Those who are of God should seek for peace – **Rom. 12:18**
 3. Gentle – is not harsh, even when dealing with error (**2 Tim. 2:20-26**)
 4. Willing to yield – ready to obey God’s word, possesses meekness (accepts that God’s will is good toward us is good); conform in all things to God’s will –
 5. Full of mercy – willing to show mercy to others (**Js. 2:13**)
 6. Full of good fruits –
 - **3:13** – show this wisdom by our conduct
 - **2:14-17** – w/o actions, our faith (this wisdom) is useless
 - **1:22** – be a doer of the work, not a mere hearer
 7. Without partiality / hypocrisy
 - Partiality – do not be a respecter of persons, don’t hold the faith of God w/ partiality (**Js. 2:1-13**)
 - Hypocrisy – again by partiality in Ch. 2; not keeping the whole law, not living by what we teach; also 3:10 hypocrisy in tongue
- C. The goal/purpose of wisdom – teaching God’s word (**:18**)
1. To produce the fruit of righteousness
 2. Making men righteous – lead them in the way that brings them to be right with the Lord
 3. NOT the righteousness of man, but of God (**1:20; Rom. 1:17** → **Rom. 10:17**)
 4. ONLY when the teaching is according to God’s will (which ONLY happens when our heart is right) will this be accomplished!
- D. Sown in peace, by those who make for peace
1. Not from a place of selfish ambition (**3:14**); but to glorify God and bring others to the truth

Conclusion:

1. The desire to teach should be with caution and self-examination
2. First, bring yourself into conformity with God’s word and know His word before teaching
 - Otherwise great harm and destruction will be done
3. False teaching is to be despised, regardless of who the teacher is BECAUSE of the destruction. HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP with them
4. Let us all seek after spiritual maturity through the word and seek the proper source of wisdom!