

**First Southern Baptist Church - 7-14-21**  
**James 3:13-18 - God's Wisdom**

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**Background/ context** - works, and specifically the works of the tongue (3:1-12)

-the issue he is dealing with is “strife and envying” which comes out/ develops as he works through the verses.

-note:

1. At 14 - “strife and envying”
  2. At 16 - “strife and envying”
  3. At 18 - righteousness is attached to peace, and peaceable living
- all this sounds so “Baptist”

**Train of thought**

1. Makes a statement - the truly wise (verse 13)
2. Contrasts with false wisdom “**but**” (verse 14)
  - gives the **traits** of the false wisdom (14, 16), the **origin** of it (15), and the **results** of it (16)
3. Contrasts with heavenly wisdom (17) - another “**but**”
  - heavenly wisdom is described, and it’s origin given (17-18)
4. The summary statement (18)
5. Note, that in chapter 4 he continues this thought of strife and envying...
  - there must’ve been a problem.

**Verse 13 - Proof of wisdom**

1. Rhetorical question - who is wise?
  - do you hear the challenge... okay, you say you are wise and endowed with knowledge
  - show me!
2. A “stand alone” verse
3. Picks up the idea/ theme of
  - the “wise teacher” in 3:1
  - doing/ works versus saying we are saved
4. Show me your wisdom
  - so, does that mean right wisdom may be seen? Yes. It means that right wisdom may be seen in actions/ doing. It is not a “head” thing only. Can this wisdom be learned in college?
  - the reality of faith is seen in works that are it’s outcome
5. The manner of our deeds - “meekness”
  - the all pervading quality of this lifestyle is meekness

**Meekness:**

  - A. In the life of Christ - Mt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1
  - B. A fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:23
  - C. A distinctive trait of those who belong to Christ - Mt. 5:5
    - teachable in spirit

**Verse 14 - Contrasting False Wisdom**

1. "But" - compare and contrast
2. Strife and bitter envying - **the culprit** (shows up again in verse 16)
  - they must've been fighting
3. **Strife** - rivalry, party spirit or factiousness
  - this little group against that little group
  - a disposition to struggle for your own selfish interests
4. **Envying** - desire to promote your own opinion to the exclusion of others
  - "bitter" the type, resentful
  - jealousy, zeal about one's own opinion
5. Not only filled with strife, but are boastful in it
  - GNB** - don't sin against the truth by boasting of your wisdom
6. Matthew Henry says "Envy comes first, excites strife, then vainglory and lying."
7. At the end of verse 14 he says... in a short command:
  - glory not (don't boast)
  - lie not against the truth (the truth being the gospel)
8. Living Bible - "And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of wisdom."
9. The opposite of meekness in verse 13\*

### Verse 15 - Traits of Natural Wisdom

1. Traits
  - A. Descends not from above - not heavenly in origin (you didn't get that from God)
  - B. Earthly - belongs to the world, earth-bound motives, while discussing heavenly things
    - why we do what we do is important
  - C. Sensual - animal-like (domain of unregenerate mind)
    - RSV says "unspiritual"
    - you get the picture of two dogs fighting
  - E. Devilish - demon-like, not God-like
    - may be easily translated "demonic"
2. To be an enemy of the world, or to be an enemy of God?? - James 4:4
3. The overall idea here is origin of this evil... and then what it does, results
  - strife and envy are the culprits
  - they lead to every evil work (16)
  - they come from devil (15)
4. If you read between the lines it sounds as if they were saying their wisdom came from God, but then they fought with each other. James says - it does not come from God.

### Verse 16 - Consequences of Earth-bound Wisdom

1. Strife and Envy lead to:
  - A. Confusion
  - B. Every evil work - "every vile deed"
2. "Confusion, disorder and tumults will inevitably result in the church where Christians, especially leaders, are more interested in pursuing their own ambitions or partisan causes more than the edification of the body as a whole."

3. God is not the author of confusion - 1 Cor. 14:33

### Verse 17 - Heavenly wisdom

1. "But" - by contrast to confusion, and every evil thing... there is God's wisdom
2. Traits of the heavenly kind:
  - Pure** - undefiled by self interest (contrast that with the wisdom that is self-centered)
  - Peaceable** - promotes peace, productive of harmony, the wise do what they can to preserve peace. Having God's wisdom makes man peaceable.
  - Gentle** - considerate in its demands of others, not rude in conversation, not harsh and cruel
  - Easy to be entreated** - RSV, open to reason  
-reasonable, willing to listen, able to make compromises?
  - Full of Mercy and "good fruits"** - sympathetic, abounds in compassionate, helpful love and good works. Will do what it can to relieve want. It will forgive easily.
  - Without partiality** - not making distinctions, a spirit which disrupts
  - Without hypocrisy** - in all human relationships, without insincerity, open, genuine, without pretense
- ~ 3. An obvious parallel to the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23, and the contrast in Galatians between works of the Spirit and works of the flesh - Gal. 5:19-23. Both passages (one of Paul and one of James) speak of the same Christian reality.
4. Don't miss - true wisdom is God's gift (from above), not man's accomplishment
  - you have the up and down image.
  - God's wisdom from above is this
  - man's wisdom from below is this

### Verse 18 - A Summary Verse

1. Train of thought -
  - "Fruit" (or Harvest) of righteousness (where you want to go - the end result)
  - Is "Sown" (the beginning) in peace, how you get it, sow peace
  - "Of them" (sown by who?, where it comes from) that make peace
  - So, the bottom line - sow righteousness, by peaceable seeds
2. James 1:20 - righteousness cannot be achieved by the wrath of man (negative)  
Here James says it positively - it is the natural harvest of the seed sown in peace by them that make peace
3. The image is changed - instead of the harvest being gathered it is sown  
-wrong image in the natural, but makes good spiritual sense
4. "Make peace" - their deeds contribute to putting men at peace with one another.  
In effect this verse is a commentary on Jesus' command that we be "peacemakers"
5. Singles out one attribute of wisdom - why?  
Because he tries to eradicate the bitter, contentious quarrels and disputes rending the church (3:16; 4:1-2)

**New Testament says Christ is the source of true wisdom**

1. He is the power of God and the wisdom of God - 1 Cor. 1:24, 30
2. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - Gal. 2:3
3. How unsearchable is the wisdom of God - Rom. 11:33
4. Wisdom is one of the first characteristics of those chosen to be deacons in Acts 6:3-4  
-the Holy Spirit and wisdom are linked often in the New Testament
5. Paul prayed that the manifold wisdom of God be known to us that we might walk worthy - Col. 1:9-12
6. Your lifestyle shows your wisdom