

Series – Part 14: How to Live as a Christian:

Practice Heavenly Wisdom!

James 3:13-18 ESV

Sunday, July 28 at 9:00; Monday, July 29 at 7 PM

10th Sunday After Pentecost / 9th After Trinity – 2013

Our Summer Schedule for July & August:

Sundays: DS 9; Refreshments 10:10; BC&SS 10:30; Mondays: DS 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends, these things are true of God's holy children: By God's grace they **+**trust in Jesus as their Savior, **+**have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, and **+**desire – *according to their new nature* – to live for Christ! I hope those great blessings are clearly evident in your life!

This sermon *and the next two* are a call for change! Remember, to be a believer in Jesus is not merely to possess knowledge – “*even the demons believe and shudder*” (2:19). Instead, those who **know Jesus** are ever-desiring *to learn* and *to keep* all that He has commanded (Mt. 28:19). Take note: The knowing is first; then the learning and keeping follow!

1. May Our Conduct Show Our Wisdom and

Understanding: ¹³ ~~Who is~~ [Is anyone (Tic)] wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. //

- a. James' recipients: Many were people who needed to repent – *because they had separated their faith from their works*; they confessed Christ, *but lived like the world* (so James identified them as Tic, *those who are in need of repentance*).

- b. James could have said: *Put your money where your mouth is!* In other words, don't just say it – *do it, show it, prove it* (compare 2:18)!
 - c. Notice the kind of works: “*...in the meekness [gentleness, humility] of wisdom.*” So wisdom – *knowing how and proceeding sensibly:* ♦comes from above, ♦is recorded in the Bible, and ♦is taught to us by the Spirit. Therefore, let us – *as believers* – gently and humbly live God's Word!
2. **Demonic Wisdom:** What is *of God* and what is *of the devil*? We live in a *confused world* among *confused people*; therefore, the only right answer is found in God's Word of Truth!
- a. Description of demonic wisdom: ¹⁴ **But if you have bitter jealousy [envy] and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to [lie [thus speak falsely] against] the truth [see 1 John 1:8, 10].** ¹⁵ **This [That] is not the wisdom that comes [coming] down from above [which is God's gift, compare 1:5, 17], but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. //**
 - i. James' call for honesty: If deep down our motive is jealousy, *then we should not speak as if that were not true!* James is not calling for people to EXPRESS a right motivation, but for them to HAVE a right motivation – *which comes only from God's work of transformation!*
 - ii. Two good reasons to get rid of envy: “*In a saying attributed to Socrates, envy was*

termed an ‘ulcer of the soul.’”¹ Also, according to LTJ, “Killing the competition is the ultimate expression of envy.”²

iii. Note the negative progression: “...earthly, unspiritual, demonic.” Each word points more specifically to the source of demonic wisdom. It is ♦from earth—*not heaven*, ♦unspiritual—*thus from the human mind, not God*, and ♦demonic—*ultimately from the devil himself!*

b. Results of demonic wisdom: **16** **For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile** [lit. worthless] **practice.** // So the fruit of an unconverted heart is *disorder* and *practices which are worthless*. Who would want such things? *Hopefully no one!* So for anyone who sees demonic wisdom at work in his/her life, *God wants to work transformation!*

3. **“from above” Wisdom**: *Thus from God!* Luke Timothy Johnson wrote: “Living according to the wisdom that comes from God demands a separation from the evil qualities just listed [in vv. 14-16].”³

a. Description of “from above” wisdom: **17** **But the wisdom from above is first pure** [without sin], **then** [the opposite of jealousy, thus] **peaceable** [promoting peace], **gentle** [kind], **open to reason**

¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (Yale University as assignee from Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995), 287, quoted from Stobaеus, *Anthologium* III, 38, 48.

² Ibid., 288.

³ Ibid., 273-274.

[willing to work with others], **full of mercy** [compassionate] **and good fruits** [good deeds], **impartial** [treating others equally] **and sincere** [genuine]. // In the LSB we read that “Good works flow from a heart that has been purified by Christ” (2141).

b. Results of “from above” wisdom: **18** **And a harvest of righteousness** [thus a “bounty of righteous actions.” (LSB, 2141)] **is sown in peace by those who make** [making] **peace.** //

i. The law of the harvest: **Galatians 6:7-8**

ii. The seventh beatitude: Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” (Mt. 5:9 NIV)

iii. The Ultimate Peacemaker: Peace between all people is good; peace between God and man is ESSENTIAL and comes only through JESUS – *the Prince of Peace!*

Conclusion: The LSB concludes chapter 3 with this comment: “How different is the wisdom of God! He has purified us in Christ and freed us from the stain of the world. We now walk in the works He has prepared for us to do [Eph. 2:10].” (2141) And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

Verse and <u>Key Word</u> – James 3 ESV	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [Also see v. 16]	ζήλον zelon	jealously : <i>envy</i> , the desire to acquire by taking something away from another.

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