

**GreyStone EDU James: GS.EDU 2020**  
**SESSION 07: FALSE WISDOM/TRUE WISDOM**  
**WEEK OF 07/14/2020**

Welcome back! Thank you for continuing our Distance-Discipleship Summer Study: JAMES by Matt Chandler; hosted by Grey Stone EDU with Small Groups by Lifeway! We hope you are growing spiritually over these 13 weeks by studying this vital book together! \*\*\***Video reminder:** In order to view the video teachings each week, you will need to download the **Lifeway Small Groups App** for your device.

**MAIN POINT**

In living our lives, we can follow worldly wisdom that's false or godly wisdom that's true. We must examine every thought and deed by the Lord's truth, the Word, and by no other standard.

**INTRODUCTION**

- **How would you define wisdom? How is wisdom gained?**
- **What is the difference between the way the Bible defines wisdom and the way the world defines wisdom?**

The idea of wisdom brings to mind experience, knowledge, and sound judgment. From the world's perspective, wisdom can be gained as one grows in experience and knowledge and is able to make sound judgments based on these two areas. However, the Bible makes it clear that wisdom is not gained through mere wisdom and knowledge. True wisdom is gained as we grow in our experience with and knowledge of God. To gain true wisdom, we must look to God, the source of all wisdom.

[Watch the Session 07 Video featuring Matt Chandler.](#)

**Video Teaching Notes:**

A. Lenses for Reading **James 3**

**True Wisdom is built on two key ideas:**

1. God is for God.
2. God has designed the world to work a S\_\_\_\_\_ way.
  - You are not uppermost in His affections... because if you were, God would be an idolater Himself.
  - A "delight in God that leads to a rejoicing in God" F\_\_\_\_\_ the soul in magnificent ways.
  - If God is for God, that means every command in the Bible leads me in to joy.
  - God wants His people to follow Him into life through His commands.
  - If you walk in true wisdom, you find L\_\_\_\_\_, and you're blessed by the Lord.
  - If you walk in false wisdom, you hurt yourself, and you love D\_\_\_\_\_.
  - False wisdom is marked by bitter jealousy and selfish ambition because it follows that you are all there is; you are uppermost in your own affections; and you are your own god.

**B. False Wisdom**

1. Is earthly.
2. Is unspiritual.
3. Is D\_\_\_\_\_.

True wisdom is from above.

**C. How we grow in True wisdom**

1. We must have an ever-growing understanding of the God of the Bible.
2. Walk in community.
3. Learn from G\_\_\_\_\_ leaders.

**\*\*\*Specific; Frees; Life; Death; Demonic; Godly.**

**SCRIPTURES USED IN TODAY'S SESSION JAMES 3:13-18**

- Proverbs 14:12
- Matthew 7:24-27
- Luke 6:46
- James 2:19

**Conclusions and Remarks:**

1. Two false beliefs drive your destructive behavior:
  - My life is all about me, so my happiness matters the most; therefore, I am the utmost.
  - There is no absolute objective standard that I must live by. All people have their own preferences and opinions.
2. True wisdom is inseparable from good conduct.
3. Faith Works and Wisdom Acts.

#### *Notes from Pastor Randall*

- *The more life is about you, the more miserable you will be. Because...*
- *Worldly wisdom comes from hell...so results in disorder, evil, sin and death and hell...all miserable.*
- *Godly wisdom comes from heaven...so is motivated by a God-centered humility...and results in peace and righteousness; as well as an eternal, abundant life in heaven.*
- *There are two pictures of friendship in James 3:*
  1. *With the world (characterized by earthly desire, flesh, and sin);*
  2. *With God (characterized by grace, satisfaction, and submission to God's authority).*
- *There are also two pictures of our speech:*
  1. *Worldly speech (which is discouraging and dishonors God);*
  2. *Godly speech (which is encouraging and exalts God).*

#### **My Personal Study:**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

#### **Read James 3:13-18.**

- **What are the characteristics of false wisdom? Which of these traits do you most struggle with?**
- **What are the characteristics of true wisdom? Which have you seen the Spirit of God producing in your life?**
- **In the video, Matt said, "The more your life is about you, the more miserable you're going to be." When and how have you experienced this statement to be true?**

The wisdom of the world is rooted in selfishness. While our culture discipulates us to believe that our determination, our truth, and our happiness are the most important priorities in life, these ideas run contrary to God's Word. All people were meant to find their ultimate purpose and delight in God. True wisdom means we embrace God's vision of how the world works.

Matt gave two ideas that Christian wisdom is built upon: God is for God and God has designed the world to work a specific way.

- **"God is for God" means God is radically God-centered. He seeks His own good and glory before He seeks ours. Why is this good for us?**
- **If God pursued our glory first, how would that violate His nature? Why do people want to believe God pursues our glory before His own? Why would that ultimately be harmful for us?**

You are not uppermost in God's affections because if you were, God would be an idolater Himself. A delight in God that leads to a rejoicing in God frees up the soul in magnificent ways. If God is for God, that means every command in the Bible leads me into joy. God wants His people to follow Him into life via His commands. If you walk in true wisdom, you find life, and you're blessed by the Lord. If you walk in false wisdom, you hurt yourself, and you love death.

Now think about what it means to say God has designed the world to work a specific way.

- **Why should the way God designed the world concern us?**
- **In what ways is this truth liberating? Give an example of how God's design of the world could affect a practical decision.**
- **How is understanding the truths that God is for God and that He has designed the world to work in a certain way necessary for embracing true wisdom?**

If God has designed the world to work in a certain way, then it is in our best interest to live in the world according to the way God says is best. To do otherwise is foolish and a futile pursuit. This is liberating as we realize that we don't have to know everything on

our own, but can look to God in prayer and through His Word for wisdom confident that He is faithful to provide. As we recognize that God is the only who deserves all glory and seek to live according to His way, we will gain true wisdom.

## APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

- **How have you sought wisdom apart from God? How do you need to repent in light of this study?**
- **How does worldly wisdom lead to conflict in relationships? How does true wisdom from God lead to unity in relationships?**
- **How does seeking wisdom from above show the authority of Christ in your life to others?**
- **What remaining questions or comments do you have regarding this session's video teaching?**

E-mail Pastor Randall with your questions or comments after today's session: [Randall@gsdurham.com](mailto:Randall@gsdurham.com)

**This Week's Companion Reading: James Session 7 from Lifeway:**

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product-family/james-bible-study>

**Next Week is Session 08: Worldliness/Godliness and will be sent out July 23.**

## PRAYER

Confess the ways you have sought false wisdom from the world. Ask the Father to help you repent of this and turn to Him that He might give you true wisdom.

## COMMENTARY Digging Deeper in James 3:13-18

3:13. James 3:2-12 presents shortcomings of the tongue to which teachers and all individuals are vulnerable. 3:13-18 reminds us of our need to demonstrate genuine wisdom. The words particularly apply to aspiring teachers, but they have relevance to all believers.

The opening rhetorical question asks how we can show that we have wisdom. Wise refers to someone with moral insight and skill in deciding practical issues of conduct. Understanding pictures someone with the knowledge of an expert. We are to show the presence of wisdom by good deeds practiced with humility. Only obedient deeds, not mere talk, prove the presence of wisdom.

Humility refers to a submissive spirit opposed to arrogance and self-seeking. The person with humility is not a doormat for the desires of others, but controls and overpowers the natural human tendency to be arrogant and self-assertive. Non-Christian Greeks felt that this type of humility was a vice. Christianity made meekness into a virtue. "Meek" in Matthew 5:5 is the adjectival form of the noun translated here as humility. Jesus promised the "meek" they would inherit the earth. Jesus meant a believer who relates to God with dependence and contentment will reap God's abundant blessings.

Even when you are involved in a disagreement, you must demonstrate a gentleness and kindness of attitude. You must banish all contentiousness and mutual accusation. The Bible calls on all Christians to show the presence of spiritual wisdom in their lives by deeds of humility and goodness.

False wisdom destroys unity and develops rivalry. This section discusses the demonstration of false wisdom (v. 14), the source of false wisdom (v. 15), and the results of false wisdom (v. 16).

3:14. Bitter envy and selfish ambition prove that a person is following the route of false wisdom. Envy describes a determined desire to promote one's opinion to the exclusion of the opinions of others. Selfish ambition pictures a person who tries to promote a cause in an unethical manner. This person becomes willing to use divisive means to promote a personal viewpoint. Bitter rivalries develop out of these practices.

James warned that people who had envy and selfish ambition could boast about it or deny the truth. Boasting describes the malicious triumphant attitude gained by one party over its opponents. Those who choose to deny the truth can end up rejecting the truth of the gospel. Envy of Jesus led the religious leaders to deny his person and power and to plot his death (John 11:47-53).

3:15. This verse uses three adjectives to describe the distinctive traits and source of false wisdom. First, negatively, false wisdom does not come from heaven or from God. Its source is earthly. It belongs to the way of life of this world. Second, false wisdom is unspiritual, belonging to the natural world and not to the supernatural world. It comes from the mental and emotional ideas of

fallen human beings. Unfortunately, we Christians are too often guilty of using this twisted wisdom. Finally, this false wisdom is of the devil. Satan uses it to corrupt relationships.

3:16. The results of envy and selfish ambition are disorder and every evil practice. Disorder describes an experience of anarchy and disturbance. Such disarray affects private relationships between Christians and public meetings of believers. Every evil practice pictures an evil from which no good can come. People who cater to selfish ambition need never expect to develop any fruit which is godly, righteous, or helpful to others.

False wisdom promotes self-assertion and independence. It destroys a spirit of mutual concern. Where Christians “do their own thing” instead of caring for one another, a community of support and mercy can disintegrate (see 1 Cor. 1:10-17). Paul outlined a solution for this epidemic of selfish living, telling us to look out for “the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4).

3:17. True wisdom is free from self-interest and strife. This verse lists eight traits or characteristics of true wisdom. The first is purity. People with true wisdom are pure in that they have put aside the vices of a self-seeking nature and factionalism. This trait provides the secure foundation for all that follows.

The following five traits show the attitude of true wisdom toward other people.

- **Peace-loving** means it demonstrates a desire to promote peace between struggling factions.
- **Considerate** refers to being reasonable in the demands it makes on others.
- **Submissive** indicates a willingness to learn from others by being open to reason.
- **Full of mercy** is revealed by offering compassion to those in distress.
- **Full of good fruit** is shown by kind actions and helpful deeds to others.

The final two traits describe the essential nature of true wisdom in itself. It is impartial, without prejudice and unwavering in its commitments. True wisdom is sincere, genuine and open in its approaches to others. Jesus particularly showed his genuineness in his dialogues with Pilate (John 18:33-37).

3:18. Verse 18 concludes this section with a description of the effects of true wisdom. True wisdom results in a harvest of righteousness, that is, a conformity to God’s will. True wisdom also lets one experience peace, the enjoyment of harmonious relationships between human beings.

Over the years Christians in various churches have developed wide differences in their social practices. American Christians from the South sometimes opposed “mixed swimming,” but they may have offended a Christian from the North by their cultivation and use of tobacco. Christians differ in their preferences for English versions of the Bible. Some regard the use of certain modern translations as sure signs of compromise and moral apostasy. European Christians live in a culture which more readily accepts the use of alcohol by believers. Many American Christians find it hard to tolerate this acceptance. American women almost never feel compelled to wear a covering for their heads to worship services. Among many eastern European Christian groups it is expected that women will wear a covering, even if it is only a scarf. Even in our local churches, the argument of a preferred “worship style” using traditional hymns with orchestra instruments is compared to another style of using choruses from K-Love with a band. Each of these circumstances demands a response of peace and consideration to prevent strife, factionalism, and petty quarreling.