

Living by Faith VIII: James
"In Wisdom" James 3: 13-18

Going Beyond the sermons into the Scripture preached by Pastor Peter Oh on October 1, 2017

Entering In:

*It seems every religion and every great teacher talks about wisdom.
Why do you think wisdom is important to human beings?*

1. In Buddhism, wisdom is obtained by understanding human suffering. In Hinduism it is achieving a peaceful mind by meditation. What does the Bible say is the source of wisdom? (cf. Proverbs 1:7; 9:10)

Many people say that we all worship the same God; we all just worship in different ways. Do you agree or disagree with that? Justify your answer from the verses cited in this section.

2. James is addressing two very different kinds of wisdom in this passage. What should we consider before answering his question, "Who is wise and understanding among you" (cf. 1:5)?

According to James, how does one demonstrate that he is wise and understanding?

How do you demonstrate that you are *wise and understanding*?

3. In what two ways do those who possess this *other* kind of wisdom demonstrate it in how they live? [characteristics]

What are some common ways people *boast* when they are trying to prove something to you?

What does God think about this? [cf. Jeremiah 9:23, 24]

What is the fountain (source) from which this kind of behavior flows?

4. The Greek word for *envy* (*zēlos*) can mean two very different things. Use the following verses to identify the two different meanings of this word.

- John 2:17
- Acts 5:17

In which way is James using the word here? What other word(s) in the context helps you to see that?

What makes this kind of *envy* sinful?

What makes selfish ambition *selfish*? Give an example to illustrate your answer.

5. The Greek word for “disorder” (v.16) is the root of the same word used already twice in James – verses 1:8 and 3:8. What word(s) in the English translation do you think are probably related to “disorder”?

How important is *order* in the church? [cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33]

What do *envy* and *selfish ambition* stand against that causes *disorder*?

Pastor stated in the sermon, “Those who have more knowledge will speak more.” How will you examine yourself as a teacher or a leader in the church in order to discern whether what you say is coming from *worldly* or *heavenly* wisdom?

Share how you personally practice *not loving anything from the world*. [cf. 1 John 2:15-16]

6. In contrast to *bitter envy and selfish ambition*, what is characteristic of heavenly (true) wisdom?

Why do you think *humility* is the primary condition to receiving heavenly (true) wisdom?

What is the first (and overarching) attribute of heavenly wisdom? Why do you think that virtue has to come first?

List the eight attributes of heavenly wisdom with one synonym for each.

Choose one of the eight characteristics of a person whose wisdom is from God. How might that characteristic be evident in how you relate to someone in the church with whom you disagree.

7. What is James’ greatest concern in all of this discussion?

What do peacemakers produce in the church?

How does this contrast with what results from *worldly wisdom*?

What does James mean by the word *righteousness* in this context? [cf.1:20]

Living It Out:

Pray for God’s wisdom to purify your heart.

Pray for heavenly wisdom for our pastor, elders, teachers, and the whole congregation.

