

FINISH 3:13-18.

OUTLINE

▶▶ James begins with a question, ~ 13a.

▷▷ Who among you ~ claims ~ to possess godly wisdom, ~ which is, ~ by its nature ~ absolutely true ~ and superior to all other wisdoms?

▶▶ A challenge, ~ 13b.

▷▷ Those who claim to possess godly wisdom ~ must prove it ~ by living an honorable life, ~ which is characterized by ~ doing good works ~ that are coupled with the humility that comes from godly wisdom.

▶▶ Next, ~ describes worldly wisdom, ~ 14-16.

▷▷ More specifically, ~ describes ~~ 2 characteristics, ~~ the source, ~~ ↴↴

↵↵ the distinctive nature, ~~ and ~~ the fruit ~~ of worldly wisdom.

▷▷¹⁴ But ~ if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, ~~ do not boast and be false to the truth. ⇨ 2 characteristics.

▷▷^{15a} This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. ⇨ source from earthly realm.

▷▷^{15b} But is ~ earthly, ~ unspiritual, ~ demonic. ⇨ Distinctive nature. 1/16

▷▷¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, ~ there will be ~ disorder and every vile practice. ⇒ Fruit.

▷▷ And as we summarized, ~ worldly wisdom is a ~ ¶¶

↳ ↳ sin-tainted, ~ flawed, ~ and inferior ~ type of wisdom, ~ which is in direct opp. to God.

▶▶ Then describes godly wisdom, ~ 17-18.

▷▷ And that's what we'll be looking at today.

TO REFRESH MEMORIES & SERVE AS AN INTRO, ~ some points about godly wisdom.

GODLY WISDOM, ~ BY ITS VERY NAME ~ SHOUTS ~ TRUE AND SUPERIOR WISDOM.

▶▶ True in the sense of ~ 100% truth.

▶▶ Superior in the sense of ~ unmatched superiority.

▶▶ Define this true and superior wisdom more fully.

▷▷ The Greek concept of wisdom ~ centered around ~ "knowledge," ~ "cleverness," and ~ "scholarliness."

▷▷ In biblical usage, ~ however, ~ especially in the OT, ~ true wisdom ~ ¶¶

↳ ↳ is basically a ~ practical, ~ moral, ~ and spiritual ~ insight ~ given ~ only ~ by God.

▷▷ It is the ability from God ~ to discern ~ right from wrong ~ and good from evil. 2/16

▷▷ It is the power from God ~ that enables a person ~ to do and say the right thing ~ at the right time.

▷▷ And it has little to do ~ with intellectual capacity.

▷▷ Briefly put, ~ having godly wisdom, ~ which is ~ absolutely true ~ and superior to all other wisdoms, ~ ↴↴

↴↴ means ~ having great spiritual insight.

TURN TO 17-18.

THE SOURCE, ~ THE NATURE, ~ AND THE FRUIT ~ OF GODLY WISDOM.

▶▶ In 17a, ~ the source. ⇨ Above

▶▶ In 17b, ~ the nature.

▷▷ First pure, ~ then ~ peaceable, ~ gentle, ~ open to reason, ~ full of mercy and good fruits, ~ impartial ~ and sincere.

▶▶ Then 18, ~ one of the fruits. ⇨ And a harvest of righteousness ~ is sown in peace ~ by those who make peace.

17a, ~ THE SOURCE.

THE GRK TEXT SHOWS EMPHASIZING ORIGIN.

▶▶ There is one, ~ and only one, ~ source of godly wisdom. ⇨ God

▷▷ 1st reading showed this. ⇨ Job 28:20-23 3/16

LIKE IN 15a ~~ FROM ABOVE ~ ☺ ~ 1:17-18.

▶▶ Recall, ~ there God was seen ~ as the One ~ who pours out good gifts from above.

▶▶ Again, ~ this link ~ encourages ~ the interpretation of godly wisdom ~ as the preeminent gift from above.

▷▷ Job ☛ preeminent gift from above. ⇒ 28:15-19

▷▷ Proverbs ☛ also preeminent gift from above.

↳↳ E.g., ~ Prov. 3:13-15, ~ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

↳↳ Prov. 8:10-11, ~ Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

↳↳ And Prov. 16:16, ~ How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

▶▶ More profit in godly wisdom ~ than in silver and gold.

▷▷ More valuable ~ than jewels.

↳↳ It is ~ incomparable.

→→ Nothing we could want ~ is equal to it. 4/16

17b, ~ DESCRIBES NATURE.

7 Characteristics.

GODLY WISDOM IS: ~ ¶¶

▶▶ first pure, ~ then ~ peaceable, ~ gentle, ~ open to reason, ~ full of mercy and good fruits, ~ impartial ~ and ~ sincere.

▶▶ These characteristics are, ~ strictly speaking, ~ attributes ~ ¶¶

▷▷ not of godly wisdom by itself, ~ but of the person ~ who has godly wisdom.

▶▶ IOW, ~ the believer who possesses godly wisdom ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will ~ have ~ and, ~ in their life, ~ openly display ~ these 7 characteristics.

NOTICE, ~ JAMES SAYS NOTHING ~ about intellectual or doctrinal content for godly wisdom.

▶▶ Rather, ~ he explains it in terms of ~ moral virtue and practical goodness.

UNPACK.

THE BELIEVER WHO POSSESSES GODLY WISDOM IS, ~ FIRST, ~ PURE.

▶▶ Purity ~ is the nature of God.

▷▷ This purity, ~ then, ~ means that the person partakes ~ of a characteristic of God.

▷▷ This fits with Paul's exhortation in Eph. 5:1, ~ be imitators of God, ~ as beloved children.

▶▶ Further, ~ those who possess godly wisdom ~ follow God's moral directives ~ with unmixed motives.

▶▶ They serve God alone.

▶▶ They are free ~ from self-interest.

▶▶ And, ~ they have purity of heart and mind ~ in all their conduct.

NEXT, ~ THE BELIEVER WHO POSSESSES GODLY WISDOM IS PEACEABLE.

▶▶ I.e., ~ peace-loving.

▷▷ The truly wise believer ~ is peace-loving.

▶▶ Being peace-loving ~ is incompatible ~ with jealousy and selfish ambition.

▷▷ And it stands opposite ~ to the disorder evil practices ~ caused by worldly wisdom.

▶▶ This characteristic, ~ peace-loving, ~ desires and fosters peace by ~ ¶¶

▷▷ restraining discord ~ and pacifying the turbulent elements around it.

↪↪ It promotes right relationships ~ ¶¶

→→ between people ~ and ~ between people and God. 6/16

▶▶ We are exhorted in the NT ~ to be peace-loving.

▷▷ Rom. 12:18 (NIV), ~ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

↳↳ Harmony with others may not always be achievable, ~ but believers ~ 77

→→ should not be responsible for that lack of peace.

▷▷ And Rom. 14:19 (NIV), ~ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

↳↳ "Make every effort" = the idea of ~ unceasing effort ~ to produce a thing.

→→ Lit., ~ Let us keep on pursuing.

▶▶ The OT speaks to this as well.

▷▷ E.g., ~ Ps. 34:14, ~ Turn away from evil and do good; ~ seek peace and pursue it.

▶▶ Not peace @ all costs.

▷▷ E.g., ~ we are not to sacrifice doctrinal purity and biblical truth in order to have peace.

↳↳ Paul addressed the issue of doctrinal purity ~ in his instructions to Titus on qualifications for elders.

→→ Titus 1:9, ~ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. 7/16

↪↪Jude addressed the issue as well. ~~ Jude 3-4

▷▷Likewise, ~ not to tolerate sin. ~~ 1 Cor. 5:2, 5, 13b.

MOVING ON, ~ THE BELIEVER WHO POSSESSES GODLY WISDOM IS GENTLE.

▶▶The Grk wd for gentle ~ is not easily translated into English.

▷▷*Yielding, ~ gentle, ~ kind, ~ courteous, ~ tolerant.*

▶▶Refers ~ to the attitude that is ~ reasonable, ~ fair-minded, ~ charitable, ~ non-combative, ~ and that does not seek to retaliate.

▷▷It describes someone willing to yield ~ his or her own rights ~ to show consideration and gentleness to others.

▶▶Paul uses the word in his exhortation to believers in [Phil. 4:5](#).

▷▷Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

NEXT, ~ THE BELIEVER WHO POSSESSES GODLY WISDOM IS ~ OPEN TO REASON.

▶▶Grk wd for ~ [open to reason](#) ~ pertains ~ to being easily persuaded, ~ ¶¶

▷▷with the implication of being ~ open to reason ~ or willing to listen.

▶▶It ~ has a conciliatory attitude ~ and is ready to cooperate ~ when a better way is shown.

▶▶It is ~ the opposite ~ of being stubborn and unyielding. 8/16

▶▶ But let's not misunderstand ~ easily persuaded.

▷▷ Easily persuaded ~ is not in the sense of gullibility.

▷▷ Rather ~ it refers ~ to a willing deference to others ~ 77

↳↳ when unchangeable theological or moral principles ~ are not involved.

▶▶ Perhaps we can put it briefly this way.

▷▷ It's the attribute ~ of being persuadable ~ when there are no serious moral or theological issues that threaten.

THE NEXT CHARACTERISTIC ~ a believer who possesses godly wisdom will have.

▶▶ They will be ~ full of mercy and good fruits.

▶▶ Here James combines 2 attributes ~ to form one idea. ⇒ Another doublet.

▷▷ We can understand the phrase as saying, ~ full of mercy ~ that brings about ~ good fruits.

↳↳ We could read it this way. ⇒ Mercy ~ produces a rich crop ~ of kindly acts.

▶▶ Mercy ~ is more than a feeling of pity.

▷▷ It is an attitude of compassion ~ toward those in distress ~ that leads to practical help.

↳↳ I.e., ~ kindly acts. 9/16

▶▶IOW, ~ the mercy that comes from godly wisdom ~ 77

▷▷sees the brother or sister who is poorly clothed and hungry ~ and clothes and feeds them.

▷▷Rather than saying, ~ that's too bad ~~ and then walking away w/out doing anything to meet their needs.

▷▷Jesus serves as our example here.

↪↪Matt. 14:14, ~ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, ~ and he had compassion on them ~ and healed their sick.

▶▶In contrast ~ to the evil works and disorder ~ that result from worldly wisdom, ~ 77

▷▷godly wisdom ~ produces good fruits ~ by putting compassion into operation.

▶▶The believer filled with godly wisdom will be full of mercy ~ that brings about good fruits.

▷▷The adjective ~ good ~ indicates ~ the beneficial nature of these results

▷▷And the plural noun ~ fruits ~ indicates ~ the variety of the fruit produced.

▷▷IOW, ~ the believer who possesses godly wisdom ~ will be full of mercy ~ 77

↪↪that produces ~ a rich harvest ~ of wide-ranging beneficial acts.

▶▶James may have used the adjective ~ full ~ to consciously contrast ~ 77

▷▷the virtue "full of mercy" ~ with the tongue that is ~ full of deadly poison. 10/16

▶▶ The mercy produced by godly wisdom ~ prefers to deal with the needy ~ in terms ~ 77

▷▷ of what is needed ~ rather ~ than what is deserved.

▷▷ Sound familiar?

↪↪ But God, ~ being rich in ~ mercy, ~~ because of the great love with which he loved us, ~ even when we were dead in our trespasses, ~ made us alive together with Christ, ~~ by grace ~ you have been saved.

↪↪ Titus 3:4-7

▶▶ Mercy ~ is one of the attributes of God Himself.

▷▷ The Lord is merciful and gracious, ~ slow to anger ~ and abounding in steadfast love (Ps. 103:8).

▷▷ God prefers mercy to judgment.

↪↪ Mercy triumphs over judgment.

▶▶ God desires and approves the practice of mercy in human relations.

▷▷ Micah 6:8, ~ He has told you, ~ O man, ~ what is good; ~~ and what does the Lord require of you but ~ to do justice, ~ and to love kindness, ~ and to walk humbly with your God?

▶▶ Mercy ~ is something commanded by Jesus.

▷▷ Lk. 10:36-37, ~~ Which of these three, ~ do you think, ~ proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ~~ He said, ~ "The one who showed him mercy." ~~ And Jesus said to him, ~ "You go, ~ and do likewise." 11/16

FOLLOWING MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, ~ the next attribute of the person possessing godly wisdom is ~ impartial.

▶▶Impartial ~ only here in NT.

▷▷And its meaning ~ is somewhat uncertain. ⇒ Unwavering or impartial.

▶▶Unwavering. ⇒ 1:5-8.

▶▶Majority EVV & Grk resources.

▷▷Impartial. ⇒ 2:1-13.

▶▶My brothers and sisters, ~ as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, ~ never ~ engage ~ in acts of favoritism.

▷▷Incompatible w the Christian faith.

▷▷And the believer who possesses godly wisdom ~ will not be guilty of this incompatibility.

▶▶As we noted in discussion of James' warning against favoritism, ~ and it bears reviewing, ~ impartiality ~ reflects the character of God.

▷▷OT repeatedly stresses that he is impartial.

↪↪E.g., ~ Moses reminded the Israelites that ~ the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing (NIV). 12/16

▷▷ The impartial and just nature of God ~ is a leading theme of the NT as well.

↳↳ Peter tells Cornelius ~ that God does not show favoritism ~ but accepts those who fear him from every nation (Acts 10:34-35).

↳↳ Paul agrees that salvation ~ is for Jew and Gentile, ~ since "God does not show favoritism" (Rom 2:11).

↳↳ Even when the enemies of Jesus sought to trap him, ~ they had to admit ~ he is impartial.

→→ Mark writes, ~ they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God (Mk 12:14).

▶▶ The Lord does not show favoritism, ~ and neither should his people.

▷▷ In Eph. Paul exhorts us ~ ~ be imitators of God, ~ as beloved children.

AND NOW THE LAST QUALITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE GODLY WISDOM.

▶▶ Sincere. 13/16

▷▷ Pert. to being without pretense, ~ ~ genuine, ~ sincere. ~ ~ Lit., ~ without play-acting.

▷▷ Being sincere ~ is being free from all pretense.

▷▷ The person ~ does not need to work under a mask ~ since they have nothing to hide.

▷▷ They have a consistency between ~ what they say ~ and how they live.

▶▶ The gospels show us ~ that Jesus constantly denounced hypocrisy.

▷▷ E.g., ~ Matt. 7:5, ~ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

▶▶ And so we very much need godly wisdom.

▷▷ Remember, ~ possessing ~ worldly wisdom ~ comes naturally for us.

↪↪ We must reject that mindset ~ in favor of asking for and receiving ~ ¶¶

→→ the true and superior wisdom ~ that comes only ~ from our very generous heavenly Father.

IN VS 18, ~ JAMES ENDS HIS DISCUSSION OF GODLY VS WORLDLY WISDOM ~ ¶¶

BY NOTING ~ ONE OF THE FRUITS OF GODLY WISDOM.

▶▶ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

▶▶ Righteousness = Right living.

▷▷ Not righteousness in regard to salvation.

↪↪ 1:20. Having a short fuse ~ does not help us live the way God wants.

THIS VERSE ~ IS A BIT DIFFICULT TO CONNECT ~ ¶¶

▶▶ with the preceding discussion. 14/16

▶▶ Specifically, ~ he mentions ~ the fruit of peace ~ and seemingly ~ not of godly wisdom.

▶▶ Given the immediately preceding verse, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ where one of the characteristics of godly wisdom is peace-loving, ~ it seems wise ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to read v 18 ~ as a continued discussion ~ of this trait.

▶▶ What James seems to be doing, ~ is zeroing in on one specific fruit of godly wisdom ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that comes through the trait ~ of being peace-loving.

▶▶ And this implies ~ that the other characteristics of having godly wisdom ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will produce good results as well.

↳↳ James just highlights one ~ that comes through being ~ peace-loving.

A BELIEVER FILLED WITH GODLY WISDOM, ~ AND THUS BEING PEACE-LOVING, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ goes through life ~ making peace with those around them.

▶▶ According to James, ~ the long-term fruit of such a manner of life, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ i.e., ~ a life lived in peace, ~ is a harvest ~ of right living.

▶▶ I.e., ~ the long-term fruit ~ is an abundance of righteous behavior ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in the peacemaker ~ and ~ in those whom they influence. 15/16

▶▶IOW, ~ James ends this paragraph ~ by stating that ~ ¶¶

▷▷the believer operating through godly wisdom ~ is a peacemaker ~ ¶¶

↳↳who leaves behind a legacy ~ of righteous behavior and influence.

MY.... ¶¶

THERE ARE 2 WAYS WE CAN FOLLOW IN OUR LIFE.

▶▶There is ~ a wisdom that comes from above, ~ and another type that emanates from below.

▶▶The Lord wants what's best for us.

▶▶Therefore, ~ he desires us to choose ~ godly wisdom ~ rather than ~ worldly wisdom.

▶▶Choose this day ~ whom you will serve. 16/16