

Two Kinds of Wisdom

We've been looking recently at the practical aspect of Christianity from the book of James. In this *NEWSLETTER* article, we want to spend a little time looking at the latter part of **James 3**.

In James **3:13-18**, James tells of two kinds of wisdom; one acceptable to God and one that isn't. In the time that James writes this letter, much of the world is engaged in the latter type of wisdom—that of the world. There were many people, both Jew and Gentile, who liked at much of what was around them from a worldly point of view. The philosophers of James' time and those who continued to study and pursue the wisdom of the previous Classical Age of Greece looked at things a lot differently than we as Christians are urged to look at them.

James says that a Christian's wisdom will lead you to live a good life filled with good deeds done to others. That wisdom, according to James in **3:17**, causes us to live lives that **are "pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."** You become a **"peacemaker"** who will **"reap a harvest of righteousness."** (**James 3:18**) Treating others with respect will cause you to look to their good and not necessarily your own.

Those who are educated with what James terms "worldly" wisdom are self-seeking and envious. They are hurtful and conceited. The world has taught them that you are to look to advance your own agenda and not to do what God wants all of us to do. He says in **verse 15** is **"earthly, unspiritual, demonic."** This type of **"envy and selfish ambition"** will bring about **"disorder and every evil practice."** (**James 3:16**)

Paul weighs in on the difference between God's wisdom and man's wisdom in **1 Corinthians 1:18-25**. Here, he tells the Corinthians that God's wisdom is simply the **"message of the cross."** (**1 Corinthians 1:8**) He says the world considers that message foolishness, not wisdom. No doubt Paul remembered his time in Athens in **Acts 17**, when the so-called **"philosophers"** called him a **"babbling"** and **"sneered"** at his message concerning resurrection. They were entirely too smart to believe anything he had to say. Their "wisdom" caused them to dismiss him and his message. His take on the situation: **"the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."**

My God is wiser than any man. His wisdom refutes the wisdom of the world that says you have to be selfish to succeed. God's wisdom is the practical application of our knowledge of God's will for us—to love others and, as Paul

so aptly puts it in **Philippians 2:4**: “...in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” That may not seem wise to the people of the world, but to God, it’s golden.