

The Wise And Understanding True And False Wisdom

- The Scriptures often speak on wisdom or lack of it. (Prov. 1:5, 7; 3:13; 11:12; Psa. 37:30; 90:12; 107:43).
- Jesus spoke on wisdom. (Matt. 7:21-27). See also Matt. 11:25; 13:11; Lk. 21:15..
- Paul often spoke on wisdom. (Col. 3:16; 4:5; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; 12:8).
- James earlier addressed this timely subject. (Jas. 1:5, 6).

JAM 3:13 Who among you is wise and understanding [knowing]? Let him show [prove, demonstrate] by his good [noble, excellent] behavior [life, conduct, behavior] his deeds in the gentleness [submissive humility] of wisdom.

1. Men would give a lot of different answers to this question, “who among you is wise and understanding?”

a. One with good common sense.	e. Shrewd business person
b. Being able to get the advantage over another.	f. Being dogmatic and claiming to be always right.
c. Being very smart on one or more subjects.	g. Being wealthy or famous or powerful, etc.
d. Agreeing with the thinking of the age.	h. One who appears to have an answer for everything.

2. God’s answer is quite different from man’s answer to the question, “Who is wise and understanding among you?”

a. It is manifested by believing in God. (Psa. 14:1).	f. It is manifested by not claiming to know all the answers No one does.. Seeks wise counsel. (Prov. 1:5).
b. It is manifested by fearing God. (Prov. 1:7).	g. It is shown by not being jealous. (Jas. 3:14,15).
c. It is manifested by good behavior. (Jas. 3:13).	h. It is manifested by knowing God’s will. (Eph. 5:15)
d. It is demonstrated by listening to God and putting trust in Jesus. (Matt. 7:21-27).	i. It is manifested by not believing everything we hear. (Matt. 7:15; 1 Jn. 4:1).
e. It is manifested by numbering our days. (Psa. 90:12).	j. It is manifested by accepting God’s wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-25). The Cross

Definitions:

- The word “conversation” [anastrophe] in the K.J. V. does not denote “speech,” but “behavior, manner of life, conduct.”

KJV ‘a good conversation’	NASB “good behavior”	ASV “his good life”	RSV & NIV “his good life”
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- The word “understanding” comes from the Greek “epistemon” [e pee tay’_mon] meaning “learned, skilled, understanding.”
- The word “gentleness” is from “prautes” [pra oo tace] meaning “gentleness, humility, courtesy, submissive.”

3. Those who are “wise” will demonstrate their wisdom and understanding by “gentleness.”

JAM 3:14 But if you have [harbor] **bitter jealousy** [envy] **and selfish ambition** [selfishness, selfish rivalry] **in your heart, do not be arrogant** [don’t pride yourselves on it] **and so lie against the truth** [by your false claim to have wisdom from above].

1. Wise Christians do not have “bitter jealousy and self ambition.”
2. Jealousy promotes bitter feelings and strife and even violence and war.
3. Many a Christian and many a church has waged war over jealousy

Note:

1. “The truth” probably means “what is true.” Those who have “bitter jealousy and self ambition” and claim wisdom lie against what is true.
2. The words “the truth” could refer to the truth of the gospel. (Jas. 1:18).
 - a.. Those who are filled with jealousy and self ambition do great damage to the gospel.
 - b. They greatly misrepresent the life the gospel teaches us to live.

Wisdom From The Devil

JAM 3:15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly [worldly], **natural** [unspiritual, carnal], **demonic** [diabolical, devilish].

1. The conduct of 3:14 could not be called wisdom at all.
2. It is apparent that not all who claim heavenly wisdom have it.
3. Much of what is called wisdom by the world comes from the devil, not God.

Note on “demonic” - “epigeios” [e pee’ gay os]- earthly, worldly.

1. “demonic” comes from “daimoniodes” [di mo nee o’ dace] meaning “demonic, demon-like”
2. There is one devil (Matt. 4:1; 1 Pet.5:8; Jas.4:7)., but there are many demons. (Matt. 10:8; Jas.2:19).
 - a. The term “devil” without the article is always merely an adjective.
 - b. The word without the article has the idea of “demonic, demon-like, diabolical.”
 - c. Here are some ways the word has been translated.

“Of the devil” NIV	“devilish” KJV & RSV	“diabolical” - McCord
“demonic” NASB	“demon-like” - Marshall Interlinear	“demonic in origin” Arndet & Gingrich

3. Satan is the prince of demons. (Matt. 12:34).

- a. We do not know for sure the identity of demons.
- b. Most think they are fallen angels and some think they are the spirits of wicked men who were allowed to leave the abyss. Neither they nor the devil are eternal.
- c. From 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul uses the expressions “doctrines of demons.”
- d. This could mean doctrines about demons or doctrines coming from demons.
- e. All Christians believe Satan can tempt us, and it is possible that Satan uses his demons to influence men to teach false doctrine or to sin in other ways. If so, this is a non-miraculous influence.
- f. There is no evidence that demons overpower men or work any kind of miracle on them today.
- g. One can never say, **“The devil or the demons made me do it.”**

Evils Of Jealousy And Self Ambitions

JAM 3:16 For where jealousy [evny] and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder [confusion, rebellion, disharmony] and every evil [vile, worthless] thing [practice].

1. Christians must not have jealousy and selfish ambition.
2. These sins should be avoided by all the wise because such attitudes destroy the home, the church, and the nation.

Note: “jealousy” is from “zelos” [zay’_los]; “akatastasi’a” [a ka ta sta see’ a]- disturbances, disorder, unruliness, insurrection.”

“Wisdom From Above”

JAM 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure [undefiled], then peaceable [peace-loving], gentle, reasonable [yield to reason], full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

“Pure” - Gr. “hagne” [hag nay’] - pure, undefiled, uncontaminated

- God and His word are pure. (1 Jn. 3:3; Psa. 12:6).
- **Those who are wise are pure - that is, they seek to keep themselves undefiled and uncontaminated from the world.** (Jas. 1:27; 4:4).

1. Purity must precede genuine peace. Speech, thoughts, actions	4. We are taught to “earnestly contend for the faith.” (Jude 3).
2. The Bible does not teach peace at any price.	5. We must resist false teaching. (Matt. 7:15; Gal. 1:6-8; Acts 20:28-30).
3. Neither does the Bible teach we should look for reasons to fight and divide.	6. We must be “pure in heart” to see God. (Matt. 5:8).

“Peaceable” - Gr. “eirenikos” [ay ray nee kos’]- “peaceful, not given to conflict, that which is seeks to live in harmony.

1. We are admonished to be peacemakers. (Rom. 14:19; Matt. 5:9; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 4:3; Prov. 6:16-19; Rom.

12:18; 1 Pet. 3:10, 11).

2. Here are some ways we can be peacemakers.

a. Unselfish spirit (Gen. 13:7-11). See Phil. 2:4	g. Avoid selfish ambition for power 1) Put other person first 2) Do not insist on own way.
b. Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12).	h. Do not tell everything you know.
c. Return good for evil (Rom. 12:17-21).	i. Remember the tongue can be very destructive. (Jas. 3:1-12).
d. Compromise when possible 1) Never compromise God's truth. 2) Compromise only opinions and traditions.	j. Knowing and standing on the word of God - not feelings.
e. Look for ways to do things in a peaceful manner.	k. Listen carefully - avoid misunderstanding.
f. Forgiving spirit (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32)	l. Having facts right and being unbiased.

“Gentle” - Gr. “epieikes” [e pee a kace’] - “fair, mild, kind, equitable, gentle; NIV “considerate.” McCord “considerate.”

1. This word occurs 5 times in N.T.. (Phil. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2; Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18).

2. See Matt. 5:5 - Gr. “praus” [prah ouce’]

3. It can be rendered “forbearing” or “forbearance.” (Phil 4:5).

- a. “forbearing *spirit*” - NASB
- b. “gentleness” - NIV, NRSV
- c. “forbearance” - ASV

“Reasonable” - Gr. “eupeithes” [ou ray thrace’] easily obeying, compliant, submissive. McCord “willing to yield.”

- “easy to be entreated” - RSV. - The Christian should be easy to get along with.
- This word only appears once in the New Testament.

1. This is a person who can admit when he has done wrong and does not always have to be right.	4. He does not have to have own way.
2. This is a person who will yield to reason and is not dogmatic about opinions.	5. It is poor teacher or Christian who does not seek to learn from others.
3. The wise person must be teachable.	6. The NIV has “submissive”.

“Full of mercy” - meste’ - full, filled, filled full; Genitive of “el’eos” - mercy, compassion, pity.

1. Christians are not just to be merciful, but they are to be “full of mercy.”
2. Without mercy we will receive no mercy from God. (Jas. 2:13; Matt. 5:7).
3. One who is “full of mercy” is: (1) kind (2) forgiving (3) Not super-critical (4) Looking for ways to help others.

“Full of mercy and good fruits” - “karpos” - fruit; “agathos” - good.

1. The wise person abounds in good works. (Eph. 2:10).
2. He knows his labor is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58).
3. He exhibits the “fruit of the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22, 23).
4. The wise person wants to be like Jesus. (Acts 10:38).
5. He does not become weary of doing good. (Gal. 6:9).
6. He knows doing good to others will make the world better and end fighting at least among brethren.

“Unwavering” - Gr. “adiakritos” [a dee ak’ ree tos]- unwavering, free from doubts, uncertainly, impartial.

- This word appears only here in N.T..
- It is translated a variety of ways.

1. NIV, McCord “impartial” - He is not a respecter of persons. (Jas. 2:1-13).	3. KJV “without partiality”	5. “not double-minded.” Not having faith and doubt. Free of doubts
2. ASV “without variance” - be consistent.	4. RSV “without uncertainty”	6. NRSV “without a trace of partiality.”

- The truly wise person must be impartial, free of doubts in regard to God, be consistent.
5. We must not doubt when we ask God for blessings. (Jas. 1:5-8; Heb. 11:6).

“Without hypocrisy” - Gr. anupokritos” - genuine, sincere, without hypocrisy.

1. “without insincerity” - without pretense
2. “sincere” - Genuine Christian

JAM 3:18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness [good fruits or deeds] is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- Lit. “But fruit of righteousness in peace is being sown by the ones who make peace.”
1. The NIV has “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”
 2. McCord **“The fruit of righteousness is peacefully sown by those who make peace.”**
 3. The truly wise man will live a good life.

4. He will live a good life for these reasons.

a. He lives a good life to **please God**.

ROM 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

GAL 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

COL 1:10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1TH 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.

HEB 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

b. He lives a good life to **save himself**. (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12; Gal. 6:7, 8).

c. He lives a good life to **make the world a better place to live**. (Matt. 5:13-16).

d. He lives a good life to **bring glory to God**. (Matt. 5:16).

e. He lives a good life to **lead others to God and to avoid causing them to stumble**. (1 Cor. 10:31,32).

f. He lives a good life **because he is transformed**. (Rom. 12:1,2).

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