

“Who Is Wise And Understanding Among You?”

No. 27

Introduction.

I. This Lord’s day I would like to invite your attention to the reading of James 3:13-18

13. Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. 14. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. 15. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. 17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. 18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

II. **From this reading I call your attention to the question, “Who is wise and understanding among you?”**

A. He answers with these words.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure [undefiled, singleness of heart, sincerely seeking to do right - Matt. 5:8,], **then peaceable** [peace-loving, promotes unity - not discord, Matt.5:9, Rom. 14:19], **gentle** [kind, considerate, not harsh, Matt. 5:5], **easy to be entreated** [willing to yield to reason, does not have to have its own way, willing to compromise], **full of mercy** [compassion, forgiveness, Matt. 18:21,22] and **good fruits** [Tit. 2:14b; 3:1}] **without variance** [free from doubts, unwavering, Heb. 11:6], **without hypocrisy** [genuine, sincere, not two-faced].

B. The Bible gives many other answers to this thought provoking question, “Who Is Wise And Understanding Among you?”

I. **Believe In God** - The wise and understanding believe in God. (Psa. 19:1). So strong, so powerful is the evidence for God that the psalmist wrote. (Psa. 14:1).

A. The **atheist denies the existence of God**. He would have us believe that man and the universe about him all happened by chance or accident. This takes too much faith to believe. It takes more faith to believe this materialistic doctrine than it does to believe in God.

B. One time **David** made this astute observation found in Psalm 139:14. He said, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and that my soul knows right well.” Indeed, man has been fearfully and wonderfully made.

1. **One part of this fearful and wonderful makeup** is our ability to perceive the world around us. God has made us very sensitive. Consider how sensitive our body is.

2. We can:

- Feel a pressure that dents our skin .00004 inches.
- See a candle flame 30 miles away under ideal conditions.
- Smell one drop of perfume anywhere is a three-room apartment.
- Taste 0.4 ounce of table salt dissolved in 530 quarts or more than 132 gallons of water.

- Feel a bee’s wing falling on our neck from less than a half inch away
 - Distinguish over 300,000 different color variations.
 - Tell the direction a sound came from based on a .00003-second difference between when it reached our two ears
- Data taken from *Reader Digest*, November, 1996, page 9.

C. A number of years ago an article written by John Glenn appeared in the *Reader’s Digest*.

1. The article was entitled, “Why I Know There Is A God.”
2. I would like to read a portion of it at this time.

“When I was selected for the space program, one of the first things given me was a booklet containing a lot of information about space. Two paragraphs that concerned the hugeness of the universe impressed me very much.

To understand these paragraphs, you have to know what a light year is. Light travels 186,000 miles per second, equivalent to about 7 times around the earth every second. Now if you start that light ray out straight and let it continue for a year’s time, that distance is a light year--approximately six trillion miles.

Let me quote now on the size of our universe. “When we recall that our galaxy is some 100,000 light-years in diameter, the sun being an insignificant star some 30,000 light years from the galactic center, circling in orbit of its own every 200 million years as the galaxy rotates, we realize how difficult it is to visualize the tremendous scale of the universe beyond our solar system.

Nor is the interstellar space of our galaxy the end, for beyond are the millions of other galaxies, all apparently rushing from one another at fantastic speeds. The limits of the telescopically observable universe extend it least two billion light-years from us in all directions.

This shows how big our universe is. Come back now to what we know of atomic structure, the smallest particles known. Atoms have a great similarity to our solar system and to the universe, in that they have electrons rotating about a nucleus in regular patterns. Now what is the point I am making? It is the “orderliness” of the whole universe about us--from the smallest atomic structure to the most enormous thing we can imagine: galaxies millions of light-years across all traveling in prescribed orbits

in relation to one another.

Could this have just happened? Was it an accident that a bunch of flotsam and jetsam suddenly started making these orbits of its own accord? I can't believe that. This was a definite Plan. This is one big thing in space that shows me there is a God. Some Power put all this into orbit and keeps it there..." July 1962.

D. **In view of this evidence only a fool would say there is no God.** The wise man says in his heart God is a reality and all things declare His existence. The wise man seeks to honor and glorify God.

II. **Do Not Believe Everything They Hear** - The wise and understanding do not believe everything they hear.

A. Solomon said this is a foolish practice to form in everyday life. (Prov. 14:15).

B. To believe everything one hears is also a foolish habit to form in religion. (Matt. 7:15; 2 Cor. 11:14,15; 1 Jn

C. **Let us not believe everything we hear in religion.**

1. Let us rather weigh all things in light of the Scriptures and hold fast only to those things for which we have a thus-saith-the-Lord.

2. Paul said. (1 Thess. 5:21).

3. Acts 17:11

III. **Do Not Talk Too Much** - The wise and understanding do not talk too much.

A. **Once I read about a husband who always had disdain for those he thought talked too much.** He proudly told his wife that he recently heard that men use 5,000 words a day, while women use more than 10,000 words a day. He was insinuating women talk too much. His wife pondered his words for a moment, and then remarked "That's because women have to repeat everything husbands." The husband looked up and asked, "Come again." Talking too much is not a gender problem, but it is a problem. (Prov. 10:19; Jas. 1:19).

B. One time these directions came on a **fountain pen**: "When this pen runs freely it is a sign that it is nearly empty." Is there not a lesson here for us when we let our tongues run too freely?

C. **Let us keep in mind the words of Jesus.** (Matt. 12:36, 37).

1. Jesus tells us a record is being kept of every unforgiven word that we speak and some day we shall give account for them.

2. Should not this fact make us careful about the words we utter?

3. Let us say as David did. (Psa. 39:1).

IV. **Do Not Trust In Riches** - The wise and understanding do not trust in riches.

A. They remember the words of Jesus.. (Matt. 6:19,20; 19:24).

B. Paul wrote. (1 Tim. 6:7, 10, 17).

C. One reason why they do not trust in riches is because they know they are **not an end in themselves**.

1. In the **Sacramento Bee** some time ago a story appeared about a group of men who were discussing the statement: “Money can buy anything!” A wealthy businessman went so far as to offer \$4,000 to anyone who could name four desirable things which money could not buy. He was so positive no one would be able to meet this challenge. He smiled skeptically as one of the men took out a pad and pencil, wrote four short lines, and handed the note to him. He glanced at it carelessly at first then gave it a more studied look, and without a word got out his check book and made good on his promise.
2. **The list of four things money can’t buy were:** “A baby’s smile, youth after it is gone, the love of a good woman, entrance into heaven.”
3. **Nick Kenney** has written:

<p>You can win it with love and tender caress And a trinket, once in a while, But you can’t with all the wealth in the world, Buy a tiny baby’s smile.</p> <p>All the power on earth can’t stop old Time From constantly rolling on... And all the gold that this world can hold Can’t bring back youth when it’s gone.</p>	<p>And though you possess the wealth of kings And castles that reach the sky, A good woman’s love--so tender and true— Is something that money can’t buy.</p> <p>They say a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, Or what is heaven for?... The sublimest thing that money can’t buy Is a pass through heaven’s door.</p>
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V. **Win Souls** - The wise and understanding win souls. (Prov. 11:30).

- A. Why are we wise to win souls?
- B. Here are 3 reasons..
 1. First, the soul is very **valuable**. Jesus said a soul is worth more than the world. (Matt. 16:26).
 2. Second, the **salvation of others** depend on it. The world is really lost. (Lk. 19:10; 13:3; Rom. 3:23).
 3. Third, we are wise to win souls because of **what it means to us**. (Ezek. 3:16-19).

16. And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

17. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand.

19. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

- a. Here we learn our personal salvation depends on our teaching others.
- b. We cannot force others to accept the gospel, but we have the privilege and responsibility of proclaiming and sharing God’s good news with our neighbors and the whole world.
- c. We must show mercy by sharing the gospel. (Jas. 2:13).

VI. **Hear And Obey The Word** - The wise and understanding hear and obey the word. (Matt. 7:21-23, 24-27; Jas. 1:22-25).

- A. On one occasion a **skeptical soap-maker** said to a preacher, “The gospel you preach has not done much good in the world, for I see lots of wicked people.” They then came on some children who were playing in the mud and bore evidence of it. The preacher said, “Your soap has not done much good, for there are still dirty people.” “Well,” answered the soap-maker, “Soap cleans only those who use it.”
- B. The preacher replied, “You are exactly right. So it is with the gospel. It blesses only those who obey and use it.”

VII. **Judgment** - The wise and understanding are preparing for the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:10).

- A. The wise and understanding know, as Paul warned, some day they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account for what they have done in this life.
- B. They want to be ready. They do not want to stand before Christ unprepared. They hearken to the age old admonition, “Prepare to meet thy God.” They heed the admonition of Solomon. (Eccles. 12:13, 14).

Conclusion.

- I. **Are you prepared to meet God?** Are you ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Are you a Christian? Have you made Christ your King and Savior? Are you living to please Jesus?
- II. If not, we urge you to give your life to Jesus. The Lord will save you if you will turn from sin, confess Him, be baptized, and then live a life trusting and obeying Him. Come as we stand and sing.

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