

LIVING WELL IN GOD'S WISDOM

AUTHENTIC FAITH: GROWING WITH JAMES THE APOSTLE · JAMES 3:13-18 · FEBRUARY 9, 2025 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom." (James 3:13)

Let the Wise Step Forward (James 3:13a)

- Who is wise?
- Who thinks they're wise?
- What really is wisdom?

The Defining Features of the Wise (James 3:13b)

- Good life or good conduct
- Deeds done with humility or meekness

The Way of Un-Wisdom (James 3:14-16)

- The "heart root" of un-wisdom: envy and selfish ambition
- The "fuel" of un-wisdom: earthly mindset, unspiritual approach, and demonic ways
- The "end" of un-wisdom is disorder and every evil practice

The Way of Wisdom (James 3:17-18)

- Real wisdom looks like this:
 - pure
 - peace-loving, considerate, submissive
 - full of mercy and bearing good fruit
 - impartial and sincere
- Wisdom cultivates peace

Living Well in God's Wisdom (and Fleeing Un-wisdom)

- Turning from un-wisdom
- Seeking the Triune God:
- Daily turning toward wisdom

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you define true wisdom?

2. This week we continue our preaching series, "Authentic Faith: Growing with James the Apostle," by exploring James 4:13-18. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this study and then read that text aloud.
3. Background: The first verse of this letter introduces the writer as James, likely the brother of Jesus and an early church leader, who is writing to dispersed Christians in various places, making the letter a more generally applicable teaching for us.
4. In the beginning of verse 13, James invites a certain group of people to, in a sense, step forward. Who is this group of people?
5. What does James say are the defining features of wisdom for the Christians in verse 13?
6. In verses 14-16, how does James describe human-centered wisdom that is not Christian?
7. Throughout this section and on into the beginning of the next section (4:1-3), James is concerned with what contributes to true peace in the community. How does James say that the false wisdom described in 3:14-16 actually works against peace in God's community?
8. In contrast, how does James describe true wisdom that comes from God, or from heaven, in verse 17?
9. In verse 18, James returns again to themes of peacemaking. How do you think this connects with his exploration of wisdom in the previous verses?
10. What is one thing God speaking to you personally through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER

- Memorize James 3:17-18
- Consider exploring themes of wisdom in the Bible by doing a word search on "wisdom" or reading and reflecting on the following passages: Job 28:28; Psalm 90:12; Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-6; 4:5-7; 8:11; 9:10; 13:20; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 2:2-3; 4:5-6; James 1:5-6.
- Consider exploring these resources about wisdom from God: Bible Project video on the wisdom in Proverbs: [bibleproject.com/explore/video/wisdom-proverbs/](https://www.bibleproject.com/explore/video/wisdom-proverbs/) and Timothy Keller, *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs*.