

Study of the book of James

Part 5 - James 3:13-18 ; 4:1-10

“Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight. Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor. She will be your crowning glory. “

Proverbs 4:7-9

Part 5 – James 3:13-18; 4:1-10

- a. True wisdom from above (3:13-18)
- b. Drawing close to God in humility (4:1-10)

James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

In this passage James makes a transition from discussing about controlling the tongue to dealing with wisdom’s impact on everyone’s life. It starts with a question “Who is wise and understanding among you”?

We all need wisdom everyday especially when we have important decisions to make. It could be related to our job, marriage, finance, purchasing a property or house, an investment, medical treatment, change of career, raising children and their needs.

Man’s wisdom is insufficient as it fails, results in wastage of time and money. But God’s wisdom supersedes any human counselling, google advice or man’s wisdom. Man’s counsel is for ‘now moment’ but God has the bigger picture. He sees into the future.

We have abundance of information/ knowledge but lack of wisdom. Being smart & wise is different. Smartness comes from your education and experience, but true wisdom comes from the fear of the Lord.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7)

Our attitude should be “Lord I don’t know if this makes sense now, but I completely trust you. I don’t want to lean on my understanding but on your wisdom. ***Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.***

Before we consult any counsellor, bank, financial advisor on earth, do we consult God for His wisdom FIRST or after we get into trouble?

Truths about the wisdom of God:

- God’s wisdom always operates at a higher level and covers our future. Human wisdom works for ‘a now moment’ but God’s wisdom always sees the bigger picture. When God’s wisdom redefines our

lives, we can see beyond human reasoning and recognize the bigger picture. Knowledge alone isn't enough to make decisions. We may know a lot about the issue at hand but don't have the perspective we need. It takes godly wisdom to see through the issues and make right decisions that will have lasting impact. He is an Omniscient God who knows our past, present, and future. I've personally seen this in ministry. There have been times when Pastor had to make the right decision against the choice that might have the popular vote and that would seem right at that moment. But by the supernatural wisdom of God and leading of the Holy Spirit, God would enable to take the right decision and it still has fruitful & lasting impact.

- **When we operate in God's wisdom, there will be acceleration & overtaking.** He anoints us with more wisdom than people with many years of experience. Your advice will have more value. What others took many years to learn, He will enable us to understand quicker. Examples: Daniel who came in as a young lay man was promoted to the position of the governor for the entire Babylon. Even though he was trained for 3 years in the language and literature of Babylon it was not his education that enabled him to interpret dreams and visions. ***Daniel 1:17 God gave them an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. Daniel 1:20 Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.*** It was wisdom from above.

Joseph, a slave boy, mocked and rejected by his own brethren was promoted as the second in command of Egypt. ***Acts 7:9,10 says These patriarchs were jealous of their brother Joseph, and they sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. And God gave him favor before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God also gave Joseph unusual wisdom, so that Pharaoh appointed him governor over all of Egypt and put him in charge of the palace.*** It was not his influence, education, or experience but the wisdom from above. It was the supernatural wisdom of God. How many of us desire for this wisdom?

- **When we operate in God's wisdom there is manifestation of the Spirit & God's power.**

"For the Jews require a sign (Miraculous manifestation), and the Greeks seek after wisdom (philosophical wisdom): But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:22–24). And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:1–5

The apostle Paul was writing to the Corinthians. At the time, their city, Corinth, was known as an academic city with many philosophers, intellectuals, and scholars who wrote with an understanding of how they were thinking and how to challenge their Greek thought with the Hebrew doctrine of wisdom. The apostle Paul steadfastly refused to do that.

Greeks were limited by their own human reason and logic. The basic assumptions of the educated within the Greek world made the declaration of the crucified and risen Christ seem as foolishness. They couldn't understand the resurrection of Christ due to their human reasoning.

- **God chooses the weaker categories/ vessels to manifest his wisdom.** Throughout the Bible, we see God oftentimes chose men and women that society or culture would overlook. The wisdom of this world is no match to God's wisdom. **1 Cor 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.**
- **You can never comprehend God's wisdom in the eyes of human wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."**
- **God is the source of wisdom:** He created the entire universe by His wisdom. Spoke things into existence by His wisdom. He sustains and holds all things together by His divine wisdom. **James 1:5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.**

Proverbs 3:19-20 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; By understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, And the clouds drop down the dew.

Psalms 104:24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all:

Psalms 136:5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: For his mercy endures for ever.

Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding

Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; By understanding hath he established the heavens.

Jeremiah 51:15 He hath made the earth by his power; He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

In Job chapters 38 & 39 we see that Job is silenced by this display of God's creative wisdom.

Job 38- 39 he demands that God provide an explanation. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (38:4). "Have you ever in your days commanded the morning light?" (38:12). "Where does light live, or where does darkness reside?" (38:19). "Can you lead out a constellation in its season?" (38:32).

Then Job answered the Lord and said, "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more."

- Wisdom is gift of God to some people (***For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 1 Corinthians 12:8***) They operate in that area skillfully.
- You can acquire wisdom through experience. It is not bad in itself. But anytime wisdom of man or wisdom of this world is against God and His standards, His word, it becomes evil. It must be subjected to God's word.

Paul's prayer for church at Colossae:

Colossians 1:9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Church at Colossae were known for their faith in Christ Jesus and for the love that they have for all the saints) Paul did not pray for their physical or financial blessing but that they will be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. That's so powerful! How much more do we need an understanding of God's wisdom in our lives?

WISDOM:

Wisdom & knowledge - while knowledge is simply knowing, wisdom involves ability to make sound judgments about a subject, LOT OF DISCERNMENT INVOLVED.

"Knowledge is knowing what to say. Wisdom is knowing when to say it or when not to say."

Knowledge is the correct understanding of things, while wisdom is the application of that knowledge in the right context and at the right time.

Wisdom is not simply a matter of possessing factual knowledge but of properly and effectively applying truth to everyday life. It causes you to think in a certain way and to say the right things in the right way at the right time for the right purpose in the right place.

One can be knowledgeable/ Intellectual without being wise.

Why is Wisdom important / Why do we need:

- We need His wisdom in daily practical living to help us discern and make wise decisions. We need this in ministry, in different areas we serve the body of Christ.
- *Wisdom better than weapons of war, better than gold/ silver, precious than rubies, strength*
- *Ecclesiastes 7:12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*
- *We need wisdom for our health, long life, favour with God and man & honour (Read Proverbs 3)*
- *Isaiah 33:6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be; The stability of thy times, and strength of salvation*
- *Luke 21:15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. 16 You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. 17 You will be hated by all for my name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.*

- Requirement when seven men were appointed to serve the church: *Acts 6:3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.*

Christ Himself is the power of God and the wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 1:30 God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

Colossians 2:3 Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Characters in the Bible who were blessed with supernatural wisdom much above human wisdom:

Bazaiel – *Spirit of God in wisdom, knowledge and understanding (skilled craftsman) Exodus 31:3*

Oholiab – *building of tabernacle Exodus 31: 6*

Joshua - *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom;*

Joseph – *Acts 7:10 and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and (unusual) wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.*

Solomon: *2 Kings 2:30 And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men; And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 2 Kings 10: 25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.*

Daniel: *Daniel 1:21 When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. 20 Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.*

Daniel 2:20 “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings ; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter.”

Daniel 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him,

Stephen: *Acts 6:10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.*

Jesus: Jesus operated under tremendous wisdom always. – answering the pharisees questions. (Mathew 21:41-46 Pharisees (one expert in religious law) came to trap Jesus by asking question. Jesus asked them another question, no one could answer him. After that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and might, The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Luke 2:40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

James mentions two main kinds of wisdom: James 3:13-18

Wisdom of man/ wisdom of this world	Wisdom of God (wisdom from above) Based on God’s word; source is God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bitter jealousy • selfish ambition in your hearts (self centeredness (own ideas, desires) • boastful • false to the truth. <p>(It is earthly, unspiritual, demonic)</p> <p>Disorder/ confusion, evil thing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meek (no boasting) - • Pure • Peaceable • Gentle/ humility • open to reason/ willing to yield/ reasonable • Full of mercy & good fruits • No favouritism / partiality • Sincere / without hypocrisy

Self-centered wisdom that is consumed with personal ambition is not from God. When God's wisdom is at work, there is a sense of humility and submission. The person wants the Lord to be glorified. When the person is boastful, he wants to be glorified.

Jeremiah 9:23,24 Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, Let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glory, glory in this, That he understands and knows me.

The wisdom that gives rise to strife does not come from God. The wisdom from God is always peaceable.

Meekness & gentleness were words of ‘weakness for Greeks. Wisdom from God is always humble, gentle, willing to yield and reasonable.

3 terms pertaining to Wisdom :

Sophia : Theoretical / General wisdom (insight into reality). It is the Greek word for wisdom. It is a rare insight to accomplish things / fulfill tasks that seems impossible for others.

Because of Sophia wisdom of God upon Bezalel he was able to do far more than he could do or knew.

Suneimi : Critical wisdom; the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them. Ability to connect dots (Sun – harmony) Understanding the bigger picture. When you read Mathew 13:13,14,15,23 - **13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."**

They can hear and see miracles all over but unable to connect get the bigger picture.

Phronesis: Practical wisdom - "Phronesis" is practical wisdom; it's a force that makes you do and say the right things before you even think. It is paying attention to small details that others might miss.

When Jesus sends out the 12 apostles with this instruction: **Mathew 10:19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**

Luke 21:15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

How do we walk in the wisdom of God

- Ask, pray – for the ability to discern the voice of God
- Word of God
- Holy Spirit **1 Cor 2: 13 (Holy Spirit teaches) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual**

James 4: 1-3 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Passions are at war within you – God is not the reason for that – sinful desires, carnality, lusts, murder, covetousness

Wrong motives in prayer – James addressing problem of selfish prayer

We must remember that the purpose of prayer is not to persuade a reluctant God to do our bidding. The purpose of prayer is to align our will with His, and in partnership with Him, to ask Him to accomplish His will on this earth. Check our motives for prayer.

“Ask” conveys the idea of imploring (1:5-6). God wants us to ask things from Him because asking is an act of dependence. Christians are powerless in their spiritual lives because they simply do not ask God for things because of unbelief. They deemed themselves sufficient in themselves, so they did not pray about their needs.

Jn 16:24 "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." Mt 7:7-11, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

James 4: 4-7 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Adulterous people – those who are spiritually unfaithful. James addresses those who left their first love for God and went behind friendship with the world. It is a strong emotional attachment, with a deep and intimate longing for the things of the world.

Friendship with world is enmity with God

It is like having your feet in two boats. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (Math 6:24)

God resists the proud – I can do by myself; Includes spiritual pride

1 Cor 4:7 For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

Submit yourselves: Literally "to line up under," the word was used of soldiers under the authority of their commander.

Resist the devil - Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Don't give him a foothold.

Flee from you – Flee" means to take flight, run away, escape, shun. We get our English word "fugitive" from the Greek word

Gives grace to the humble - here is an endless source of God's grace in God's capacity. God will never run out of grace, for there is always more to come. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. We can never exhaust God's grace because He gives it in abundance.

The one characteristic of a humble person is dependence on God. ***Mt 11:29-30, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."***

Rom. 12:16, "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion."(Don't think you know it all. NLT)

God is a great giver. The more we depend on self, the less availability there is to the grace of God.

James 4 :8-10 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to us. God requires that we exercise our volition toward Him first. God will embrace any believer, no matter how long or to what extent he went away from Him.

Lament : This word comes from two words: to bear, to undergo, and hard, callus. The idea is to undergo hardship, carry a sense of brokenness. The brokenness here is conviction of sin in the life of the believer. If we don't If we do not get serious about sin, then we will persist in apathy and indifference towards the seriousness of sin. Insensitive to sin.

“Mourning” implies deep contrition, deep remorse.