



Leading Families Toward Spiritual Maturity



This Week's Core Virtue

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7): I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Ask a room full of Christians who the wisest man on earth is, and many would probably answer Solomon. Anyone who reads their Bible knows of Solomon and his great wisdom.

Ask a room full of Christians who the wisest person on earth is *today*, and many would probably associate wisdom today with Worldly Wisdom. Yoda from Star Wars, the Dalai Lama, or perhaps an elderly statesman are often seen as pictures of wisdom. Yet, in many cases, we are associating mere age and spiritual insight with the word wisdom.

In reality, true wisdom is hard for us to spot on our own. The Bible tells us that God uses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:27), and by this Paul is essentially placing the word “wise” in quotes meaning that true wisdom from above (from God) will look foolish to the so-called wise, unregenerate man.

This week's text focuses on the solution to a problem James first identified in Chapter 3:1-12—the destructive power of the untamed tongue. He identifies the problem (the tongue), and then he points to the solution. “Who among you is wise?” he asks in a rhetorical question. Then he gives us what to look for as we examine those in our circle of acquaintances—“you will know him by his good conduct and by the gentleness of his works” (v. 13).

You see, the tongue is indeed “a world of unrighteousness” within our bodies, and the way to tame the

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Step 1 ENCOUNTER—God's Word to put yourself in touch with him.

James 3:13-18 (ESV)

Wisdom from Above

¹³ 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.

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tongue is not through will power or self determination, a controlled tongue is further evidence of true faith.

Staying with a theme he has employed from the beginning, James forces us to examine ourselves to see whether or not we show the unavoidable signs of true faith or counterfeit faith. Godly wisdom accompanies true faith; worldly wisdom is evidence of counterfeit faith.

Not wanting us to miss the point, James provides a list of obvious character traits that result from Godly Wisdom and from Worldly Wisdom. A person with Godly Wisdom will display eight character traits: purity, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere. A person with Worldly Wisdom will display two character traits: bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.

As we learned last week, an uncontrolled tongue is the external evidence of a corrupted heart; a controlled tongue is the external evidence of a born again, Spirit-filled heart.

How do we gain Godly Wisdom? This is a good question. In many ways, one of the stereotypes of wisdom is correct—age does play a factor. Godly wisdom is the fruit of a life committed to Jesus Christ. It is part and parcel of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in our life. Read the character attributes of Godly Wisdom in James 3:17 and compare those with the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

Mark the text to highlight the themes and key points.

Wisdom from Above

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? ¹³ By his **good conduct** let him **show his works** ¹³ in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have **bitter** ¹⁴ jealousy and **selfish ambition** in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not ¹⁵ 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 ¹⁷ the wisdom from above is first pure, then **peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere**. ¹⁸ And ¹⁸ a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Godly Wisdom is not a once-and-done kind of thing. It is a lifelong pursuit, following hard after the voice of the Holy Spirit as He calls us into deeper and deeper obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is being willing to let go of our man-made sense of knowledge and intelligence and exchange it for what our friends, family, and coworkers will think is complete foolishness. It is not a religious experience or spiritual high; it fixing our eyes on the Cross and dying to selves.

James ends this passage on wisdom with an appropriate word picture: wisdom from above leads to a "harvest of righteousness sown in peace by those who make peace" (v. 18). Living in central Iowa, we are surrounded by fertile farmland. We know instinctively that the harvest in Autumn doesn't happen automatically. In early spring farmers will begin tilling the ground and planting the seed; they will fertilize and watch for weeds and bugs; they will pray for the right combination of rain and sunshine that will cause the plants to grow. In the Autumn, if the Lord blesses, they will harvest a crop.

So, too, is the life of faith that exhibits Godly Wisdom—the seeds of righteousness are sown in peace and nurtured throughout one's life by the Spirit of God Himself, so that in that day, our Lord will reap a harvest of righteousness from our time on this earth. May He receive all glory, honor, and praise!—Chris Eller

Step 2 ENQUIRE—the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Use the questions below to guide your reading and to ensure you are grasping the key lessons and themes of the text. This is called *Inductive Bible Study*, in which you ask the questions, *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *Why?*, *When?*, *How?* as you read the text. (Also known as the “5Ws and an H.”)

1. How can a person demonstrate wisdom and understanding? (3:13)
2. How can we tell when a person is wise? (3:13)
3. What common attitudes do we need to avoid boasting about? (3:14)
4. What is wrong with the “wisdom” of a selfish and bitter person? (3:14-15)
5. How is a person’s character related to his or her ability to discern? (3:14-16)
6. From where does the “wisdom” of a selfish and bitter person come? (3:15)
7. To what do envy and selfish ambition lead? (3:16)
8. What are the qualities of the wisdom that comes from heaven? (3:17)
9. How does a wise person act? (3:17-18)
10. What happens when people “plant seeds of peace”? (3:18)

Summary Notes

Write a one paragraph summary of this week’s text including key areas of interest and significant instruction.

Consult the commentary on the text and the notes following this page for additional help.

About The Compass

The Compass is a ministry of First Family Church and is edited by Chris Eller. The purpose of The Compass is to help you better grasp the truth of the biblical text from which the weekend sermon is based.

The Compass also connects readers with the principles of discipleship found in 10 Core Beliefs (doctrine) 10 Core Practices (disciplines), and 10 Core Virtues (spiritual fruit).

If you would like The Compass delivered each week to your email box, you can to to www.thecompass.life for a free subscription.

Step 3 EXPLORE—the commentaries to answer the questions.

Sin in the Mind (3:11-18)

Wisdom and Its Course (3:13-14)

The Main Stream of Wise Behavior (3:13). James moves now from words to wisdom. The two concepts are, of course, closely related. Even an unregenerate man can hold his tongue when it is in his interest to do so. We have all known foul-spoken men who have refrained from cursing and obscenity when they are in the presence of a high-principled employer whom they know will not tolerate use of bad language. Wisdom controlled their words. They knew well enough that if they spoke to their boss the way they spoke to others, they would lose their job.

So James points first to the mainstream of wise behavior: “Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” A wise man does not need to boast. The old-fashioned word conversation here refers to a lifestyle and everyday behavior. Endued with knowledge comes from a word that means to have skill and understanding. It also means to know something well. The word for “meekness” is one that James has already used—we must “receive with meekness the engrafted word” (1:21).

Jesus exemplified all of these characteristics even as a boy (Luke 2:40, 52). James was blind to the wonder of Christ’s life until he met the risen Lord after His resurrection. He had sat at table with incarnate Wisdom. He had walked to and from school with Him. He had heard His answers to all kinds of questions. A greater than Solomon resided in that home in Nazareth, worked at that carpenter’s bench, and took the scroll in the synagogue to read and expound the Scriptures.

James calls on the people in the church who professed to be wise to “show” it. The word is emphatic. Thinking back over the years in Nazareth and the years of the Lord’s public ministry, and dwelling on His teaching, especially as enshrined in the Sermon on the Mount, James could have confessed that no one had ever shown wisdom more clearly and wonderfully than did Jesus.

The Muddy Stream of Wicked Behavior (3:14). Sometimes the negative accentuates the positive. A dark piece of velvet best reveals the glory of the diamond. The bad behavior of Judah enhances the good behavior of Joseph (Gen. 38-39). Similarly, James produces four exhibits of things that negate wisdom.

Take, for instance, the man with a *bitter spirit*: “But if ye have bitter envying...” (3:14a). The word for “envying” is *zelos*, the word for “jealousy.” James has just used the word in relation to bitter water (3:11). Undoubtedly, jealousy makes a person bitter. This double use of *zelos*, one use connected with bitter water and the other use connected with bitter jealousy, might indicate that James had in mind the Mosaic Law. God required that bitterness and jealousy be dealt with in accordance with the law (Num. 5:12-31).

To have “bitter envying” in one’s heart toward a wiser, more gifted, and more successful brother is the very opposite of wisdom. It leads the envious person to do and say things that are mean-spirited and contrary to the Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Then consider the man with a *belligerent spirit*: “if ye have... strife in your hearts” (3:14b). The word for “strife” here contains the ideas of ambition, self-seeking, and rivalry. Self is on the throne,

and factions are the result. Paul had to face this problem with the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 12:20). Even the Philippian church was not altogether free of it (Phil. 2:3; 4:2). Indeed, during his first imprisonment at Rome, Paul knew of some people at Philippi who were actually preaching Christ in an acrimonious spirit, hoping to get a rise out of Paul (Phil. 1:16).

James was familiar with the problem right there in the Jerusalem church over which he presided. In the very early days, that church had experimented with communal living. The practice soon died out, however. It had to face too many problems arising from human nature. Indeed, it did not take long for problems to arise. The Hellenist Jews in the infant church complained that the Hebraist Jews were getting more than their fair share of the communal handouts. The apostles heard about the resulting strife. Their solution was to appoint godly, gracious, and gifted men to administer the program. One of the required qualifications for such men was wisdom (Acts 6:1-6). James warns the believers scattered throughout the Roman world that the spirit of strife was the opposite of wisdom. It denoted a carnal spirit, not a Christian spirit.

There was also a *boastful spirit*: “glory not,” he says (3:14c). The word he uses is *katakauchaomai*, which means “to boast,” or “to exult.” Some people in Jerusalem had fostered a party spirit and promoted themselves and their faction. James had no use for that kind of thing. But James himself, as a matter of fact, might have been suspected of promoting, or at least of protecting, the legalistic, Jewish faction in the church. But he did not do so out of a spirit of contention and strife. He truly believed himself to be standing for the truth. Moreover, he was prepared to be as accommodating as his stern principles would allow him to be of others who were not of his persuasion, notably the apostle Paul.

Other people, however, did not have the high principles of James. They were out for partisan triumph and were prepared to use underhanded methods to promote their faction. Such Jewish teachers dogged Paul’s footsteps, seeking to subvert his churches and glorying in their successes. They were not above using forged credentials, posing as authentic delegates from the Jerusalem church. James had only contempt for such people.

But there was also a *blind spirit*: “and lie not against the truth” (3:14d) is James’s final offering on the altar of wisdom. Wisdom never parts company with truth. To imagine that one can use lies, half-truths, and trickery to promote the cause of Christ is to reveal a heart that is a stranger to true wisdom. Lies may often produce quick results, but they are counterproductive in the end—and they tend to come home to roost.

The classic biblical example of this fact is that of the wandering Amalekite who brought King Saul’s crown and ornaments to David, claiming that he had killed Saul, David’s bitterest enemy. Doubtless, the man hoped to be rewarded by David. His lie was glib enough: “As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear...” (2 Sam. 1:6). Saul was attempting to commit suicide.

The Amalekite continued, “When he [Saul] saw me,” he “called... me.... He said..., Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could

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not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord” (2 Sam. 1:7-10).

It was a lie, and David saw through it the moment the man confessed to being an Amalekite. The Amalekites had no reason to love King Saul (1 Sam. 15:1-9). In fact, Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword in the presence of his armor bearer who, once Saul was dead, committed suicide himself (1 Sam. 31:4-6).

David turned to the Amalekite: “How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?” he demanded (2 Sam. 1:14). He sentenced him to death. The man’s lies came home to roost. “Thy blood be upon thy head,” David said, “for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord’s anointed” (2 Sam. 1:16). A wise man would have known David better than to boast to him of having killed his enemy, Saul. On two separate occasions, Saul had been in David’s power, but David had spared him both times (1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-21).

James knew of those people who, professing themselves to be wise, were blind. They were lying against the truth.

Wisdom and Its Source (3:15-17)

The Source of Human Wisdom (3:15-16). Its Outflow (3:15). Two kinds of wisdom exist: the earthly, carnal, and worldly wisdom of unsaved people and the wisdom of God. Paul devotes a considerable amount of space in his epistle to the Corinthians contrasting the two types of wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). James summarizes things more tersely. He begins with the threefold source of human wisdom.

James begins with its *secular source*: “This wisdom,” the phony wisdom that he has just been denouncing, “descendeth not from above, but is earthly...” It is the wisdom of this world. It expresses itself in various ways. All human philosophy, psychology, science, and religion betray their secular origins.

By the time of Christ the great philosophers of Greece and Rome had come and gone. They had been unable to produce any real answers to life’s most profound problems. Modern psychology does no better.

The world’s religions (except for Islam, which borrowed extensively from Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible) had all had their day and had been given ample time to demonstrate their essential idolatry and bankruptcy by the time Christ came.

Freud, who hated Christianity and called himself “a completely godless Jew” and “a hopeless pagan,” invented modern psychology. He endorsed irresponsible behavior and made it respectable. He gave irresponsible people welcome excuses with which to justify their behavior.

Science has achieved wonders but has created as many problems as it has solved. It has given us nuclear weapons, intercontinental missiles, and revolutionary ways to disseminate information and process data. What horrors it has in store for us through genetic engineering, cloning, and the like remains to be seen. Much of modern science is secular and humanistic. The accepted basic philosophy of most scientists is evolution, a God-dishonoring, soul-destroying, man-debasing religion that gives people a working hypothesis for atheism.

James points us also to the *sensual source* of earthly wisdom. “This wisdom... is sensual,” he says. The word for sensual is *psuchikos*. It is related to the word *psuche*, the soul. It speaks of the natural man and has to do with the physical side of man. The way James uses the word here points, perhaps, to the physical part of

man, and to wisdom that springs from the corrupt desires and affections of the natural man. It refers to wisdom that has its roots in man’s own lower nature.

Greek scholars say that no single English word renders this word properly. Our word *psychic* is a transliteration only, not a translation. The word *sensual* makes it too much a matter of the body. So does the word *fleshy*. The worldly wisdom that James has in mind is that of man in his unsaved state of sin.

The lower nature of the unsaved man has hungers, appetites, lusts, cravings, and desires that he does not wish to, or cannot, control. He finds ways, some of them very sophisticated, to rationalize his lawless indulgence of these inner forces. He blames his parents, his environment, his glands, or his genes. He can be clever and sophisticated in his philosophical justification of his sinful behavior.

But something is worse than this. James reminds us that earthly wisdom has a satanic source: “This wisdom... is devilish,” he says. The word for “devilish” can be rendered “demoniacal.” It occurs only here in the New Testament. The first time the word *wise* occurs in the Bible is in connection with Satan’s temptation of Eve. He directed her attention to the forbidden fruit and let her dwell upon the fact that it was “a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6).

Satan’s greatest cunning, however, is displayed in his invention of hundreds of false religions. These are useful tools to keep his captives in soul-destroying bondage and to lure believers from their fidelity to the simple truths of the gospel.

John Bunyan captured the spirit of such diabolical “wisdom” early in the adventures of Christian, who was fleeing from the City of Destruction and heading for the Celestial City. Christian had just escaped from the miry slough, and his companion, Pliable, had given up the pilgrimage altogether. Christian, still carrying his burden of sin, which was made all the heavier because of his study of God’s Word, continued on his way. Bunyan wrote:

Now, as Christian was walking solitary by himself, he espied one afar off come crossing over the field to meet him; and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of each other. The gentleman’s name that met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman: he dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy, a very great town, and also hard by from whence Christian came. This man, then, meeting with Christian, and having some inkling of him (for Christian’s setting forth from the City of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the town where he dwelt, but also it began to be the town talk in some other places), Mr. Worldly Wiseman, therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans, and the like, began thus to enter into some talk with Christian:

World: How now, good fellow! whither away after this burdened manner?

Chris: A burdened manner indeed, as ever I think poor creature had! And whereas you ask me, “Whither away?” I tell you, sir, I am going to yonder wicket gate before me; for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.

World: Hast thou a wife and children?

Chris: Yes; but I am so laden with this burden, that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly; methinks I am as if I had none.

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World: Wilt thou hearken to me, if I give thee counsel?

Chris: If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

World: I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then; nor canst thou enjoy the blessings which God hath bestowed upon thee till then.

Chris: That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden; but get it off myself I cannot; nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

World: Who bid thee go this way to be rid of thy burden?

Chris: A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honorable person; his name, as I remember, is Evangelist.

World: I beshrew him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that into which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find, if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something, as I perceive, already; for I see the dirt of the Slough of Despond is upon thee; but that slough is the beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me: I am older than thou: thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death, and what not. These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And why should a man so carelessly cast away himself, by giving heed to a stranger?

Chris: Why, sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned; nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.

World: How camest thou by the burden at first?

Chris: By reading this book in my hand.

World: I thought so. And it has happened unto thee as unto other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions; which distractions do not only unman men, as thine I perceive have done thee, but they run them upon desperate ventures, to obtain they know not what.

Chris: I know what I would obtain; it is ease from my heavy burden.

World: But why wilt thou seek for ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it? Especially since (hadst thou but patience to hear me) I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest without the dangers that thou in this way wilt run thyself into. Yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add that, instead of those dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

Chris: Sir, I pray, open this secret to me.

World: Why, in yonder village (the village is named Morality) there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine is from their shoulders; yea, to my knowledge he hath done a great deal of good this way; aye, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him, as I said,

thou mayest go, and be helped presently. His house is not quite a mile from this place; and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old gentleman himself. There, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation (as indeed I would not wish thee), thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee in this village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which thou mayest have at a reasonable rate; provision is there also cheap and good; and that which will make thy life the more happy is, to be sure there thou shalt live by honest neighbors, in credit and good fashion.

Now was Christian somewhat at a stand; but presently he concluded, "If this be true which this gentleman hath said, my wisest course is to take his advice"; and with that, he thus further spake:

Chris: Sir, which is my way to this honest man's house?

World: Do you see yonder high hill?

Chris: Yes, very well.

World: By that hill you must go, and the first house you come at is his.

So Christian turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality's house for help; but, behold, when he was got now hard by the hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next the wayside did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture farther, lest the hill should fall on his head; wherefore there he stood still, and wotted not what to do. Also his burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was in his way. There came also flashes of fire out of the hill, that made Christian afraid that he should be burnt: here, therefore, he sweat and did quake for fear. And now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly Wiseman's counsel; and with that, he saw Evangelist coming to meet him, at the sight also of whom he began to blush for shame.

Bunyan's pilgrim almost lost his soul, thinking that he could get to heaven by keeping the law or by producing a man-made righteousness. It is one of the Evil One's oldest and most successful wiles. It began with Cain. At the root of all false religion is the idea that salvation has to be earned. But the notion is contrary to the entire body of revealed truth in the Word of God. It is the very opposite of the wisdom of God and is the very essence of the religious wisdom of this world.

Its Outcome (3:16). According to James, the outcome of worldly wisdom is twofold. It results in unrest—"For where envying and strife is..."—and it results in ungodliness—"there is confusion and every evil work." The word for "confusion" is akatastasia. The word conveys the idea of disorder and tumult. The Lord used it in describing the "commotions," the unrest, of the last days (Luke 21:9). Paul used the word when he commanded the Corinthians to bring order into their church services. "God," he wrote, "is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:27-35, emphasis added). He also uses the word to describe the "tumults" that he had experienced as a pioneer missionary in dangerous places (2 Cor. 6:5). And he used it when he warned the Corinthians that the next time he came to visit them he intended to deal with the terrible disorders in their church, including the tumults (2 Cor. 12:20).

The word for "evil" used here by James is phaulds. It pictures

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something being blown about by the wind. It also conveys the idea of something worthless. Such is the Holy Spirit's estimate of worldly wisdom.

The classic biblical example of worldly wisdom is found in the career of King Solomon. He started well. At first, he was distinguished by his possession of the wisdom of God, the wisdom that he so gloriously personified and described in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs. Solomon's wisdom was so universally applauded, even in his day, that people such as the Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to sample it.

The Lord Jesus warned, however, that the light that is within us can be turned into darkness: "... how great is that darkness," He said (Matt. 6:23). That is what happened to Solomon. For years, he wandered in a kind of twilight zone. His decline began early when he chose a pagan woman for his queen. It deepened as he adopted, as a matter of policy, the practice of cementing relations with neighboring pagan kings by marrying their daughters. By the time he was old, Solomon actually did the rounds. He bowed and worshiped first at this pagan altar and then at that one. He had become an old fool. In fact, Solomon did more to destroy the nation of Israel than any other king who sat upon the throne of Israel. By the time he was through, he had turned Jerusalem into Babylon. His wisdom had become earthly, sensual, and devilish. The nation never recovered from the damage that Solomon did to it until after the end of the Babylonian captivity.

The Source of Heavenly Wisdom (3:17). James now turns to the wisdom that comes down from God. First, he gives us its basic characteristic: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure" (3:17a). The word that James uses is *hagnos*, meaning "free from defilement." The word chaste aptly conveys the thought. In his early years, Solomon understood this feature of wisdom. The first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs contrast wisdom with immorality and impurity:

- Wisdoms call (1:6-2:15)
- The immoral woman (2:16-22)
- Wisdom's call (3:1-4:27)
- The immoral woman (5:1-23)
- 3 Wisdom's call (6:1-23)
- The immoral woman (6:24-35)
- 4 Wisdoms call (7:1-4)
- The immoral woman (7:5-27)
- 5 Wisdoms call (8:1-9:12)
- The immoral woman (9:13-18)

The first and last of these segments dealing with wisdoms call are especially graphic. In them, wisdom is personified as a woman. She stands in the streets and at the great thoroughfares where people congregate, offering herself to the simple, to the unlearned, and to the fool. She offers to make them wise and to lead them in the path of light. She is of old, the companion of the Creator Himself. Thus, cleverly, Solomon contrasts her with the wanton woman, who likewise plies the streets and marketplaces, offering herself and her advertised charms to fools.

Heavenly wisdom is pure. It will never suggest or condone anything unclean or vile. Wisdom never offers a defiling thought. It partakes of the impeccable righteousness and absolute holiness of God.

Next, James gives us wisdoms benevolent characteristics (3:17b-d). He mentions wisdoms motivation—it is "peaceable" (3:17b); its moderation—it is gentle (3:17c); and its mediation—it is

easy to be intreated (3:17d).

The word for "peaceable" can be rendered "peace loving" or "disposed to peace." Solomon said of wisdom that "all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17). Peace was one of the outstanding characteristics of the early years of his reign. This fact had been anticipated. David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God: but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon [i.e., 'peace'], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days" (1 Chron. 22:7-9).

The word for "gentle" here conveys the ideas of moderation and forbearance. It paints the picture of a person who does not stand up for his rights but who is willing to make room for others. It marks the man who is not a stickler for the letter of the law. Paul used the word when he urged his friends at Philippi, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Phil. 4:5, emphasis added). Paul listed it as a qualifying mark of a church elder. He must be patient (the same Greek word), he said (1 Tim. 3:3). The wise man does not insist on getting his pound of flesh.

The word for "easy to be entreated" can be translated "approachable," or "compliant." It is a military word. A good soldier knows how to receive and execute orders. The word also can mean "easily persuaded." That does not mean, however, that the wise man is gullible. On the contrary, he is fully aware of all of the factors in the equation of his decision.

David exemplified this kind of wisdom. Even as a young man, tied to the court by official duties and to King Saul by family relationship, he displayed the spirit of wisdom. Again and again, the Holy Spirit says, "he behaved himself wisely." After he killed Goliath, his name was on everyone's lips, so much so that King Saul was jealous of him and set traps for him. He tried to kill him with his spear. He tried to trap him when he offered to make him his son-in-law. David, however, saw through Saul's snare when he offered him his oldest daughter, Merab, to be his wife, and answered wisely. He saw through Saul's further trap when he offered to make him his son-in-law by marriage to Michal. He saw through Saul's transparent plot to kill him when he demanded a hundred "scalps" (as we would say today) as the dowry for Michal (1 Sam. 18). Yet, for all that, David was "easy to be intreated." On the two occasions when Saul sought to be reconciled with the man he had so wickedly wronged, David responded at once, graciously and like the Lord's anointed.

David was the same with Absalom when the wise woman of Tekoa came to plead his cause (2 Sam. 14). It was the same when the scoundrel Shimei came begging for his life (2 Sam. 19:16-23). Such are the benevolent aspects of the wisdom from above. In such a benevolent fashion has the "Wonderful, Counsellor" (Isa. 9:6) dealt with us. God is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated. We should be the same.

James continues. He reminds us of wisdom's bountiful characteristics. He sets before us the thoughts that wisdom entertains—it is "full of mercy" (3:17e) and the things that wisdom espouses—it is "full of... good fruits" (3:17f). What mercy exists in the philosophy of a man such as Nietzsche, who pictured a world based on blood and barbarism and whose ideal superman was Cesare Bor-

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gia? Nietzsche said that Christianity was “the one immortal blemish upon the human race.” What mercy is there in Darwinism, which Huxley hailed as a working hypothesis for atheism? Evolution says that might is right. It promotes the survival of the fittest. It is a philosophy that gave the world two global wars in one lifetime. What mercy exists in the philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who sought to abolish great truths common to all society and build a world based on atheism? What mercy did Lenin and his heirs ever have in imposing communism on Russia and much of the rest of the world? What mercy exists in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, with its strident demand for the extermination of world Jewry? The wisdom that comes down from heaven is steeped in mercy, mercy for all of Adam’s ruined race. The word for “mercy” here is *eleos*, “the outward manifestation of pity,” or a “feeling of sympathy with misery.” *Eleos* embraces the idea of succor, as distinguished from mere pity. God’s mercy responds to a cry of distress. It is a good thing for all of us that God’s character includes mercy. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed,” said Jeremiah (Lam. 3:22).

A story is told about Napoleon’s having condemned a man to death. The man’s mother appealed to the emperor for a pardon. Napoleon replied that it was the man’s second offense and that justice must be done.

The mother persisted. “I am not asking for justice,” she said, “but for mercy.”

The emperor replied, “He doesn’t deserve mercy.”

She said, “It would not be mercy if he deserved it. And what I ask for is mercy.”

Napoleon gave in.

We do not have to plead thus with God because God does not need to be persuaded. Mercy is not second nature to God; it is His nature. It is the nature, too, of everyone who partakes of His nature.

James points also to the things that wisdom espouses. It is “full... of good fruits.” It is full of kind deeds. Thus did David extend practical grace to poor, lost Mephibosheth. In the first place, the unfortunate fellow was lame in both of his feet. He lived far off in distant Lo-debar. He was born into the family of a man (King Saul) who hated David so much that he tried to kill him on at least two dozen separate occasions. David told Ziba that he wanted to show “the kindness of God” to Mephibosheth. And so he did. He sent the messengers of his grace to find him. He brought him to himself, restored to him all of his lost estates, adopted him into his family, and set him at his own table (2 Sam. 9). What an example of being full of good fruit!

That is what God’s wisdom teaches that He does for us. As hymn writer Samuel Medley put it in “Awake, My Soul, in Joyful Lays,”

He saw me ruined in the Fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate
His loving kindness, O how great!

The believer who has drunk deeply of that heaven-descended wisdom will be full of good fruits because “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23) will be a characteristic of his life.

That’s how Joseph treated his brethren. Dying Jacob well understood the goodness and wisdom of his beloved son. “Joseph,” he said, “is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall” (Gen. 49:22). Joseph not only proved to be easily entreated and not only frankly and freely forgave his brothers for their terrible sin of selling him into slavery but also settled them in the green pastures of Goshen. He was not ashamed

to call them brethren. He presented five of them before the throne in a generous display of wisdom because that action opened for them tremendous doors of opportunity. The fruit of his goodness extended, moreover, to the Egyptian people when they begged him to do something about their bankrupt condition. He provided generously for their future. More still, “all nations came into Egypt to Joseph” (Gen. 41:57), and he dealt with these suppliants from distant and neighboring lands according to the same heavenly wisdom that he showed to one and all.

Finally, James mentions wisdoms *balanced characteristics*. It is absolutely unbiased: it is “without partiality” (3:17g); and it is absolutely unblemished: it is “without hypocrisy” (3:17h). The expression “without partiality” comes from *adiakritos*. The word occurs only here in the New Testament and seems to have puzzled translators considerably. It is rendered in a variety of ways. It is described as a negative and adjectival form of a word similar to *diakrino* that is unambiguous enough; it means “to discriminate” or “to make a difference.”

James has already discussed the problem of believers showing partiality to the more affluent members of the Christian community. God, in His wisdom, never allows Himself to be swayed by the size of a person’s bankbook, the color of his skin, from which side of the tracks he comes, or the number of letters he can put after his name. Nor should we. The expression “without hypocrisy” comes from *anupokritos*. The idea behind the word is an actor’s playing a part on a stage, portraying a character quite different from himself. The great hypocrites of the Gospels were the Pharisees, who pretended to a holiness and a spirituality that they did not possess. Christ roundly condemned them in a passage of singular power (Matt. 23). True wisdom will keep us from putting on such airs and graces. Nobody likes a hypocrite.

Wisdom and Its Force (3:18). “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” So James summarizes this discourse. Those who are truly wise, who are endowed with the wisdom that comes from above, are peacemakers. They sow everywhere a harvest of righteousness. They sow in peace, and their harvest of righteousness is garnered in peace. They exhibit that unique wisdom of the Sermon on the Mount generally and the seventh beatitude particularly: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9).

All of these characteristics of heavenly wisdom are incarnated and displayed in the Lord Jesus. He was pure. He exhibited sinless perfection, absolute holiness, in every thought, every word, and every deed. He could challenge His enemies, who scoured His life for some inconsistency upon which they could seize: “Which of you,” He asked, “convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46). They were unable to find a single flaw in His character, conduct, or conversation. Pilate, after a thorough examination, declared, “I find in him no fault at all” (John 18:38). Even the dying thief realized suddenly the complete and supernatural sinlessness of Christ: “We indeed justly,” he said, “for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:41). God Himself proclaimed Him as His beloved Son, the One in whom He was well pleased (Matt. 3:17). The testimony of the Holy Spirit is that He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). No impure thought ever entered His mind. He was the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. Peter, who knew Him as well as anyone, declared Him to be “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

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He was peaceable. That did not mean that He was a pacifist. On two occasions, He forcibly cleansed the temple of those who defiled and debased it. Nor did He hesitate to tell people unpalatable truth in particularly pungent and unforgettable forms. People came to Him with all sorts of troubles; He sent them away in peace (Mark 5:34). As He stilled the storm on the tempestuous Sea of Galilee, so He hushes the winds and waves of our wild passions and gives us peace. After all, His name is “the Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). Solomon—in all of his glory and in the early, palmy days of his empire—was a mere temporary type of Him. Christ could well say “a greater than Solomon is here” (Matt. 12:42).

“Peace!” cried the angel hosts who swarmed down the star road from glory to herald His birth (Luke 2:14).

“Peace!” cried the exulting multitudes as the King came riding into Jerusalem (Luke 19:38).

“Peace!” He said as He burst into their midst on that glorious resurrection day (Luke 24:36). “Peace!” He said a week later when He came back to deal with doubting Thomas (John 20:26).

“Peace!” says Paul, summarizing redemption’s story: He had “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20).

He was gentle. How gently He dealt with the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11) and with the city woman who wept at His feet in the Pharisees house (Luke 7:36-50). How gently He dealt with poor, backslidden, broken Peter (John 21:15-22). How gently He dealt with the discerning mothers who brought their little ones to Him (Matt. 19:13-15). As W. M. Hutchings put it in the old children’s hymn,

When Mothers of Salem
Their children brought to Jesus,
The stern disciples drove them back
And bade them all depart;
But Jesus saw them ere they fled
And sweetly smiled and kindly said,
“Suffer little children to come unto Me.”

The prophet rightly said of Him, “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench” (Isa. 42:3; Matt. 12:20). A bruised reed never was of much use; a smoking flax once served a useful purpose as wick to a lamp, but now it was of no use at all. Jesus is gentle with both types of people.

He was easy to be entreated, the most friendly and approachable of men. He said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

No one ever appealed to Him in vain. Twice He allowed Himself to be delayed, once when Jairus pleaded with Him to come and heal his little girl (Mark 5:22-43) and once when Martha and Mary urged Him to come and heal His friend Lazarus (John 11:1-46). But in both cases He intended to perform a greater miracle than anything He had done before. He was the Great Physician. He never lost a case, charged a fee, or turned anyone away. When the dying thief, who had been cursing Him, turned to Him at last and said, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,” He responded at once, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:42-43). If Judas had taken his sad confession, “I have sinned,” to Christ, rather than to Caiaphas, he would have found one “easy to be intreated,” rather than a scornful and callous high priest (Matt. 27:4).

He was “full of mercy.” It was mercy that brought Him down from heavens heights and mercy that caused Him to become God incarnate so that He could redeem us with His blood. When the

two blind men pleaded, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us,” they did not plead in vain (Matt. 9:27-30). Nor did the Syro-Phoenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28), nor did the two blind men of Jericho (Matt. 20:29-34), nor did blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52). The father of the demon-possessed boy, at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, pleaded that the Lord would have mercy on his son. He found a ready response (Matt. 17:14-21). When the ten lepers cried for mercy, He healed them all (Luke 17:11-14). Now, He is enthroned in glory “a merciful and faithful high priest” (Heb. 2:17), One who “remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:14), One who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15).

He was “full of good works.” Indeed, Peter, after spending three and a half years in His company, could think of no better way to describe Him to the Gentile Cornelius than to say that He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). John lost count of how many good works He did. He simply says that if they were all to be recorded, “even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25).

He was “without partiality.” He was as gracious and true with the woman at the well, who had run through some half-dozen husbands, as He was with the religious aristocrat Nicodemus. He was as kind to the woman with the incurable hemorrhage as He was to the ruler of the synagogue. He was as earnest with Judas as He was with Simon Peter. He loved His unbelieving brother James as much as He loved His disciple and cousin James, the son of Zebedee.

And He was “without hypocrisy.” He was absolutely transparent, completely, even disconcertingly, honest. He told the religious Nicodemus, a member of the ruling class, that unless he were to be born again, he would not even see the kingdom of God (John 3:1-12). He told the powerful Pharisees bluntly that they were hypocrites, and then He painted their portrait for them in vivid colors (Matt. 23). But there was never any pretense, nothing put on, about the Lord Jesus. He was always Himself, as fair as the morning, and as bright as the day. His life was an open book, a living epistle, known and read of all men. He sowed the fruit of righteousness. He was incarnate wisdom. Nobody put it better than Paul: “In [Him],” he said, “are hid all the treasures of wisdom” (Col. 2:3).

John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring the Epistle of James: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 11-127.

Daily Bible Reading Plan

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3/6	3/7	3/8	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/12
Lev. 22:17-23:44	Numbers 8:1-9:23	Num. 10:1-11:23	Num. 11:24-13:33	Num. 14:1-15:16	Num. 15:17-16:40	Num. 16:41-18:32
Mark 9:30-10:12	Mark 13:14-37	Mark 14:1-21	Mark 14:22-52	Mark 14:53-72	Mark 15:1-47	Mark 16:1-20
Psalms 44:1-8	Psalms 50:1-23	Psalms 51:1-19	Psalms 52:1-9	Psalms 53:1-6	Psalms 54:1-7	Psalms 55:1-23
Proverbs 10:19	Proverbs 10:29-30	Proverbs 10:31-32	Proverbs 11:1-3	Proverbs 11:4	Proverbs 11:5-6	Proverbs 11:7

For complete details on First Family's Daily Bible Reading Plan, visit our website at www.fcgrow.com/biblereading.

WORDSEARCH—all the words come from this week's text or lesson.

What Wisdom Wears

James 3:13-18
March 6, 2016

S	V	A	E	V	O	B	A	M	O	R	F	R	U	F	U	L	L	O	F	M	E	R	C	Y
Z	I	G	L	U	N	N	M	G	N	I	E	C	A	E	P	N	I	N	W	O	S	A	C	P
E	C	N	I	E	G	O	V	R	S	T	R	A	E	H	A	Y	E	S	I	W	G	M	F	E
L	W	Z	C	E	B	P	I	D	F	B	M	O	T	X	K	E	L	T	N	E	G	O	B	H
B	A	J	M	E	N	J	E	T	C	O	F	I	S	H	O	W	H	I	S	W	O	R	K	S
A	P	Q	F	R	R	M	Q	O	I	N	O	S	A	E	R	O	T	N	E	P	O	C	J	H
E	X	L	M	T	O	E	T	V	E	B	I	A	L	T	D	I	S	O	R	D	E	R	R	Y
C	E	G	W	N	N	M	B	U	B	X	M	U	E	L	O	P	M	E	A	R	T	H	L	Y
A	N	S	I	Z	A	U	X	C	Z	Q	A	A	I	L	A	M	T	R	U	T	H	Z	L	S
E	O	C	P	Z	Q	R	L	Q	D	N	K	X	H	L	A	I	T	R	A	P	M	I	S	D
P	E	R	U	P	C	A	G	N	I	D	N	A	T	S	R	E	D	N	U	T	U	E	D	Q
V	I	L	E	P	R	A	C	T	I	C	E	P	F	J	I	C	S	E	H	U	N	U	W	U
Y	S	U	O	L	A	E	J	R	E	T	T	I	B	T	D	F	S	Q	Y	K	L	V	I	X
J	G	O	O	D	C	O	N	D	U	C	T	O	A	X	D	L	L	Y	E	A	M	S	S	X
T	G	U	N	S	P	I	R	I	T	U	A	L	J	X	A	X	K	E	R	W	M	V	D	R
G	O	O	D	F	R	U	I	T	S	S	Y	O	D	F	L	A	M	C	S	I	X	V	O	I
K	S	S	E	N	S	U	O	E	T	H	G	I	R	F	O	T	S	E	V	R	A	H	M	E

Wise	Understanding	Good Conduct
Show His Works	Meekness	Wisdom
Bitter Jealousy	Selfish Ambition	Hearts
Boast	False	Truth
From Above	Earthly	Unspiritual
Demonic	Disorder	Vile Practice
Pure	Peaceable	Gentle
Open to Reason	Full of Mercy	Good Fruits
Impartial	Sincere	Harvest of Righteousness
Sown in Peace		

To see the answers to the puzzle, go to www.thecompass.life/320

Family Devotional



"Who Is Wise Among You?"

Last week we looked at the dangers associated with the tongue in a general way. There is necessary teaching in the epistle for every believer. As we look today at the question in chapter 3 verse 13, however, we need to note that James was particularly addressing those who would be teachers of the Lord's people. Chapter 3 begins, 'My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation,' v. 1. The word 'masters' is better understood as 'teachers,' and James, a teacher himself, reminds those who would stand before the saints as teachers that such a dignified privilege brings with it a much greater responsibility before the Lord. Then comes the teaching about the dangers of the tongue when not properly controlled.

So how can a truly able teacher of the word of God be recognized? Is it by his power of oratory, or by a certain presence? Is it by his ability to sway an audience this way and that, from laughter to tears and back again? Emphatically no! Knowledge alone is not enough, it must be accompanied by wisdom. We could define wisdom as that ability to apply knowledge in the right way and at the right time, but James takes it further. Just as faith without accompanying works is dead, so a teacher who does not live out the things he teaches is no true teacher at all. His manner of life must commend his teaching, and his attitude must be one characterized by the meekness that godly wisdom will bring, v. 13. There is a wisdom that belongs to this world, and there is a wisdom that is from above. The word of God handled with worldly wisdom can be destructive. Paul told the Corinthians, 'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect,' 1 Cor. 1:17. Sadly, assemblies of believers have been spoiled and divided, not by false teaching, but by the word of God being handled without that wisdom from above.

Believers are very quick to detect whether true wisdom is there when men handle the word of God. A true teacher will be truly wise, and will exemplify his own teaching. —*Philip Coulson*

"Stepping In the Light"

*Trying to walk in the steps of the Savior,
Trying to follow our Savior and King;
Shaping our lives by His blessed example,
Happy, how happy, the songs that we bring.*

*Pressing more closely to Him Who is leading,
When we are tempted to turn from the way;
Trusting the arm that is strong to defend us,
Happy, how happy, our praises each day.*

*Walking in footsteps of gentle forbearance,
Footsteps of faithfulness, mercy, and love;
Looking to Him for the grace freely promised,
Happy, how happy, our journey above.*

*Trying to walk in the steps of the Savior,
Upward, still upward we'll follow our Guide;
When we shall see Him, 'the King in His beauty',
Happy, how happy, our place at His side.*

Memory Time

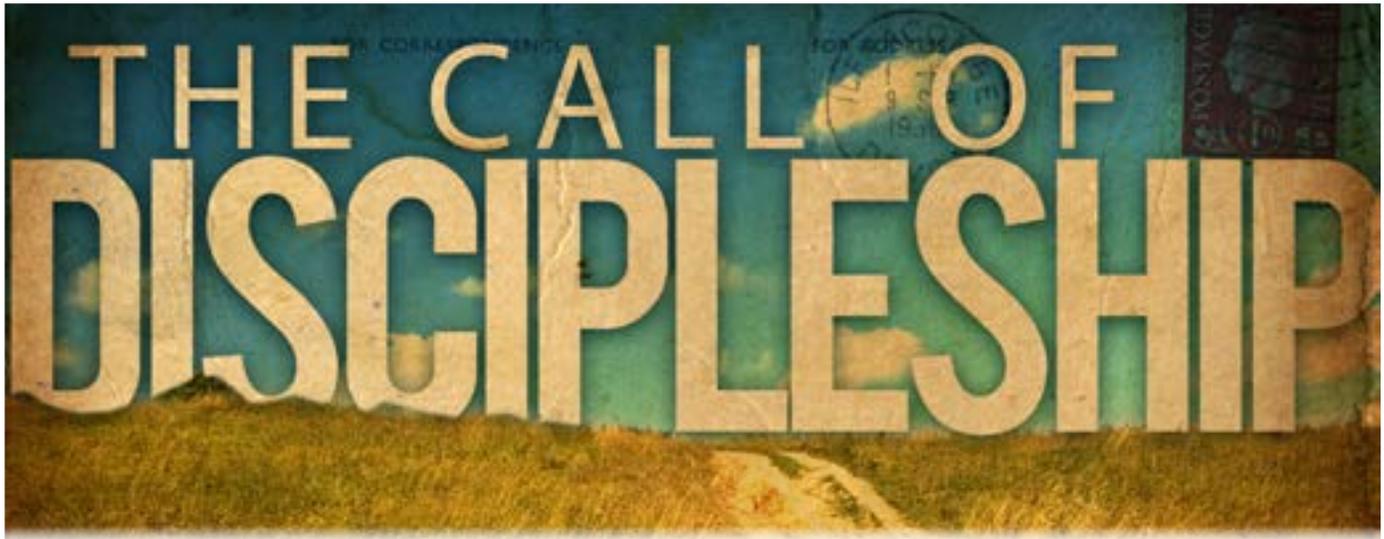
Memory Verse

“James 3:17 (ESV)

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”—James 3:17

Key Virtue

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7): *I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*



10 Core Beliefs

The Bible (2 Timothy 3:16–17): We believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

God the Father (Psalm 121:1–2): We believe God is personally involved in and cares about the daily lives of His children.

Jesus Christ (John 1:12): We believe in Jesus Christ, His deity, virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death, burial and bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His personal future return in power and glory. We are significant only because of our position as children of God.

The Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14): We believe the God of the Bible is the only true God and is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Humanity (John 3:16): We believe all people are born separated from God by sin, but God in his love sent his Son Jesus Christ as their savior.

Eternity (John 14:1–4): We believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the dead: the believer to life everlasting and the unbeliever to the resurrection of judgment.

The Church (1 Corinthians 12:12–13; Ephesians 4:15–16): We believe in the church as the body of Christ, which is composed of all believers who have accepted Christ as Savior. We believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Stewardship (1 Timothy 6:17–19): We believe that everything we have, including our very life, belongs to God.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 3:23–25; 8:38–39): We believe a person has a right relationship with God only by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. This makes believers eternally secure in Jesus Christ.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3–4): We believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need. ■

10 Core Practices

Worship (Psalm 95:1–7): I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12): I study the Bible diligently to know God, to become like Christ, and to discern His will for my life.

Service (Colossians 3:17): I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Witness (Matthew 28:18–20): I live to tell the story of Jesus and to make disciples of Him even to the ends of the earth, knowing he is with me always.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44–47): I fellowship with other believers in a small group to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16–20): I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4–6): I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Authenticity (John 13:33–34): I know and understand biblical truths and transfer these truths into everyday life. Who I am

on the inside and outside is a pure reflection of Christ and His Word.

Simplicity (Matthew 6:33): I seek to live a simple life focused on God and his priorities for my life.

Possessions (Luke 16:11–12): I seek to maintain an eternal perspective on money and possessions, realizing God has given me all that I have, and that he expects me to manage it wisely for His glory. ■

10 Core Virtues

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5): I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3–4): I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Hope (Hebrews 6:19–20): I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Joy (John 15:11): I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Love (1 John 4:10–12): I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Peace (Philippians 4:6–7): I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11–13): I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility (Philippians 2:3–4): I choose to esteem others above myself.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29): I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15): I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others. ■