

Sermon or Lesson: James 3:17-18 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Other Characteristics Of Genuine Godly Wisdom

INTRO: Have you ever known someone who was truly a wise person? How did you determine that person was wise? Can you identify what criteria you used to ascertain that person was wise? And what other virtues accompany the wisdom in that person?

Let's look at what God says are accompanying characteristics of a person who has godly wisdom.

READ: James 3:17-18

v.17 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is wisdom that "is first of all pure"?)

SECTION POINT: Wisdom that is "first of all" truly "pure".

- - God does send wisdom upon humans, albeit presumably select humans.
 - - The wisdom that God sends has a significantly different nature to it that starkly contrasts it from human generated wisdom.
 - - "The wisdom that comes from heaven" has a "first of all" prominent, overarching feature or quality of being pure.
 - - This wisdom from heaven will be easily observable, identifiable, obvious, open for close inspection, and carries the imprint of God's hand being on it.

 - - This wisdom from heaven is indeed "truly" and thoroughly "pure", indicating being completely "clean, innocent, modest, perfect" with no corruption of any kind. ("truly" - Strong's #3303, omitted by NIV; "pure" - Strong's #0053)
 - - This wisdom from heaven has pure motives, pure agenda, and pure implementation as it comes from the believer God has selected to empower with it.
 - - This wisdom has absolutely no amount of pride (v.13,14), bitter envy (v.14), selfish ambition (v.14), harboring a personal agenda (v.14), worldliness (v.15), humanism (v.15), demonic influence (v.15), disorder (v.16), or any evil practice (v.16).
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[Lesson Question: Why does wisdom that comes from heaven need to be pure?]

- - By implication, if this wisdom is adulterated by sinfulness, then it is not from God because He has no sin, and further it cannot accomplish the righteous purposes God intends because it has sinfulness in it.
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[Lesson Question: Why is the word "then" in this verse 17?]

SECTION POINT: "Then" other virtues:

- - This wisdom has other distinguishable qualities, which are equally significant but not in the forefront like its purity is.
 - - By implication, these other distinguishable qualities excellently align with, coincide with, complement, and collaborate with its purity.
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[Lesson Question: What is the meaning of each of the listed virtues in verse 17 and its implications?]

"Peace-loving":

- - "Of a peaceful nature; tranquil; Tending to diminish or put an end to conflict; appeasing; un-aggressive" ("pacific" - *AHD* (from Strong's #1516))
- - By implication, contains inner peace as well as strives and mediates to promote peace, unity, harmony, and submission to authority.

"Considerate":

- - "Forbearing, appropriate, mild"; "courteous, gentle"; "fitting, suitable, proper, lenient, yielding, unassertive" (Strong's #1933; *AMP*; *Zodhiates* #1933)
- - By implication, is properly considerate and tolerant for the situation.

"Submissive":

- - "Inclined or willing to submit"; "easily persuaded, compliant" ("submissive" - *AHD*; *Zodhiates* #2138)
- - By implication, in regard to righteousness is not prone to argue, disagree, or resist.
- - By implication, in regard to righteousness is subordinate to authority, helpful, cooperative, readily willing to go along with, supportive.

"Full of mercy":

- - "Abundantly supplied; abounding" in mercy - "compassionate loving empathy for and active involved movement in response to meet the need of a person who is suffering" (*Richards* pp.440, 441, 181)
- - Implies not merely espousing wise words, but additionally readily getting personally actively involved by following those wise words with appropriate assisting wise actions.
- - Implies generously extending mercy without hesitation or reserve.

"Full of... good fruit":

- - Abundantly supplied and abounding in "good fruit" - always applying wisdom for the purpose of producing results that honor God, further His Kingdom, and promote His agenda.

"Impartial":

- - Consistently showing no partiality or favoritism. (v.2:1)
- - Implies always prioritizes and persists at being fair and equal in both words and good deeds. (v.2:17)

"Sincere":

- - "Not pretended", "not disguised or concealed", "unadulterated; without hypocrisy; true, pure, genuine" (Strong's #0505; *AHD* - "un-dissembled", "sincere")
 - - Implies no hidden personal agenda, plot, scheme, ambition; and instead contains a quality of being self-sacrificing and oriented towards the well-being of others over oneself.
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v.18 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is the connection between godly wisdom and peacemaking?]

SECTION POINT: Genuine godly wisdom endeavors to sow peace, which produces righteousness.

- - Genuine godly wisdom will produce results according to its comprising nature, as stated by the principle in verses 3:11-12.
 - - The purity of all aspects of genuine godly wisdom enable there to be and are conducive for a concurrent sowing of peace.
 - - Thereby, the extending of genuine godly wisdom naturally works in combination and collaboration with the sowing of peace to naturally produce "fruit" of righteousness. (Strong's #2590)
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[Lesson Question: Why is peace highlighted here?]

- - The overall, highly visible, overriding effect and end result of this wisdom in action will be the making of peace.
 - - The skillful use of godly excellent wisdom has enormous and powerful potential to sway the direction of a ministry. Any person who has this wisdom will likely be tempted to perversely wield it to gain personal power and status in the ministry, generating struggles for power with the existing authorities in that ministry.
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IMPLICATIONS:

Q: What are some general or common qualities or characteristics of the virtues listed here?

- - Not tainted by any evil but instead comprehensively and intrinsically good and right before God.
- - Not in any way artificial but instead genuine.
- - Not self-seeking but instead others benefiting and loving.
- - Not contentious or divisive but instead accommodating and peace-promoting.
- - Not demanding but instead submissive.

Q: If this kind of wisdom comes from heaven, then what does this seem to say about man's natural tendencies in this regard?

- - Implies humans cannot generate this kind of wisdom on their own by their own abilities.
 - - Declares those who do generate or exhibit this kind of wisdom are being empowered by heaven.
 - - And declares those who generate corrupted wisdom are not being empowered by heaven.
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BIG IDEA: Genuine godly wisdom is comprised of numerous relating virtues, which are comprehensively pure and actively peace-promoting.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Can you recognize genuine wisdom that is empowered by God when someone speaks it?
 - - Can you recognize it when it comes from a non-leader in your church or ministry?
 - - Or from someone you have pushed aside from your ministry because you perceive that person's empowering from God may make you look deficient or incompetent?
 - - Do you shun, reject, accuse, or condemn genuine godly wisdom when it is offered?
 - - Or do you immediately recognize it for what it actually is and humbly embrace it even though it did not come from you?
 - - For those of you who think you have spiritual wisdom from God, does your use of wisdom thoroughly match the virtues and their characteristics as cited in these verses 17-18?
 - - If you fail in any of these virtues, why not make all necessary corrections right now so that you henceforth align with each of these virtues? Repent; change your thinking, attitudes, and behaviors; confess your sinfulness to God; and then ask God to give you genuine godly wisdom. (v.1:5)
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