

LIVING FAITH: JAMES Part 5 - Wisdom from Above

WISDOM from BELOW (v14-16)

In contrast to the wisdom of heaven, there is a **PURPORTED** wisdom, that is, in fact, **EARTHLY, UNSPIRITUAL & DEMONIC**.

1. **EARTHLY** → Belonging to this **MATERIAL WORLD** (1 Cor 1:20)
2. **NATURAL** → of the **FLESH**, hence **UNSPIRITUAL** (Rom 1:21-2)
3. **DEMONIC** → **MALICIOUS** or actively **EVIL** in intent (1 Tim 4:1)

The **CHARACTERISTICS** = **JEALOUSY & SELFISH AMBITION**

The **OUTPUT** = **DISORDER & EVIL OF EVERY KIND**

What are the loudest, boldest channels of earthly, unspiritual & demonic wisdom that are shouting at you, right now?
Where does jealousy & selfish ambition come from & how does it manifest?
What disorder & what evil?

WISDOM from ABOVE (v17-18)

- a) **Pure**: Free from any **CARNALITY** or **COMPROMISE**
- b) **Peace-Loving**: Leads you towards **SHALOM**
- c) **Gentle**: Not **MANIPULATIVE, INTIMIDATING, HARSH**
- d) **Willing to Yield**: **TEACHABLE, OPEN EARS, SOFT HEART**
- e) **Full of Mercy**: Always **FULL** of **GRACE**
- f) **Full of Good Deeds**: Not just **THEORETICAL**, but measured by the **FRUIT** it bears
- g) **Shows No Favouritism**: **Unmoved** by **STATUS, POWER, GAIN**
- h) **Always Sincere**: **Without HYPOCRISY**, faithful to the **TRUTH** it stands for, whatever the challenge

Pick one of those characteristics each & explain it to the group.
Which one do you find most challenging to live out consistently? Which does worldly wisdom most violently contradict?
How does your wisdom 'score' on that scale? How could you up your mark?

The APPLICATIONS: So What & Now What?

1. Sow the **SEED** of 'wisdom from above' **PERSONALLY**, to prepare the way for the preferred **HARVEST** of righteousness
 - * Some of the trouble you're dealing with **TODAY** is the **DIRECT RESULT** of **BAD** seed sown **YESTERDAY**.
 - * **FLIP**: You can start sowing **NEW** seed right now. And if you **KNOW** the seed you've planted, you **KNOW** the harvest you're going to get.
 - * **MORAL**: **CHOOSE** your wisdom **SOURCE** carefully, because that choice is **DETERMINING** your future, wittingly or unwittingly.
 - * Wisdom comes from **WALKING WITH GOD**, over the long haul.

James connects wisdom to sowing & harvesting. How does that image help you understand the long-term impact of your daily choices?
How can the idea that some of your present trouble may be the result of seed sown in the past be freeing rather than condemning?
What have you learnt from 'walking with God over the long haul' that is different & better than the world's quick fixes, shortcuts or compromises?

3 KEY ELEMENTS

- a) **BIBLICAL LITERACY** (Psalm 1:1-3)
- b) **Recognising the INWARD WITNESS** (Eph 1:17)
- c) **SEEKING** in **PRAYER** (James 1:5)

Which of the three do you feel strongest in right now? Any need attention?
How do these three work together to help us choose wisdom from above rather than relying on just one? What might change in your decision-making if you slowed down enough to engage all three consistently?

2. Going to need, more than ever, to be able to **DISCERN & DISQUALIFY** 'wisdom from below'
 - a) **Make sure you CHECK** the **SOURCE**
 - b) **Can you SEE THROUGH** the **AGENDA**?
 - c) **What worldly wisdom** have you been **TAKEN IN BY**?

What different sources do you personally use to check the news or information you see or read?
What strong agendas are being pushed out there right now? Why? How, as Christians, do we stand strong & resist the temptation to compromise?
If you're brutally honest, is there any worldly wisdom, strongly pushed agenda that you have fallen for, or been tempted to do so? Any you're struggling with right now?

3. What an **OPPORTUNITY** to **SHOW** the **WORLD** God's wisdom produces markedly different results
 - * We don't leverage opportunity by **ARGUING HARDER**, but by **LIVING WISER** (Col 4:5-6)
 - * **CONSISTENTLY** choosing 'wisdom from above' creates a **CONTRAST** the world cannot **IGNORE**.

What does it mean to 'live wiser' rather than 'argue harder.' Have you ever chosen the latter over the former & regretted it (or vice-versa).
Where do you think the world most clearly notices the difference godly wisdom makes?
How can consistent, wise living create a contrast that invites curiosity rather than resistance?