

## James 3:13-18

### Introduction:

1. Subjects previously covered in our study of James include "facing temptations" (1:2-18), "hearing and doing the Word" (1:19-27), "respect of persons" (2:1-13), "faith and works" (2:14-26), "a warning for teachers" (3:1), and "the use of the tongue" (3:2-12).
2. In James 3:13-18, two kinds of wisdom are contrasted.
3. As we study these verses, let us keep in mind that peace and unity are very important in the church (John 17:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:13b).
  - a. Peace and unity do not exist by accident.
  - b. Certain things must be done, and certain things must be avoided.
    - 1) (vs.2-12) The use of the tongue will affect peace and unity.
    - 2) (vs.13-18) The kind of wisdom that is possessed will affect peace and unity.

### Discussion:

- I. (vs.13-14) OUR ACTIONS DEMONSTRATE THE KIND OF WISDOM WE POSSESS
  - A. (Matthew 7:20) Jesus said, *"By their fruits ye shall know them."*
    1. Jesus indicated that false teachers can be detected by the fruit that they bear.
    2. In a similar way we show by our actions the kind of wisdom we possess.
  - B. (vs.13) A child of God who is wise and endowed with knowledge will *"show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."*
    1. His "conversation" [manner of life, behavior] will be in harmony with God's will.
    2. His works will demonstrate his wisdom.
  - C. (vs.14) However, the heart may be filled with bitter envying [jealousy] and strife.
    1. A person like this should not glory because he possesses these traits.
    2. Also, he should not lie against the truth by pretending to be a follower of Christ -- he is nothing more than a hypocrite.
  - D. To help us understand James' lesson, let us examine the disciples before Jesus was crucified.
    1. They were often concerned about who was the greatest (Matthew 18:1; 20:25-28).
    2. They even discussed this when Jesus ate His final meal with them (Luke 22:24).
    3. Their real problem was that they possessed the wrong kind of wisdom.
- II. (vs.15-16) THE WRONG KIND OF WISDOM
  - A. This is the kind of wisdom mentioned in vs.14.
  - B. Its source is identified.
    1. It does not descend from above.
    2. It is "earthly" [worldly].
  - C. It is described as being "sensual" and "devilish."
  - D. This kind of wisdom produces confusion and every evil work instead of peace and unity.
  - E. The church in Corinth was plagued by this kind of wisdom.
    1. The Lord wanted this church to be united (1 Corinthians 1:10).
    2. However, it was divided (vs.11-12).
    3. The problem is identified in 1 Corinthians 3:3 -- its members were "carnal" [worldly].
    4. Pursuing the right kind of wisdom will eliminate this problem.
- III. (vs.17-18) THE RIGHT KIND OF WISDOM
  - A. This is the kind of wisdom mentioned in vs.13.
  - B. Its source is identified -- it comes from above (1:5).
  - C. The wisdom that comes from God is described as being pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
  - D. This kind of wisdom produces the fruit of righteousness.

### Conclusion:

1. The Bible addresses these matters many times (Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 4:31-32).
2. To motivate us to heed these warnings and instructions, let us remember that:
  - a. God hates those who sow discord (Proverbs 6:19)
  - b. God will richly bless peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).