

Today, I'd like to talk to you about wisdom...About true wisdom...Wisdom is often pursued but few can find it...Everyone wants wisdom yet few can define it...Wisdom is difficult to define...difficult to acquire, yet vigorously sought...

So, What is wisdom? Some say Wisdom is deep knowledge or understanding...But wisdom seems not be mere intelligence...For there are many people that are intelligent but lack wisdom...Wisdom is not found in deep knowledge either...Wisdom is not found in deep scientific truths...There seems to be a relationship between knowledge, intelligence and wisdom but they are not the same...

Some say Wisdom is philosophy...For the word philosophy itself means the “love of wisdom” Some that say wisdom is philosophy tend to see wisdom as the communication of deep life truths...But wisdom surely is no this deep truth regarding life but must be the right truth regarding life...

Perhaps the dictionary is more help...The dictionary defines wisdom as the “the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment” (Pause)

I am not so sure this nails it... Perhaps, a closer definition to true wisdom is the thought... “Wisdom is the application of knowledge...” I believe this is closer but I am still not sure that this is really encompassing enough for what wisdom truly is...

Perhaps, it is more helpful to think about someone who is wise...

By worldly standards...famous philosophers or world leaders often come to mind...

People like Aristotle, Plato or Socrates often bubble to the surface...

Or even people even think of Sun Tzu who wrote the Art of War...

From a worldly perspective, what makes these philosophers and leaders wise? Being ahead of their time? Intelligence?

Transition: But for many of us here this morning...When we think of someone wise...We most likely think of a man named Solomon...Surely, Solomon is among the wisest people to ever live...Perhaps the second most...Solomon wrote book after book, poem after poem introspectively looking at the nature of humanity correlated to the nature of God...

But even Solomon in all his wisdom still made some very unwise decisions especially toward the end of his life...

But of course the wisest person to ever walk the earth was The God Man...Jesus...For Jesus

was GOD...He epitomized wisdom...He invented it...Not only is his wisdom proven through his deity but also his sayings...

Passages such as the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse and many profound parables prove his wisdom...But was it just his beautiful words that made Him wise?...Was it just Jesus' putting knowledge into action that truly made him wise?...Perhaps it is more than his words or application of knowledge that truly made him wise....

Yet for even some of us in this room...when we think of someone wise perhaps our minds do not reach to historical figures but perhaps maybe it is a person you know currently...Perhaps it is a parent or friend, mentor or confidant...

ME:

As I look back at my life...I have known many wise people...Some of the wisest people I know attend this church or are in my family...

When I think of someone wise that I personally know...two people actually come to my mind...Carl and Lisa Peck...Carl and Lisa are not wise because they are perfect...Carl and Lisa are not wise because they know every answer...

Carl and Lisa are wise for three main reasons...For three main reasons...

Reason #1: Their words reveal wisdom... Their words reveal wisdom...For their words are always carefully chosen to meet the exact need of the moment...They quickly, purposely, and strategically shave off edges of words and smith them to perfection to fit the exact shape of someone's need... Their words reveal purity...they are peaceable, gentle, reasonable,

Reason #2: Their demeanor also reveals their wisdom... Their demeanor is pure...they do not hide behind their back ulterior motives...Their demeanor is unwavering...

Reason #3: Their deeds reveal their wisdom... their deeds reveal mercy and bear good fruit...leading to peace...

Now, in case they will watch this...They are not perfect people but close...haha just kidding...
So what is wisdom? Is it just the application of knowledge? If so what knowledge?

WE:

Now Before we step forward into the text today...Let us each take a step back...Before we enter the text...I hope that we all come to some sort of realization...I imagine that each one of us here in this room...wishes to be known as "wise"... No one wants to be known as a "fool"...

Perhaps for many people in their basic human nature...the greatest goal to aspire too is to be

recognized by others as a very wise person...

But Friends, what is true wisdom? What does it look like? What are the results of true wisdom from God? What is the test for us personally to know if we are wise? What is the test to determine if someone else is wise?

Well, through the course of today's passage, James demonstrates the proof, source and results of both true wisdom and false wisdom...

In today's text, James seeks to answer the answer, "Who is wise and understanding?" In his pursuit to answer this...James gives us true wisdom's proof in verse 13, its source and results in verses 17-18, but then he also provides the proof, source and results for false wisdom as in verses 14-16...And through this discussion, James then gives us a good idea of true wisdom...

And through the examination of this text and other Biblical texts, it is also my goal for each of us to self-examine the wisdom of our lives and then for each one of us to walk out of here with a tool in our tool belt to apply this passage to our lives....

So friends with all this as a backdrop for our discussion, please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to James 3...Today we will be in James 3:13-18...

Transition: So, let us begin our discussion today with verse 13...

Read verse 13, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds done in the gentleness of wisdom..."

Now, friends, this verse is absolutely packed with juicy truth...I could spend probably an hour on this one verse...

First how does James start this passage? With a question, right? James frequently uses questions throughout his epistle to introduce a new idea or draw a conclusion...James is the prince of questions...

Yet as I think about it...I wonder where he got this from? Think about it: Who else asked tons of questions...**The king of questions is the king of kings...**I can't help but wonder if James learned the use of questions from his older brother Jesus...Perhaps it is something James learned in His father's carpenter shop...

Now What question does James ask in verse 13? "Who among you is wise and understanding?" This word "understanding" is literally intelligent... So, the question James seeks to answer in verses 13-18 is "Who is truly wise and intelligent?"

Now, pause here for a second...we discussed earlier the world's idea for a wise person...But who do we think of when we think of someone intelligent? We think of the person that had a 36 on the ACT, the person that got 4.2 GPA out of a possible 4.0... We think of the person that has two PhDs or the person who has the answer to every question...

Transition: But who does God consider wise and intelligent? Look at the rest of verse 13... "Let him show by his good behavior his deeds done in the gentleness of wisdom..."

How do you tell if someone is wise and intelligent? It isn't by what they know...It is by what they DO...It isn't by how much knowledge or Bible knowledge someone has...It is rather the application of the true knowledge of God...

Or another way to say it...True Wisdom is not just heard but Wisdom is seen... True Wisdom is just not heard but Wisdom is seen...

Interestingly here...Look at the first phrase after the question... "Who among you is wise and intelligent? **Let him show...**" The Greek construction here is wildly interesting...If I can put it in more "Plain English" Who among you is wise and intelligent? **PROVE IT** by your good behavior...

True Wisdom is proven not by pontification...True wisdom is not rooted in intelligence but true wisdom is rooted in action... If you are wise, prove it...Prove that you are wise and intelligent...But How do you prove it?

Prove it...First by your "Good Behavior"...Good behavior...**Now, the Greek word here honestly is a bit vague...**And I think James is purposefully so...This Greek word means both behavior and conversation...James' intention seems to be broader than just your behavior but rather your "manner of life..."

What does your manner of life include? If you wish to be wise, then it includes both **your dictation and your demeanor**...Good behavior here means dictation and demeanor...

#1: True Wisdom is proven in wholesome dictation or speech...

To be wise, We must have good or wholesome dictation...we must speak to others in a wholesome or Godly manner...Let us fix the miss conceptions that wisdom is saying something profound or insightful...True wisdom from God is saying something wholesome, Godly, Biblical...

True Wisdom is Saying things that encourage not discourage, true wisdom saying things that unify and not divide, saying wholesome uplifting things that point to the Savior...true wisdom is avoiding tearing others down which points to conflict brought on by the enemy...

#2: True Wisdom is proven in wholesome demeanor...

True wisdom is founded in our demeanor... What do I mean by our demeanor? Our demeanor is how we present yourself in your day to day or everyday actions...Generally, demeanor is how we carry ourself...How we treat the common person...Our demeanor is not a purposeful good deed but rather a reflection of who we really are...What we show the world when we are anonymous in the grocery store...What we show the world in the fast food line...what we show our family...it is how we carry ourself...

Transition: So, True wisdom is wholesome dictation (or speech), wholesome demeanor...

But then look at the end of verse 13, “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior... (wholesome speech and wholesome demeanor) And His deeds done in the gentleness of wisdom...”

True wisdom #3: True wisdom is proven in wholesome deeds...

Wholesome deeds... The Greek literally reads, “His works themselves done in the meekness of wisdom”...

So, if we wish to be proven wise... If we want to determine if someone is wise...The three piece puzzle for a complete picture of true wisdom... is Wholesome dictation, wholesome demeanor and wholesome deeds...

Transition: But how do we attain these three wholesome pieces of the wisdom puzzle? The source of true wisdom comes later in the passage in verses 17-18...but in verse 14 James switches gears from true wisdom to false wisdom...

Now if you look at verse 14...there is one very important word... it is one simple yet Very IMPORTANT WORD...Do not miss it...What is the first word in verse 14? It is the English word “but” which shows contrast...

Now, Notice this word appears again... Look at the beginning of verse 17...So the basic outline of this passage is True Wisdom in verse 13...False Wisdom in verse 14-16, then back to True Wisdom in verses 17-18...

So, what does James reveal about False Wisdom?

Read verse 14-16, “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, to not be arrogant and so lie against the truth...This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, and demonic...For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing...”

What is the proof of false wisdom? False wisdom consists also of two things...**

#1: Bitter (or sharp) Jealousy-

#2: Selfish Ambition

Now on the surface, James’ message seems to be pretty simple...But Friends, James seems to be implying something **very** deep and profound here...What is James revealing about our fallen human nature?

He seems to be implying that in our basic human nature we find sharp jealousy and selfish ambition to actually be wise...that when we dig down a bit, we as human actually find someone who is jealous and selfish to be wise...

(Scratch your head) Hmm...Now, some of you maybe looking rather cross eyed at me...

Listen to this commentator, “**Here** bitter envy and selfish ambition describes the grasping and self-advancing motivation for the use of the life skills that are frequently considered wisdom by the world... He adds, “Because Human wisdom seeks self-advancement and is anything but humble...especially when it achieves worldly success...” (ibid, 200)

Friends step back and think about it...If you don’t believe me that our world and fallen human nature finds someone who is selfish and jealous to be wise then think about it...

Who do we typically as Americans find “wise” in our modern society? Who do we immortalize and seek to copy all of their wise moves? Our world typically finds to be wise...

--Very successful politicians and especially successful businessmen- We respect and lap up the “wisdom” from Jeff Bezos, Oprah and especially Warren Buffett...We as humans seek to lick up the bread crumbs of Warren Buffett’s mind...But who is Warren Buffett and Jeff Bezos in the business for? For themselves...Right? Their companies, their net worth...Their wisdom is founded upon jealousy...being richer than everyone else and their own selfish ambitions to be known and wealthy...

Yet we may even more idolize perhaps the richest man of all time John D Rockefeller who

was in today's money would be worth over 392 billion dollars...YES which if he were alive today he would be wealthier than 163 countries on earth...YES...

Yet, One time John Rockefeller was asked by a reporter, "How much money is enough? He responded, "Just a little bit more"...

In our worldly and broken nature, we find those who are jealous and selfish to truly be wise... We idolize people who use their jealousy and ambition to drive them toward success...

Shift: But friends, is this true wisdom? Is this Biblical wisdom?...According to James, false wisdom is self-seeking...is jealous of others...Yet so then True wisdom is rather wholesome...True wisdom is not revealed in wealth or even intelligence...but in dictation, demeanor and deed...

Transition: But let us not just notice the proof of false wisdom in verse 14 but let us also notice the source and result of false wisdom...**Look at verses 15-16,** "This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural (or more literally unspiritual), and demonic..."

Friends, what is the source of false wisdom? What is the source of jealousy and selfish ambition? It's source is earthly (of the world), natural (of the flesh), and demonic (Of the devil)...What are the three enemies of faith? The influence of the World, the corruption of the flesh, and the wiles of the devil, Right?

False wisdom is proven through selfish ambition and jealousy but it is sourced in the falseness of the world, the brokenness of our human nature and in the influence of the devil... **That is exactly the source of false wisdom...**

So, let us think about the flip side of the coin...If all this (Point to the world, point to your head and toes, and hand motion) if all this is false wisdom then what is the ONLY source of true wisdom?

In Him...(Point to the sky) Revealed in Here... (Point to the Bible)...Right? I mean logically think about it...If all we see, if all we think, if every human is broken then true wisdom is not founded in another human...It is not found out there...Then, truly the only source of true wisdom is found **in Him** (Point to sky) and **in Here** (Point to the Bible...)

Transition: The source of false **wisdom is the world** (Point out there), **flesh** (Point head to toe) and **the enemy (Moving hand by ear)**...If Everything out there is false wisdom then the only source of true wisdom is in **him revealed in here...**

But friends what is the result? What is the result of false wisdom? Look again at verse 16, “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing...”

What is the result of false wisdom? Disorder and every evil thing...in other words, CHAOS...

Friends, let us ask an insightful question based on verse 16...How can we tell if someone is wise? How can we tell if someone is truly unwise?

Look at their life...Look at the trail they leave behind...Look at their family, Look at their friends, look at their past service on boards or church classes...If you want to tell if someone is wise, then what did they leave behind? Did they leave disorder or order? did they leave behind peace or chaos? Did they leave behind people that glorify God or glorify themselves?

To tell you a quick Story: A number of years ago I met a very “wise unwise” man...This wise unwise man was a professing Christian and by every standard of the world he was wise...

He was successful...He rose to be a president of a Christian organization

He was very insightful...Very insightful about education programs...PhD programs...Teaching students and communicating effectively...

He was very intelligent...He seemed to know everything about accreditation...Everything about education, everything about teaching...He knew everything about everything...He was very “wise” by worldly standards

But according to James, he was unwise...(pause) Because this man left his presidency and anarchy ensued...Mutiny ensued...back-biting ensued...a rupture of leadership ensued...Disorder and every evil thing ensued...

The trail this “Wise” person left behind was disorder and chaos...And according to James this person was actually very “Unwise”...Oh, sure he was wise by the world’s standard but had every fruit of false wisdom...He had the charisma to fool many...but he did not fool God...

Transition: Friends, false wisdom leaves behind chaos and every evil thing...

Transition: Yet, in verse 17, James makes another sharp turn...He shows his sharp turn again with the all important word “But”...James does a quick 180 from false wisdom back to the source and results of true wisdom...Let us look at the source and results of true wisdom...

Look at verses 17-18...Read verse 17-18, ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, ^[m]reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the

^[u]seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace ^[o]by those who make peace.”

First, what is the source of true wisdom? “*But the wisdom from above* is first pure...” Where does true wisdom come from? Heaven right? From God... The only source of true wisdom is from Him (Point to the sky) revealed in Here (Hold up the Bible)...

And what are its results? What does a truly wise person look like?

First pure...then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy –

Yet, Notice something about these results...These result encapsulates one’s dictation, demeanor and deeds...

The results of your dictation, demeanor and deeds should be pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable and full of mercy... These attributes encapsulate the wholesomeness of a truly wise person...

What do wholesome dictation, demeanor and deeds ultimately lead too? What are its final results? Look at verse 18, “And the ^[u]seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace ^[o]by those who make peace.” Or more literally, “and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who are peaceful...”

What is the end result of true wisdom? Fruits of righteousness...Fruit of righteousness is the ultimate result of heavenly wisdom...Fruit of righteousness...

The result of true wisdom bears...

Fruits of the Gospel in the lives of people through the seeds of our words and actions...

Fruits of Discipleship sown through the seeds of sharing our lives with others

Fruits of unity and love for one another through the seeds of selflessness and sanctification...

Fruits of the Spirit which is love yielded from the seed of your walk with God..

****Friends my point today is to Acquire true wisdom from a Godly pursuit aligning your dictation, demeanor and deeds to yield fruits of righteousness....****

Friends, allow me to now define true wisdom... True wisdom is the application of **Godly** knowledge which aligns and inspires our wholesome dictation, demeanor and deeds to bear fruit... True wisdom is the application of Godly knowledge which aligns and our wholesome dictation, demeanor and deeds to bear fruit

Transition: Yet as we head towards application...I find my heart to be heavy...For my heart

is not just heavy with personal conviction...**My heart is** heavy for those lost among us...

Friends, the ways of the world are a false hope, a false prosperity, a false deliverance, a false wisdom...Friends, the hopes and dreams of the world that play over the radios of our hearts is false...

Friends...we must all realize that we are truly broken...We as humans are truly broken...Without realize one's own brokenness then one does not realize their need for redemption...**We are all broken...we are all sinful**...The Bible says....There is none that are righteous...No not even one...

Yet God did not leave you in your brokenness...But decided to rescue you...to give you a chance for a second hope...Your brokenness is evidenced through your physical death but you do not have to die an eternal death also...God gives each one of us the chance to believe in his gospel which is that Jesus Christ died for my sins...And that if I believe in Him I am saved...

If you realize your brokenness yet have never believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ...I encourage you to believe in him...

The Bible says, “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, ^[f]resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, ^[g]resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “**WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE ^[h]DISAPPOINTED.**” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³ for “**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**””

Transition: Yet many of us here today know we are sinner and many of us here today believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ...And For all of you today, I wish to help each of us apply this passage....For you I answer the question, “So What?...How do I apply this to my life?”

YOU:

What is the first step to acquiring true wisdom? If we only acquire true wisdom from Him...Then the first step must begin with Him...

Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” To gain true wisdom we must implement Step #1...

Step #1: Fear the Lord, Fear the Lord...

What is the fear of the Lord? There are many, many definitions...For the sake of simplicity, the fear of the Lord is the respectful trust in God...Respectful trust in God...

Story from my childhood:

When I was a child, I was fearful of my father... Yet my fear was founded in respect and a healthy fear was reflected in my trust in him... Friends, We are God's children... We each should have a respectful fear in God...

So step #1 is to Fear the Lord... But any healthy fear of God is rooted in something... It is rooted in relationship...

Step #2: to acquiring wisdom is to Pursue the Lord... To Pursue the Lord...

Any healthy fear of God is rooted in a growing relationship with him... a respectful trust of God that grows greater and greater as we pursue God more and more...

To grow in fear and wisdom... It requires a pursuit... We must pursue God by daily praying, daily reading our Bible, daily seeking His will, daily meditating on scripture... If you are curious as to how to have a healthy relationship with God, approach me after...

Step #1: Fear the Lord, Step #2: to Grow in the Lord...

Step #3: Ask the Lord: James 1:5 says, "Let he who lacks in wisdom... Let him ask of God who gives to all generously and without reproach and it will be given to him..." We all lack in complete wisdom... So, we each must ask Him for it...

Step #4: Surround Yourself, Surround Yourself...

Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel."

Friends, acquire wisdom through pursuing God with a healthy fear, by asking of God, but also by surrounding yourself with people that also have wisdom from God... Surround yourself with people that are not wise in the world's way... but they themselves fear the Lord, Grow in the Lord and Pursue the Lord...

Transition: Friends, we all can grow in our true wisdom... Let us never give up the pursuit of our king... Let us never tire in our running sprint toward our Savior Jesus Christ...

WE:

Yet, I'd like to close with a thought... My hope is for Calvary not to be known for our intelligence but for our application, that we are not known for our friction but for our wholesome words... It is my hope that we are known by our Godly wholesome deed so much that people randomly walk up to us and ask, "what church do you go too?"

Friends this hope is only found in true wisdom sourced from God... Friends let us pursue God and Live out this aligning our dictation, demeanor and deed to yield a great harvest of righteousness...