

James 3:14-18

False (or human) wisdom begins in the heart. Proverbs 4:23 "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."

James uses the word "envy" or "jealously" in your heart then this is what comes out. A definition of this is precluded with the word "bitter." Self seeking or selfish ambition has no room for humbleness. Do not boast about this type of wisdom, it is false, and it's a lie.

Application: these traits do not represent a true Christian. There is nothing more characteristic of a fallen human state than unredeemed men with these traits. No matter what one may claim or say of who he or she is, based on these traits they cannot be a truly redeemed believer.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE WISDOM

The Christians enemy is the world, the flesh and the devil. The corresponding truth is earthly, sensual and demonic.

Such wisdom is earthly. By definition it's restricted to things man can theorize, discover and accomplish by himself. It has no place for God or the things of God. It has no place for spiritual illumination. It's often been described as "do it your way" or "do your own things" and "look out for number one".

Such wisdom is natural. This isn't Godly wisdom, because the natural man cannot understand the things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Jude 19 "These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit." 1 Corinthians 1:20 "Where is the one wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

Such wisdom is demonic. Satan has always promised wisdom to those he tempts. Satan asserts that God's wisdom should be doubted and his own words or yours to be accepted as truth. Cf. Genesis 3:1-6, thus was born the lie that man could be his own god. To the world's philosophers, religion in general are relics of superstitions and prescientific age. 1 Timothy 4:1 "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons."

2. RESULTS OF FALSE WISDOM (vs. 16)

Disorder and every evil thing covers a multitude of bad results. Disorder defined is "instability, confusion and even rebellion and anarchy." We see this in American cities today. This is man's wisdom and his answers to deeply spiritual problems.

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God isn't the author of disorder. 1 Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." Every evil or vile thing is a broad category of bad results by human wisdom. It's used to contrast the difference between the saved and the unsaved.

3. TRUE WISDOM - Vs. 17-18

This wisdom is from above. The NT links saving faith and godly wisdom together. We see these words of Jesus, Matthew 7:24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Cf. Matthew 25:1-13, 1 Corinthians 1:24 "But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

True wisdom is pure. Even the pagans believed in some sort of purity before they went into their gods. The Greek word for pure is *hagnos* which is also translated *holy* and indicates that pure wisdom comes from above and is holy. Cf. 1 John 3:2-3, the fact is, Godly wisdom drives you to be pure like God.

True wisdom is peaceable. The corresponding verse to this is Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The truly wise don't perpetrate conflict by their selfishness, but produce peace by their humility. Cf. Philippians 2:1-4

True wisdom is gentle. The corresponding beatitude is Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." 2 Timothy 2:24-25 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth."

True wisdom is willing to yield (reasonable). The corresponding beatitude is Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It has been said this means a willingness to yield without disputing. This is a good marriage principal. And quite frankly this can be summed up in the old saying, "That's not a hill worth dying on". Sometimes as a believer you yield too senseless and useless things.

True wisdom is full of mercy. The corresponding beatitude is Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Cf. Luke 10:30-37

True wisdom is full of good fruits. The corresponding beatitude is Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

True wisdom does this without impartiality (which James has already dealt with) and hypocrisy. True wisdom, Godly wisdom produces behavior reflective of God's holiness and ways.