

Women's Bible Study

February 27, 2019

James 3: 13-18 Two Kinds of Wisdom

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

According to James 1: 5 wisdom is essentially practical, even when it is about spiritual things. Wisdom enables one to face trials with "pure joy." The Hebrew word *Tobuwnah* means "understanding," which represents the act of wisdom by being equipped with expert or professional knowledge. Together, to be wise and understanding means to know all the technical facts, all the spiritual implications, and all the practical applications that a teacher needs. Wisdom is chiefly a matter of means, not end. Clever and successful people may be wise in how to attain their goals, but the question is, are their goals earthly or heavenly? *Life Change Series on James/ Strongs Expanded Concordance/NIV Commentary*

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Q- How can we recognize in ourselves and others the wisdom and understanding necessary for a teacher?

A –Are we trusting in God alone? Are we concentrating on the wisdom from above? Jesus encouraged people to come learn from Him, because He was gentle and humble in heart. (Matthew 11:29) Paul asserted his authority as an apostle and teacher after displaying the meekness and gentleness of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:1)

“To be meek is to accept what God commands and ordains, and to seek help from God rather than trusting in one’s own abilities. It is not a passive tolerance of injustice (especially toward others), but a reliance on God for vindication and a refusal to retaliate when insulted. The meek person is convinced that God’s ways are good, so he neither disputes nor resists what God sends. The humble person

does not have a low opinion of himself; he is not occupied with self at all because he trusts God's goodness and His control over situations, the meek person does not have to worry about self-interest, looking out for number one, or enhancing his status. Jesus' meekness (Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls) did not conflict with His courage, concern for justice, and confidence that through God He was competent to do His job." (*Life Change Series of James*)

The Greek Dictionary from Strong's New Concordance defines meekness (*praos*) as gentleness of spirit. The meek man truly acknowledges himself as a sinner among sinners and this knowledge of his own sin teaches him to endure the provocations of others and not to withdraw from the burdens their sins may impose on him. The meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice.

Q- Who comes to mind from the Old Testament when we think of meekness gained from affliction?

Galatians 6: 1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Ephesians 4: 1-2 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Colossians 3: 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Numbers 12: 3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all the people who were on the face of the earth.

Make a list below of contrasting words you would use to describe each type of wisdom

Worldly or Unspiritual	Heavenly or of God

James 3: 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

The Greek Dictionary from the New Strong's Concordance defines envy as a feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others. Bitter is defined as a condition of extreme wickedness; discontent; angry. Bitter envy is being excessively jealous.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshipping God and communing with Him all the day long, however long the day may seem. True religion lifts the soul into a higher region, where the judgment becomes more clear and the desires are more elevated. The more of heaven there is in our lives, the less of earth we shall covet. The fear of God casts out envy of men."

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day

James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

The Bible story of Joseph and his brothers is a good example of bitter envy

Rachael and Jacob gave birth to Joseph. But all was not well. Joseph was one of 12 sons and was favored by his father Jacob. Joseph was a confident, Godly young man and didn't hesitate to tell his brothers of a dream that seemed to flaunt his supreme destiny. God revealed in these dreams that someday his brothers would bow to him. This certainly added more resentment to his brother's increasingly bitter envy and hatred towards him. Some of his brothers wanted to kill him. This jealousy resulted in the events that placed Joseph into slavery but ended with favor bestowed upon Joseph in Egypt.

Selfish ambition can be defined as "motivation to elevate oneself or to put one's own interests before another's. It is a self-above-others approach."

"Learn to discern where the ambition leads, and you will see why it is so necessary to live facing the Lord Jesus Christ." *Oswald Chambers*

Philippians 2: 3-4 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

As you read Philippians 2:3-11, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you the wisdom of humility.

"We can learn how to avoid acting out of selfish ambition or vain conceit by looking at the contrasting words in the same context. The opposite of being

selfish and vain is to “in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. We must learn to be others-focused, not self-focused. If we’re putting others first, we won’t be conceited or proud or overly ambitious. It’s hard to be self-important when we’re considering others as more important.”

When our focus is on ourselves and each other we begin to compare and compete, which leads us into a black hole of demonic evil (James 3:14–15). But looking to Jesus reminds us that we have nothing that we haven’t received through him (1 Corinthians 4:7). Past and future, world without end, all is God’s grace toward us in Christ. Looking to Jesus reminds us that loving and serving each other just as Jesus has loved and served us is the path to full joy” (John 15:11–12). *Jon Bloom*

As C.S. Lewis explained it, “A really humble man...will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.”

Let’s look at an example of selfish ambition from the Bible (Luke 22: 21-27)

During the Last Supper Jesus had revealed that one of them that very night would willingly participate in the death of the Son of God. And yet somehow the introspection and inquiry that followed ended up in a competition over who was greatest. *Jon Bloom*