

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes

Sermon Notes for October 9-10, 1999

Dale Whitehead

"Where to Get Wisdom"

James 3:13-18

In the OT scriptures the fear of the Lord distinguished those who were wise in their own eyes from those who were wise in God's eyes (Proverbs 3:7).

When we think of OT saints being obedient because of their fear of the Lord we should not think of them rendering that obedience grudgingly. Their fear was balanced with a healthy respect and the belief that obedience was the way of blessing. Their fear of God led them not to tremble but rather to trust (Hebrews 11).

As the church progressed and the Gospel was proclaimed throughout the whole world, the response to the gospel became the determining factor in NT scripture as to whether a person was wise in their own eyes or in the eyes of God (I Corinthians 1:18-24).

The Challenge

The Jewish usage of, "wise" (SOPHOS) described the individual who possessed moral insight and skill in deciding practical issues of conduct.

The word "understanding" (EPISTEMON), which occurs only here in the New Testament was used of one having the knowledge of an expert, a specialist able to apply his fuller knowledge to practical situations.

James demands that the possession of wisdom, like faith (James 2:14-16), must be proved by righteous conduct.

The phrase "good behavior" (ANASTROHPES) denotes the life of movement and action, a turning here and there in the daily affairs of life.

"Gentleness" (PRAUTES) carries the idea of tenderness and graciousness, and can be accurately translated "meekness". But unlike the English word, the Greek word does not connote weakness, but rather power under control.

A person who is "gentle" has given himself up he is not so much concerned with servicing himself as he is with servicing the Lord and others (Numbers 12:3).