

James 3:13-4:12

I. Introduction

A. The book of James is filled with practical instruction for daily Christian living. Notice some specific instruction given in the third and fourth chapters of the book.

II. Wisdom: Heavenly or Earthly?

- A. The need for the Christian's life to be consistent with the claim to follow Christ is a theme of James. This principle is emphasized in his contrast between wisdom from this world and the wisdom that is from above. One who is walking in true wisdom will prove this through his or her *behavior*. **James 3:13**
- B. On the other hand, one who claims to be wise, but is envious and self-willed, actually demonstrates a wisdom that is "earthly," "sensual," and "devilish." **James 3:14-16**

III. Wisdom from Above

- A. One who truly walks in godly wisdom behaves far different from this. For instance, those who demonstrate heavenly wisdom are *pure*, free from moral uncleanness. **James 3:17**
- B. One who is truly wise is also *peaceable*. In the context of James, this appears to emphasize seeking peace with others. **James 3:17; Romans 12:18-21**
- C. One who walks with true wisdom is also *gentle*. While we must uphold truth, this does not excuse doing so with brashness or condescendingly. **James 3:17; Galatians 6:1**
- D. The wisdom from above is also *easy to be entreated*. This involves being "willing to yield" (NKJV) and "open to reason" (ESV). **James 3:17; Acts 18:24-28**
- E. One who is truly wise is also *full of mercy and good fruits*. Consideration of God's mercy ought to motivate us to be merciful toward others. **James 3:17; Titus 3:5**
- F. The wisdom from above is also *without partiality* (or "unwavering" – NASB) and *without hypocrisy*. **James 3:17-18**

IV. Adultery Against God

- A. While one who walks with true wisdom promotes peace with others, one who follows the "devilish" wisdom from the earth promotes quarrels and contentions. **James 4:1**
- B. Some of the Christians James addressed were guilty of promoting such quarrels. They were lustful, hateful, covetous, neglected prayer, and prayed with wrong *motives*. **James 4:2-3**
- C. All of this exemplified the fact that these Christians were committing spiritual adultery against God. When one of God's children gives to something else what ought to be reserved for *Him*, that person is guilty of such spiritual adultery. We cannot be faithful to the LORD and belong to the world at the same time. **James 4:4-5**

V. Choose the LORD

- A. While James sharply rebukes sin, he also gives encouraging words concerning the *answer* to sin. God's gracious forgiveness is accessible to those who humbly return to Him. **James 4:6**
- B. The *choice* to return to God goes hand-in-hand with the *choice* to resist Satan. **James 4:7**
- C. James urges unfaithful Christians to make this choice in genuine repentance. His words show that we must not make light of sin, but realize its severity and have godly sorrow. **James 4:8-10; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11**

VI. Warning About Judging

- A. The Holy Spirit through James follows up this call to repentance with a warning about judging. While we must make judgment calls based upon God's Word, we must *not* judge others unrighteously. **James 4:11-12; Romans 14:3**

VII. Conclusion

- A. May we heed these truths from the book of James.