

## **Title: Two Kinds of Wisdom**

### **James 3:13-18 – Two Kinds of Wisdom**

#### **Introduction:**

Good morning. I'm Kraig Westendorf, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to examine God's word with you today. I'm not one of the elders here at Trinity, but served in that capacity in a past life. I have to agree with what Barry Karstens said last week. Preparation and teaching does bring joy. I've often said that doing biblical research is like digging for gold. It takes some work, but you always strike gold. And helping others to understand what you found is very fulfilling. In a sense, you get to share the gold strike with them. I'll try to do that with you today. Before we proceed, let's pray to God for help.

#### **Pray:**

#### **Introduction Continued:**

The text we will look at today is a fairly short section in James, but there is much knowledge and insight to be gleaned from a closer look. Overall, James' style is very direct and to the point. James' commands are sometimes so direct that it helps to know the context and the original recipients of the letter, to know how these commands should be understood and applied.

#### **“Context covers a multitude of interpretational sins.” Pastor Michael Easley**

Former Moody Bible Institute president Michael Easley has said that “Context covers a multitude of interpretational sins.” Context is important in Biblical interpretation because if we ignore it, we can misapply verses and hurt ourselves and others. We don't want to read over the top of the text, but instead strive to understand the context to know the truth of God's word, in order to know God better, and how we can be more obedient.

As we think back to the sermon last week by Barry on James 3:1-12, James addresses the tongue and how much damage this small body part can inflict on others. James asks the question: Who can tame his or her own tongue? The

answer is that **no one** can tame the tongue on their own. It is too full of deadly poison and all kinds of evil. As I read through verses 1-12, taming the tongue almost seems like a hopeless task. Who is up to this task? As Connor asked a few weeks ago, who is feeling convicted by the book of James? Or, as I've come to say, there is conviction on every page of the book of James!

So how can we deal with this conviction? More specifically, here in James chapter 3, How can you bridle your tongue? To help us, James is going to talk more about wisdom in the verses that we'll examine today.

### **James 3:13-18 - "The antidote for the tongue"**

One commentary that I consulted titled verses 13–18:

- "The antidote for the tongue"
  - *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1363)

This is a helpful title, because it ties verses 13-18 to the context of the preceding verses. James is making arguments in the flow of the letter and sometimes, he seems to switch subjects without a full explanation or application. So, hopefully this examination of wisdom will help us all become more wise and self-controlled.

As I've read through the book of James, some of the words and phrases that James uses can be jarring. Think about some of the words and phrases so far:

- James 1:8 – Being a double-minded man, a person is UNSTABLE in ALL HIS WAYS.
- James 1:26 – The person that doesn't bridle his tongue but DECEIVES HIS OWN HEART, this man's religion is WORTHLESS.
- James 2:20 – But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that FAITH WITHOUT WORKS is USELESS?
- And James 3:8 – But NO ONE CAN TAME THE TONGUE; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.(Jas 3:8).

One of the words in our text today is DEMONIC. As I read and re-read James 3:18, that word "demonic" jarred me each time I read it. A question that came to mind is, are the people that we have disagreements with, are they demonic? Or, in disagreements in the past, was my conduct demonic? Reading the book of

James has caused me many times over the last weeks to examine myself, my actions, and my attitude during and after disagreements.

In your Bible, if you look at the superscription, that's the title that translators put in right before the verses. In this section of James, in the NASB and ESV, you'll see the title: **Wisdom from Above**. The NET Bible titles this section: **True Wisdom**. And, the NIV titles this section: **Two Kinds of Wisdom**. While all these titles are helpful, I think the NIV captures the essence of our text and the way we'll examine it. James writes about 2 kinds of wisdom:

- true, godly wisdom from above and
- the false, ungodly wisdom from the world.

As we move through these sections, we'll see that James uses **contrast** to highlight the differences in true and false wisdom.

It helps to have a short summary of things before we get to specifics.

**The summary of verses 13-18:** *Godly wisdom from above is pure and leads to peace and wisdom from the world is demonic and leads to evil and chaos. Seeds sown in peace will reap a yield of righteousness.*

**The summary application of verses 13-18:** *Seek true wisdom from God, which is pure, peaceable, and gentle. Reject the false wisdom from the world, which is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. Work to sow seeds of peace and you will reap a yield of righteousness.*

I'll attempt to give more specific points of application as we go through the sections.

Speaking of sections, our text lays out in 3 sections, so I'll have 3 different points to give you, to help understand and apply these verses to your life. I know, 3 points, doesn't every sermon have 3 points? It may seem that way, but verses 13-18 break down pretty clearly in that way

Here is an outline of the 3 sections. We'll also list them individually on the screen as we go through each section:

Section 1: James 3:13

Summary: True, godly wisdom will show in your actions.

Section 2: James 3:14-16

Summary: False, worldly wisdom leads to chaos.

Section 3: James 3:17-18

Summary: Godly wisdom produces peace.

You can keep this outline in mind as we examine each section in more detail. Now, let's get to our text.

### **Exposition:**

#### **Point #1: True, godly wisdom will show in your actions. Verse 13**

I'll read James 3:13:

- Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. NASB (James 3:13)

James starts this section with a rhetorical question, asking who the wise people are among his readers. This question seems out of place, considering the preceding verses. Bob read these verses earlier, to help show the flow of the letter.

Here's where the context of the book helps to understand why verse 13 starts with a question. James is addressing people in this letter who were under extreme persecution. The stress of this persecution led to infighting amongst believers. James was most likely addressing those believers, not just teachers, that were claiming to be wise, but their conduct was not that of people with godly wisdom. So, he calls them out. Not by name, of course, but to anyone who was claiming to be wise, they should show their wisdom by their conduct.

It's important to establish your terms while studying the Bible. What do particular words mean? If I asked you to define what wisdom is, what would you say? The

worldly definition would probably center on the amount of knowledge a person has and if they make decisions with favorable outcomes.

The dictionary of Bible themes describes wisdom this way:

- The quality of knowledge, discernment and understanding characteristic of God himself.
  - Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. Martin Manser.

Wisdom is an important concept in the Bible. In fact, the word wisdom occurs 216 times in 202 verses in the NASB. Several people in the Bible that were known for their wisdom. Moses, Joshua, and Solomon were all mentioned as wise people in the Old Testament.

A verse that has stuck with me for years in Proverbs 9:10, which states that:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. NASB (Proverbs 9:10)

If you claim to be wise, a necessary prerequisite for wisdom is to acknowledge God and submit to his proper rule over your life. So true wisdom ultimately comes from God and should have the characteristics of God.

In the second half of verse 13, James challenges his readers to show their wisdom “by good behavior and deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.” True, Godly wisdom should result in good behavior and good deeds. And it should show in the gentleness of wisdom.

This last phrase, gentleness of wisdom, needs some explaining. While it seems simple to understand, I did some research, consulting several commentaries and Bible translations. The ESV uses the phrase “meekness of wisdom” and the NIV uses the phrase “humility that comes from wisdom.” Gentleness is easy enough to understand, but meekness and humility can use some defining, in order to help us see how wisdom should be displayed.

Humility is defined as:

- An attitude of lowliness and obedience, grounded in the recognition of one's status before God as his creatures.
  - Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. Martin Manser.

To summarize that definition is this: Knowing your place in the world compared to the almighty creator of the universe helps to keep us in proper perspective.

Meekness is a word that isn't used much in our day. I think many people believe as I once did, that meekness is a 1st cousin to the word weakness. This couldn't be further from the truth. Meekness is defined as:

- An attitude of humble, submissive and expectant trust in God, and a loving, patient and gentle attitude towards others.
  - Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. Martin Manser. (2009)

A very simple definition of the word meekness may be this: strength under control.

Far from being a synonym for the word weakness, meekness is about strength that is bridled. And this is getting to the context of James in this part of his letter. The context of the earlier part of chapter 3, especially related to controlling the tongue, continues here in verse 13 and beyond. James is instructing his readers to exercise self control and to remember their proper place in God's world. Some of the people that James is writing to aren't always exercising self control and while they claim to be wise, they are not displaying wisdom in attitudes of humility and meekness.

Some of James' readers were using their knowledge to build themselves up in the eyes of their fellow believers. Instead of displaying humility, they had attitudes of pride. And instead of strength under control, their actions were that of foolish people. James calls them to account by saying, if you are so wise, prove your wisdom with humility and meekness.

A takeaway for this section for us would be to follow the example of Christ. One section of scripture that is very clear on how to do this is Philippians 2. Turn with me to Philippians 2 and we'll start at verse 3:

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. NASB (Phil 2:3–8).

Paul is instructing the Philippians how to be humble and meek. To do this, they'll need to look outside themselves and to the needs of others, as well as their own needs. These actions don't come naturally and without mental effort, so Paul advises them to have this attitude which was also in Christ Jesus. Being humble and meek is a mindset and it is the very mindset that Jesus had (and still has!). Jesus humbled himself, he left his rightful place in heaven, looking to the needs of his elect, and came to die in their place, to take the wrath that they deserve. He voluntarily suffered a brutal death, as Hebrews puts it "for the joy set before him." You could say that he was looking to the needs of others so much that it cost him his very life!

We're called to have this same attitude, this same mindset of humility and meekness. It's that same mindset that Jesus has and with that mindset, we'll be more likely to display wisdom instead of pride, foolishness, and empty conceit. James is advising his readers to be humble and meek so that wisdom will be the characteristic that will show.

So, to reiterate point #1: True, godly wisdom will show in your actions.

**Now, we'll look at our second point.**

**Point #2: False, worldly wisdom leads to chaos. Verses 14-16**

We see this in verses 14-16.

In verse 14, James starts with the word **but**, to signify that what comes next is an idea that contrasts the idea just before it. Verse 14:

- **But**, if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. NASB (James 3:14)

To explain this verse simply is this: If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, you are living a lie. If you have these prideful traits about you, you don't have humility. You have self-centeredness, which is the opposite of humility. You can't claim to be wise when your deeds are prideful, even if they are cloaked in a false humility.

One question that needs answering before we go further is this: Who are the people that James is addressing here?

Here is some background,

- Some of the people that James is addressing here were teachers who were attacking one another and being aggressively defensive.
  - New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., p. 1363)
- Some of the teachers (and others) were having arguments in the churches
  - New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., p. 1363)

They may have thought that their arguments and their doctrine were correct, but their motives were not linked to humility. We'll see later in point number 3 that there will be visible and tangible outcomes (aka: fruit) to handling things with humility. These people weren't handling their disagreements with humility, meekness, and wisdom. James makes the point that wisdom, which comes from God, should produce godly actions and attitudes. You can't claim to be wise and have your attitudes and actions be prideful and foolish.

Here's how one commentary describes the phrase:

- "What James describes as selfish ambition they may have called 'standing for the truth' or 'keeping our group pure'. The term James uses for it could also be translated 'party spirit', for they were forming groups or parties

rather than standing for the unity of the whole church. To call these attitudes 'God's wisdom' and thus to boast about them is to deny reality, the truth of God."

- *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1363)

For James, unity in the churches that he's writing to is a paramount concern. These factions or groups may have thought that they were standing for the truth, their "wisdom" did not fit the meek character of God. It was false, worldly wisdom.

James continues in verse 15, explaining where this type of wisdom comes from. Verse 15:

- This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. NASB (James 3:15)

Since this worldly wisdom doesn't come from God above, it doesn't produce the things of God, and it doesn't produce the fruit of the Spirit. This worldly wisdom is of the earth, of the nature of the earth, and of the devil. This reminds me of the phrase: "the world, the flesh, and the devil." It is, as some Bible translations put it: **demonic**.

This is one of those jarring words that James uses. James gets to the heart of the matter in many places and here he calls things as they are.

In verse 16, James further describes what bitter jealousy and selfish ambition will lead to. Verse 16:

- For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. NASB (James 3:16)

When we look at the outcome of disputes, we should see peace, not chaos and disorder. However, sometimes, disagreements can become intense.

As I studied this section, there was much self-examination. A question that I asked myself was this: Have my attitudes and actions always been humble and meek during disagreements? I'd say not always. This is a difficult area and

humility and meekness are key to standing for the truth without displaying bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.

So, how are we to handle disputes with others? What should our outcomes look like? We'll try to answer those questions in our 3rd section, which we'll look at now.

### **Point #3: Godly wisdom produces peace. Verses 17-18**

We see this in verses 17-18.

I'll read verses 17-18:

- But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. NASB (James 3:17-18)

Once again, James starts with the word **but**, to signify that what comes next is an idea that contrasts the idea just before it. He is back to discussing godly wisdom and the fruit that is produced by godly wisdom. In fact, what James writes is similar to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

Working our way through verse 17, the first priority in godly wisdom from above is that it is **pure**. The wise person has pure motives, is obedient to God, and doesn't have double-minded motives. Purity is in contrast to the attitudes that the people James addresses in verses 14-16 who have disguised and false motives. The wise person doesn't have a hidden agenda of self promotion that gratifies the flesh.

Wisdom is pure, like the character of God. Since it is pure like God, it is also peaceable, the next word on James' list in verse 17. The ESV and NASB use this word **peaceable**, but the NIV uses the phrase **peace-loving**, which I think is more common and easier to understand. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, proclaimed that

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.  
NASB (Mt 5:9).

Peace loving people are God's sons because they are acting like their true Father. New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., p. 1364).

The people that James is writing to are in need of peace, which is from God. Many problems would be solved by being peace-loving and peace-making.

Now, I could end here with an application and we could all go on our way. I could simply advise you to do things that bring peace, we could pray, and dismiss. But, there's an opportunity to go deeper and gain more biblical understanding. We need understanding as we deal with one another inside and outside of the church.

Sometimes, coming to a peaceful solution isn't simple or cut and dried. What happens when we have disagreements in the church and with other Christians?

If you've been a Christian for more than a few years, you've probably seen or experienced disagreements, some of which may have led to what seems to be undesirable outcomes. But shouldn't all of our interactions have peaceable outcomes? What if these outcomes don't seem peaceable?

Peace doesn't always mean the absence of tension within the body of Christ. Sometimes, believers in Jesus Christ, who are submitted to the scriptures, and trying to be obedient to the commands of Christ, come to **different** biblical conclusions.

For instance, Baptists and Presbyterians differ on when baptism should take place. Baptists believe strongly that baptism should follow a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Presbyterians, on the other hand, believe that children can be baptized in the covenant community which their parents are a part of. Faith doesn't need to precede baptism.

These differences, among others, have caused Baptists and Presbyterians to have separate churches. However, and for the most part, there are many common beliefs that are shared by these 2 groups. I can fellowship with many whom I disagree with, but we don't worship together regularly. There are strong convictions on both sides that would violate consciences if we tried to have what might be considered "peace."

So, to help understand this, let's do a Biblical case study to look at how this can play out. We'll leave James for a few minutes and look at a biblical example of a disagreement. Turn with me to Acts 15, verses 36–41

- After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. 38 But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. NASB (Acts 15:36–41).

The phrase that stands out in these verses is “**a sharp disagreement.**” I don't think of this kind of interaction between an apostle and a close associate. Here are these 2 major figures in the early years of the church, separating over a disagreement about taking a particular young man on a missionary journey. And how does the account here in Acts 15 this square with verse 17 in James chapter 3 that we just looked at, where we're supposed to be peaceable? Let's dig deeper for more gold.

We live in a time where nearly any tension between Christians is avoided at almost any cost. Listen to this excerpt from the NIV Application Commentary on James. The author, David Nystrom, states this in the section titled “Contemporary Significance”:

- “Evangelicals would do well to recapture the biblical idea of peace. In practice we often confuse the biblical idea of peace with its **impoverished, modern counterpart, *the absence of obvious tension***. We do this in part because we find it expedient in the short run to avoid disagreement and the tension it brings.” David Nystrom
  - Nystrom, David P.. James (The NIV Application Commentary) (p. 212). Kindle Edition.

He continues later in the section with this paragraph about a couple who were causing problems in a church. To keep the supposed “peace”, problems weren't

addressed for many years, until the tension could no longer be avoided. David Nystrom writes:

- “The members of the congregation who allowed one couple to dominate church life sought peace through appeasement. They allowed themselves to impugn the integrity of the biblical call to community by holding to the promise of “peace” in the congregation. By placing their feet on this path, they condemned the church to more than a decade of envy, bitterness, and strife. Peace that leads to righteousness is peace that steadfastly refuses to let go of its standard: justice, righteousness, and the wisdom of God. Peace bought at their sacrifice is not biblical peace.”
  - Nystrom, David P.. James (The NIV Application Commentary) (p. 220). Kindle Edition.

### **Point #3: Godly wisdom produces peace. Verses 17-18**

Back to my question from a minute ago. Should we expect to always agree on every issue? Think back to the pandemic period. There were disagreements over lockdowns, masks, and vaccines. Sometimes, the disagreements were strong. But, we can still have peace, in spite of holding different positions on non-primary issues. These primary positions include the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, and salvation by grace through faith in Christ, to name a few.

So back to our case study in Acts 15. Paul and Barnabas were both highly committed Christians. They were sacrificing their very lives for the spread of the gospel, the building of churches, and the discipling of believers in those churches. They were both passionate men with high standards. But yet, they had a “sharp disagreement.”

We’re all sinners here today. Some sinners here are saved by God’s grace and some sinners are still enemies of God, not yet repenting and trusting Christ. Paul and Barnabas were both sinners, but nothing in the verses that we looked at showed any obvious sin that either man committed. They had good motives and were attempting to use discernment in a decision.

It seems regrettable that these 2 leaders couldn’t come to a compromise. However, since God is always working for good, the separation described here in Acts 15 caused the spread of the gospel and the strengthening of churches in

more areas than was originally planned, because Paul and Silas went one direction and Baranabas and John Mark went in another direction.

And, the disagreement about John Mark didn't last forever. Later in his life, Paul stated in 2nd Timothy chapter 4 to bring John Mark to him because he was very useful to Paul for ministry.

Paul and Barnabas were **both** right about John Mark. Paul thought that he may not be ready for the trip because he had abandoned Paul and others earlier on. Barnabas was right about John Mark because he saw potential that needed to be given a chance to be realized. The Gospel of Mark came from this young John Mark described in Acts 15.

Wisdom, humility, meekness, and God's grace are needed in these matters. God's grace is more than enough to cover our weaknesses, even when we are seeking to honor him in situations where tensions arise.

And we will have tension and disagreements in the body of Christ. Sometimes sin is involved and other times, there is no sin on the part of either party. How do we resolve all of these disagreements? I don't have the time to cover everything that the Bible has to say, but I can give some general guidelines.

In those disagreements where sin is involved:

Try to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11 says this:

- A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression. NASB (Proverbs 19:11)

A question we need to ask ourselves: Can you just ignore a minor sin? 1st Peter 4:8, which sounds a bit like the Micheal Easley quote from earlier, says this:

- Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. NASB (1st Peter 4:8)

A takeaway from these verses is: Not every sin committed against us needs addressing.

How about tensions where sin can't or shouldn't be overlooked? Follow the steps of Matthew 18:15-17, which I'll summarize:

- If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. If he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that witnesses can confirm the facts. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

At this point, the church elders will need to deal with unrepentant sin. The goal of church discipline is repentance and restoration. Both of these things will bring peace. This principle goes back to point in verse 17, where peace is pure.

How about tensions where there is no sin involved? In love, discuss the matter, using the scriptures as your guide. This is one of the many reasons to study and know the scriptures, in order to maintain peace through biblical truth. Sometimes, we can compromise on issues **without** compromising the truth. Sometimes, trusting the wisdom and discernment of others can lead you to not violate your conscience, by allowing you to follow the lead of someone else.

Unfortunately when believers cannot come to an agreement because of bound consciences and all other loving methods have been tried, separation may be the right decision. Although, I'm not saying that separating is always the answer, or the answer in most cases. It should really be a last resort action, when peace can't be maintained otherwise.

All of these issues require much prayer, bringing the issue before God, on multiple occasions, to look for the Holy Spirit's guidance, through the scriptures, to allow you to find a way forward. And it also helps to look to others in the body for advice. Proverbs 15:22 helps here. It says:

- Without consultation, plans are frustrated, **But with many counselors they succeed.** NASB (Proverbs 15:22).

We all have blind spots, so seek out other wise believers and let them help bring clarity.

Let's return to James 3, verse 17. I'll read it again:

- But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
  - NASB (James 3:17)

We've covered the purity and peace aspects of wisdom already. Let's look at the rest of the list in verse 17, briefly, to gain more understanding.

Wisdom is also gentle. I think back to the sharp disagreement that Paul and Baranabas had and wonder if the severity of the disagreement violated this principle of gentleness. I couldn't find in the commentators that I looked at where there wasn't gentleness, but neither was there a confirmation that all was handled as well as it could have been. Luke doesn't give a lot of details in that regard.

Paul tells the Philippians to let their gentle spirit be known to all. One of the qualifications for elders in 1st Timothy 3 is to be gentle instead of violent. The idea is that the person should be non-combative.

In 2 Timothy 2:24-25, Paul gives instructions for disagreements with unbelievers:

- "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth." NASB (2 Timothy 2:24-25)

If we're to handle opposition with unbelievers with gentleness, how much more gentle should we be with those in the household of God?

Reasonable is the next trait that is produced by godly wisdom. While this word is understandable, the NASB footnotes this with the phrase "willing to yield" which, I think, is more helpful.

- This "reasonableness" is an attitude of teachability, of one who is "willing to learn, be corrected, or will otherwise gladly respond to godly leadership."
  - James. *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1363).

Next on James's list is the phrase: "full of mercy and good fruits." This is an interesting phrase because if you have mercy, it should **and** usually does

produce good fruit. This concept is in keeping with James' message, that **true** faith should produce **good** fruit. Our faith should produce the character and actions of God with a merciful heart that does good to others. This is the opposite of the people described in verses 14-16, who had self-centered hearts and were looking for selfish gain.

Last, but not least on James' list, is this phrase: unwavering, without hypocrisy. Another good way to describe this is the way that the ESV and NIV translate this as: **impartial and sincere**. God hates partiality and insincerity. James is very clear related to partiality in chapter 2 verse 9 when he writes this:

- But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. NASB (James 2:9)

In short, to show favoritism and oppress others is a sin to be repented of. Impartiality favors the **person** instead of what we can gain by knowing them, by their wealth, or by their influence.

Finally, in verse 18, James writes what sounds like a proverb:

- "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." NASB (James 3:18)

Here, James uses a common farming metaphor, similar to the saying that you reap what you sow. Verse 18 in the NASB is a bit clunky for me to read, it was helpful when I was studying this verse to rephrase it:

- Those who sow seeds of peace will reap a yield of righteousness.

With this phrase, we're reminded of James 1:20 which states:

- The anger of man doesn't produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:20)

This doesn't mean there isn't a place for righteous anger over sin and injustice. But, to sum up verse 18, like the fertile ground where peace can produce fruit, our actions, attitudes, and atmosphere is where peace can yield its fruit of righteousness. And this is similar to Hebrews 12:11, which states:

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. NASB (Heb 12:11).

We've reached the end of our passage that we'll cover today. I'll reiterate the 3 points with an application statement for each to help you apply the word of God to your life.

**Point #1 Summary:** True, godly wisdom will show in your actions. V13

**Application:** With humility and meekness, let true, godly wisdom show in your actions. Use the example of Jesus's humility and meekness to help guide your attitudes and actions.

**Point #2 Summary:** False, worldly wisdom leads to chaos. v14-16

**Application:** Avoid prideful, selfish ambition and worldly wisdom that leads to chaos, disorder and evil things. Check your mind and heart, especially during disagreements. Be careful that you aren't more concerned with your stature and getting your way.

**Point #3 Summary:** Godly wisdom produces peace. v17-18

**Application:** Let your humble actions and attitudes guide you to God's wisdom and to peace. Remember that righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Look to the Word of God for guidance for peace.