

Wisdom From Below

“Who is wise and understanding among you?” This question could be difficult to answer. In our own minds, every decision we make is the correct one to make. Very few, if any at all, do something they feel is wrong. Obviously, there are a lot of people that make a lot of bad decisions. As we know and have discussed in the past, God determines what’s right and wrong and by that same line of reasoning, He decides what is why and what is not. Earlier in James, we have observed that faith without works is dead, and claiming to be wise and acting foolishly falls into the same category.

Notice some of the signs of that mark the wisdom from below: *“if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there”* (James 3:14-16). Webster’s Dictionary defines wisdom, in regards to insight, as “good sense.” The word here in James had multiple facets. We generally use wisdom exclusively as a positive quality. We almost never use wisdom to describe a person in a negative light. The word James uses was good or bad depending on what it described. The individual that is bitter, envious, or self-seeking used bad wisdom. This wisdom is said to come from the world and is sensual and demonic. Why? Because it causes confusion and every evil thing.

Paul encourages us to *“see that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all”* (I Thessalonians 5:15). What is good for the group and what is good for you is the same thing; it is doing God’s will. Self-seeking has always been condemned under God’s law. In the “seven deadly sins” the writer lists *“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”* (Proverbs 6:16-19). Two of these seven fit under self-seeking: a proud look and sowing discord among brethren. Selfishness is what divide God’s family. In Corinth Paul had to tell them to *“not think beyond what is written.”* They were drawing followers to themselves and away from God because they bound where God did not bind and loosing laws God had not set free.

Wisdom from this world can accomplish no good. Good only comes from having the wisdom from above, the wisdom of God. *“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace”* (James 3:17-18). God is the embodiment of pureness. For an eternity and forever more, God *“is a light and in Him is no darkness”* (I John 1:5). What ever God deems as good, is good and anything that falls short of His standard or goes beyond it is sin by definition. Sin is means nothing more than “missing the mark.” God’s wisdom is gentle because of the peace it brings to its followers. The Philippians were told, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ*

Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). This kind of peace can only come from God and His wisdom. Anything else would not have the same affect and would be considered wisdom of the world.