

WISDOM FROM ABOVE VS. WISDOM FROM BELOW

JAMES 3:13-18

SERMON POINTS

- Calling out the wise
- Wisdom from below
- Wisdom from above

MAIN IDEA: The truly wise person's life is marked by humility, peace, and love over and against bitter envy, divisions, and selfish ambition.

QUESTIONS:

Q: Who is the wisest person you know? What makes them so?

Q: What type of attributes make up the least wise people you know?

Q: James contrasts two types of wisdom-that which is from below and that which is from above. Why do you think he calls that which is from below, "wisdom."

Q: The fruit of "wisdom from below" is bitter envy (zelos) and selfish ambition. Tied up in the idea of "selfish ambition" is a divisive and partisan spirit. What is the difference between healthy ambition and selfish ambition?

Q: Our culture is deeply divided, and need the wisdom that comes from above now more than ever. Read the attributes that James describes as "wisdom from above". All of us are deeply concerned about what is happening in our country. How can we pursue the truth and maintain wisdom from above?

Q: Many of the pundits on television, and bloggers online make their living by stirring up divisions. Many of our political leaders do the same. How does that impact us as it relates to wisdom?

OTHER SCRIPTURES:

Philippians 2:3–8

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

QUOTES:

Dan Doriani

“One minute we use our tongue to bless God; the next we use it to curse men. One minute we tell our wife how much we love her; the next we castigate a child for a petty offense. “You’re always late. You make the family look bad.”

Douglas Moo

“James asks people who think that they have special understanding and insight in spiritual matters to step forward...James assesses these people’s claim to wisdom not in theological terms--how much doctrine do they know...but in practical terms: Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes with wisdom.”

Dan Doriani

“The envious think their identity and worth derive from their status or possessions. As long as someone else has what they think they deserve, they are miserable. Envious thoughts lead to a host of evils: boasting, quarreling, grasping, criticisms of rivals. Envy leads us to rejoice rather than grieve at the sorrows of others. It prevents us from loving them. Ambition and envy breed restlessness. But godly wisdom brings peace and righteousness.”