

## Godly Wisdom by Don Henderson

Why is wisdom so important? In I Kings 3 the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said “Ask what I shall give thee.” Solomon said, “Give thy servant an understanding heart.” The Lord was pleased with Solomon’s request and gave him a wise and understanding heart. In the book of Proverbs we read that wisdom is greater than gold and greater than rubies. So, one might conclude that wisdom is high on God’s list of virtues.

Today we seem to have lots of information. Just go to the internet and you can find information on almost every subject. But, the internet cannot provide wisdom. I went through grammar school, high school, college and graduate school and got mounds of information, but unfortunately a gained little wisdom. My character paid the price and unfortunately many around me were also hurt.

Too bad I waited so long to study the Book of James.

And in particular James 3: 13-18. Please read along with me as I explain what I learned.

What is wisdom? I think we all can agree it is more than information. Many verses out of the Book of Proverbs connect wisdom with understanding. Wisdom connects facts to produce meaning. Wisdom is received from the application of information. Wisdom is the result of experience. For instance, I can tell a person that has never tasted sugar what it taste like, but they have to experience the taste to fully understand.

In James 3: 17 we find that true wisdom comes from above. Several times in the Bible we read that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” By close investigation we will find that wisdom from any other source is not really beneficial wisdom. In fact earthly wisdom can be quite corrosive.

What does Godly wisdom look like? First, we have to know where Godly wisdom leads. Verse 18 reveals that wisdoms final destination is in peace. Wisdom produces peace.

Verse 17 shows us some components of wisdom. It is first pure. In other words morally blameless, full of integrity, clean. Morality is a subject much debated in today’s society. But connect morality with wisdom. Immoral behavior can cause dire consequences. Let’s examine abortion. Certainly an area where there are differing opinions. The more liberal women would say it is a matter of women’s choice concerning her body and health. But I have never hear any of these women interviewed about the after effects of an abortion. The guilt that it can carry for a lifetime. I wonder how many women as they grow older think about the life that they so easily discarded. It is wise to be morally pure.

Peaceable. Isn’t it wise to be peace-loving? People living in harmony with each other. For instance I believe most small businessmen want workers that show up on time and do a day’s work for a day’s wage. In a nutshell they seek harmony. And, the laborer should seek the same harmony. I wonder what society would be like if blacks and whites could co-exist in harmony. I have no problem with living in harmony with my Christian brother no matter what their skin color.

Gentle and easily entreated. Are you approachable? Are you considerate? Are you flexible, willing to yield? In many relationships there is one that has the dominant personality. Wisdom is the person that has learned not to start a fight. Peace is achieved, not division or breakdown. Full of mercy and good works. Often when mercy is mentioned in the Bible it relates to our treatment of others. Take the above relationship example. If both partners serve each other the result will be peace and peace is wisdom.

Without partiality or hypocrisy. It is hard not to play favorites. Wisdom says treat everyone the same. Also, be the same in public as you are in private. Don't criticize one group just because you don't like or agree with them while at the same time give your favorite group a pass for the same behavior.

If one follows the above instruction than they will mirror what we read in verse 13 of James 3. They will have good conversation and meekness of wisdom. They will be attractive to others and present a picture of Godliness.

So, what is in conflict with Godly wisdom? Is there a competing force. In verses 14, 15, and 16 we read about worldly wisdom and it is in a battle with Heavenly wisdom for control. First, we learn that earthly wisdom is demonic in nature (v15). Earthly wisdom is not only wrong but supports evil. I wonder how many would feel that hold philosophies contrary to God's word, if they knew their opinions were not only wrong but evil.

Earthly wisdom creates strife in one's heart (14). It is self-centered, boastful, and prideful. It ignores accountability. Those who operate in earthly wisdom believe theirs is the only opinion that counts. They hold bitter envy for those who have obtained what they want. The wisdom of the world creates confusion, breakdown and division. Have you noticed earthly wisdom at work in today's society?

For example take an ordinary family. If two members are in conflict, the whole family suffers. But if the two members were to reconcile than the whole family is at peace. Our society could use a little reconciliation. Why not try Godly wisdom?

Finally, wisdom is a journey. If you are like me you could use some advice along the way. Examine your ambitions. Is God your primary source for wisdom? Pursue peace. Some folks are just more competitive than others. They enjoy a good debate. But, in the end settle for peace. Life is not a sporting event.

There doesn't have to be a winner and loser. Follow the advice in James 1:5, ask for wisdom. Would a parent not want the best for their child? What makes us think God, as the perfect parent, would withhold His wisdom from us. Surround yourself with other wise people. Why spend too much time with people operating on earthly wisdom. Be careful that devilish wisdom doesn't rub off on you.

In 1 Corinthians 1 we read about this battle between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1: 30 & 31 says that heavenly wisdom was created at the cross. When Jesus died heavenly wisdom was made available for us. If you think heavenly wisdom is important then learn about Jesus.