

**Day 26**  
**Mercy shows wisdom!**

***Matthew 5:7 (GNT) Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!***

We are learning what a happy life looks like from God's point of view. We all want to be happy, blessed and favored. Having the desire for something, and being willing to pursue that desire through discipline and sacrifice, are two completely different things. Jesus is giving us a picture of a blessed life that is built completely on Him. These blessings that He speaks about are not obtainable through living a selfish life. It can only come by us doing the hard work of following God's instructions. Jesus is not simply talking about blessings; He is talking about a completely different approach to life and living. He promises us that if we build His way, the blessings are guaranteed. **The wise thing to do, would be to undo our previous approaches to what we see as a blessing, and then trust that what Jesus calls "blessed" is what truly is a blessed life.** How wise are you? Here's a hint, mercy shows that you are full of wisdom.

James, the brother of Jesus, tells us that it is easy to spot those who are wise and understand God's ways: ***"If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom."* (James 3:13 NLT)** We prove that we are wise and that we understand God's ways by honorable living and doing good works with an attitude of humility that is rooted in wisdom. What a mouthful! James is not finished yet. He then shows us the complete opposite of what Jesus calls "wise." Remember you have a choice. You can choose the broad way that man says is wise or you can choose the narrow way that Jesus calls wise.

Here's the world's way: ***"But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind."* (James 3:14-16 NLT)** This is not what I would call a "blessed life list." As a matter of fact, James says it's earthly, unspiritual and demonic. When these things are present and operating in our lives, they produce disorder and all kinds of evil results. We want, we envy, we desire for selfish reasons, and we tear others down. Then we simply deny it by boasting how great we are and cover it up with lies. All of this because we lack an understanding of God's wisdom and we compare ourselves to others and harbor selfish ambition in our hearts, instead of a heart of mercy.

Here's God's way: ***"But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere."* (James 3:17 NLT)** Wisdom from our Father is pure; meaning, there is no ulterior motive. What you see is what you get. It is not hot or cold; one day, treat you great, the other day indifferent towards you. Wisdom loves peace and it is gentle all the time. Wisdom does not have mood swings, happy today, but watch out tomorrow! Wisdom is willing to be the least because it does not see yielding to someone else as a weakness. Here comes what we need: wisdom is full of mercy that leads to bearing fruit, and that fruit manifests itself by good deeds through our lives. To be merciful is wise and being full of mercy produces everything that is good! This mercy that is rooted in wisdom does not give mercy only to those it favors, just the opposite. It shows no preference of one above the other, because it comes from a heart that is always sincere.

**We need to understand that we can have acts of mercy that are rooted in selfishness, instead of acts of mercy that are rooted in God's pure wisdom.** People can act mercifully for a plethora of reasons. But

Jesus wants us to be merciful because our motivation is God's love, not our own benefit. Paul writes: ***"If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."* (1 Corinthians 13:3 NLT)** This verse clearly tells me I can have incredible acts of love and mercy, yet totally miss the point of mercy and love. How is that possible? The wisdom of mercy is that I am always more concerned about giving mercy to others, than getting something in return.

Mercy cannot be sustained in our lives unless it flows from a pure heart. When we give mercy to others only when it is convenient or only when we feel like it, we show a lack of wisdom. A Heart of mercy shows great wisdom because we give what we have received. The mercy we give always comes from a sincere heart. People who are merciful view themselves correctly, view God correctly, and view others correctly. When we see ourselves as those who needed God's mercy and received God's mercy freely, we become givers of that same mercy we received so freely. We see others in the same way and, therefore, are never reluctant to give them what they need: God's mercy. Peter writes and says, ***"You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart."* (1 Peter 1:22 NLT)**

To be a mercy giver is the wisest thing you can do. To give someone mercy when they don't deserve it, shows that you are wise enough to know that God gave you mercy when you least deserve it. How wise do you want to be? It all depends on how merciful you are.

#### Reflection and Prayer:

- Reflect on the following verses and pray about practical ways you can show mercy.
- ***Proverbs 3:27(GNT) "Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it."*** Who can you do good to this week?
- ***Proverbs 19:17(MSG) "Mercy to the needy is a loan to God, and God pays back those loans in full."*** What investment are you willing to make to those in need? Are you loaning anything to the Lord?
- ***Matthew 25:35-40(MSG) "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me." 37-40*** "Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ***Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'***" Are you willing to help your church be a Matthew 25 church? We believe in making our Love:Active around the world; are you engaging? Are you willing to fast a meal and make a contribution to benefit others around the world? Can you imagine what we could accomplish together if we are all 100% committed to the vision of reaching our world with God's mercy? What will Jesus say to us when we stand before Him?
- ***Hebrews 10:23-25(NLT) "Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."*** God can be trusted to keep His promises so we can hold tightly to the hope that is unwavering, at the same time we need to be encouraging one another to acts of love and good works. Who can you encourage today? How can you help to motivate others to be mercy givers? When will you reach out?

- **Luke 1:78(NCV)** ***"With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will dawn upon us."***

Thank God for His new day of mercy that we have benefitted from!

- **Proverbs 11:17(AMP)** ***"The merciful, kind, and generous man benefits himself [for his deeds return to bless him], but he who is cruel and callous [to the wants of others] brings on himself retribution."***