

James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith Week 8

*Last week we learned that **genuine faith chooses words with care**. We examined the dangers of being “double-tongued” in our habits of speech.*

*This week, James wants to show us another “double jeopardy” we must avoid, this time in the area of wisdom. Read through the entire book of James. As you read, use a pink highlighter to mark every occurrence of the term “wisdom”. Then re-read **James 3:13-4:10**.. Read it in the *ESV* and *NIV* before you begin to answer the questions.*

Look at **James 3:13-18**.

1. Look back at the definition you wrote for the word *wisdom* in the week 2 homework (p.6) and rewrite it below. You can refine it if your definition has grown or changed.

wisdom:

2. Much of the book of Proverbs is an appeal to pursue and seek wisdom. Look up the following verses and note what each adds to your understanding about wisdom.

Proverbs 8:10-12

Proverbs 8:32-36

Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 2:1-6

Proverbs 3:5-8

3. Look back at **James 1:5**. Specifically, what do we learn about wisdom in this verse?

4. James begins with a question in **3:13**. How can we recognize wisdom and understanding in ourselves and in others?

5. How do many people attempt to “show” they are wise? (Look back at **3:5**.) When we are attempting to “show” ourselves to be wise, what is often the motive?

6. In contrast, in what way are we called to show that we are wise according to **3:13**? (Look at the NIV as well.)

7. When you hear the word *meek* what other words come to mind?

Look up the word *meek* in the dictionary and write a definition that best fits the context of **3:13**:

meek:

8. In the NIV, a different phrase is used in **3:13** rather than “in the meekness of wisdom”. Fill in the statement below.

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the _____ that comes _____.”

9. Look up **Matthew 11:29**. How does Jesus describe Himself? What does He ask us to do?

10. Why do you think humility/meekness is such an essential sign of wisdom?

11. Complete **James 3:14**.

*"But if you have _____ and _____
_____ in your hearts, do not _____ and
be false to the _____."*

12. What can bitter jealousy and selfish ambition look like within community of believers?

13. Compare **3:14** in the NIV. What truth does James imply is being denied when we harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition?

14. James describes two types of wisdom in **3:15-17**. Contrast them in the chart below:

Where does it come from?

What are its characteristics?

What are its outcomes?

Wisdom #1

Wisdom #2

15. In contrast to the maker of disorder is the maker of peace mentioned in **3:18**. Read **Matthew 5:9**. Why do think Jesus and James use the word *peacemaker* rather than *peacekeeper*?

16. What crop is sown in peace by the peacemaker (**3:18**)?

"a _____ of _____"

What do you think James means by this phrase? Look up **Galatians 5:22-23** to help with your answer.

17. Read **3:13-18** again. Within the context of the whole passage, where do the good fruits listed in verses **17-18** come from?

18. Apply: Which of the evidences of Godly wisdom would you like to see more of in your life? Which relationships in particular would benefit from your operating out of Godly wisdom?

Now look at **James 4:1-10**

19. What does James say causes quarrels among people?

How does his answer differ from the one a quarrelsome person would give?

20. Is James addressing quarreling in general, or quarreling within a specific setting or group?

(4:1) Explain your answer.

21. In **4:2-3**, does James mean to imply that we do not have *the things we covet* because we haven't asked God for them? Summarize what you think he is saying about prayer in these verses.

22. In **4:4-10**, James characterizes the behaviors of **4:1-3** as friendship with the world. How would you define "worldliness"? What do you think it means to have "friendship with the world"?

It is important to note that James is warning against loving the fallen world, a way of thinking and living that seeks self-gratification and self-exaltation. This is not the same thing as having a love for the lost. Loving the lost is a moral imperative for the believer.

23. Apply: What outward behaviors do Christians typically associate with having “friendship with the world”? List as many as you can think of below. It may help to think of your five senses to prompt ideas.

Are any of these behaviors more of a problem for you than others? What about the attitudes (desires/passions) that lie behind them?

24. In **4:4**, why do you think James uses the term “adulterous” to describe people who practice friendship toward the world? Look up **Ephesians 5:25-32** to help with your answer.

25. In **4:5**, of what is the spirit intensely envious (NIV)? Why?

26. In **4:7**, James offers a solution to the problem he outlines in **4:1-6**. What is it?

“_____ yourselves, therefore, _____.”

Look up *submit* in the dictionary and write a definition for it below that best fits the way it is used in **4:7**:

submit: (intransitive verb)

27. In **4:7b-10**, what are the five instructions James gives to bring about submission? List them below, along with what you think they mean:

steps meaning

1. (v 7b)

2. (v 8a)

3. (v 8b)

4. (v 9)

5. (v 10)

28. Now let's try an exercise that can help bring home the meaning of a passage. It's a little like doing a "mad lib". Fill in all the blanks below before looking at the next page. Use a thesaurus if you need help. Then turn to the next page and fill your answers into the appropriate spaces.

1. 3-letter name for The Father of Lights: _____

2. The Father of Lies: _____

3. Opposite (antonym) of "cleanse" _____

4. Opposite of "purify" _____

5. Opposite of "grieve" _____

6. Opposite of "humble"(verb) or "abase" (verb) _____

A Formula for Worldliness

Submit yourselves therefore to friendship with the world. Resist (1)

_____, and he will leave you to your own devices. Draw near

to (2)_____, and he will draw near to you.

(3)_____ your hands, you sinners, and (4)_____

your hearts, you double- minded. (5)_____ your sinfulness. Let your shame be turned to laughter. (6)_____ yourselves above the Lord, but He will bring you low.

29. Read your “inverted” paraphrase of **James 4:8-10** from start to finish. Now read **Romans 6:16**. How does it reinforce what we have just seen?

30. Apply: What do you think James means by “humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you”? Has this ever been your experience? Describe how you have found this to be true in your own life.

Wrap-up

What aspect of God’s character has this week’s passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is _____ shows me that I am _____.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

Close in prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how, where, and with whom you need to be a peacemaker. Confess where you have not chosen to make peace. Thank Him that He has made peace with us through His Son. Ask Him to show you where earthly wisdom has governed your thoughts, words, and actions. Ask Him for His wisdom that comes down from above. Ask Him to give you single-mindedness, focused on friendship with God rather than with the world. Confess to Him any areas of worldly behavior in your life where you are not in submission to Him. Thank Him that “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)