

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

FOR THE WIN (JAMES 3:13-18)

APRIL 7, 2019



### SERMON OUTLINE

1. Powering u\_\_\_\_\_ will leave you p\_\_\_\_\_ (vs 8)

2. Be willing to l\_\_\_\_\_g\_\_\_\_\_ of your a\_\_\_\_\_ (vs 9-13)

3) When words won't fix a problem use a t\_\_\_\_\_ (vs 17)

For the win: with w\_\_\_\_\_, we can always find  
a powerful w\_\_\_\_\_ without abusing p\_\_\_\_\_.

*What should I do with what I have heard today?*

### MAIN POINT

Godly wisdom produces good fruit that will bring about peace.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

**1. How would you define wisdom? When you think of someone wise, who comes to**

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mind? Why?

**2. Why is wisdom an important attribute for a Christian? What are the repercussions if you don't make wise decisions?**

**Leader:** If wisdom is an essential characteristic of every Christian, then we need to have a good understanding of what wisdom is and what wisdom does. Wisdom is the ability to discern the best course of action in a situation, not only for us, but also for others. Wisdom is not interested in the easiest or most pragmatic solution for life's challenges; it seeks the course of action that will bring the most glory to God and the best for our fellow man. Today's passage in James 3 will help us to understand the essence of wisdom, and demonstrate that wisdom doesn't just know the right path to take, it also acts upon that knowledge.

### DIGGING DEEPER

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JAMES 3:13-16.](#)

**3. What does it mean to be humble? How does humility relate to wisdom?**

**4. How is wisdom the opposite of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition?**

**Leader:** James linked being humble with being wise because the wise understand the difficulties of life. Wise people recognize the temptation toward sin, both for themselves and others. When wise people conduct themselves well, they know it is because of God's grace and not because of their own cunning. This is why wisdom leads us to humility and not into pride.

**5. How does wisdom bring order instead of chaos? How do selfish ambition and envy bring disorder to a community?**

**6. What do you think James meant by "such wisdom" being "of the devil"? What do you think he meant by it being "earthly"? What is the difference between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom?**

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**Leader:** Earthly wisdom is “of the devil” in that it copies the same sort of foolishness we see in the demons themselves. Their works are at odds with the works of God, and instead of seeking to bring God glory, they seek to bring about their own glorification. We can see this in action in Satan’s temptation of Jesus (see Matthew 4:8-9). When we seek our own selfish ambition, we act demonically.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JAMES 3:17-18.

**7. Why is an unwise person unable to bear “good fruits”? How do the wise bring peace to a difficult situation?**

**8. What does it mean to be submissive when receiving instruction? Is submission seen as a strong trait in our culture? Why or why not?**

**Leader:** A wise person is able to receive and learn from instruction (see Proverbs 10:8). The wise are submissive and quick to receive instruction from others. Wise men and women bring peace, instruction, and life through their counsel and actions. If we are unwise, we will bring strife and promote ignorance, rather than bearing the fruit of wisdom.

**9. Why is it important for a wise person to act impartially with others? Why does the gospel require this of us?**

**10. If wisdom results in making peace, how was Christ’s death on the cross an expression of wisdom?**

**Leader:** Jesus is the ultimate expression of wisdom and has made ultimate peace for us with the Father. Paul wrote that the cross seems foolish to men, yet Christ is the true wisdom of God and the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24-25).

### **DOING LIFE TOGETHER**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

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**11. Where do you currently need wisdom? Why can we have confidence that God will provide wisdom to those who seek it (see James 1:5)?**

**12. How does wisdom help us in making good decisions or solving life's problems?**

### PRAYER

Thank God for being the source and object of our wisdom. Praise Him for the wisdom in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ask Him for wisdom where it is needed, and pray that you would always search for wisdom where it can be found—in God's Word.

### MEMORIZE

<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. - James 3:13

### SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

#### JAMES 3:13-18

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3:13. James 3:2–12 presents shortcomings of the tongue to which teachers and all individuals are vulnerable. 3:13–18 reminds us of our need to demonstrate genuine wisdom. The words particularly apply to aspiring teachers, but they have relevance to all believers.

The opening rhetorical question asks how we can show that we have wisdom. Wise refers to someone with moral insight and skill in deciding practical issues of conduct. Understanding pictures someone with the knowledge of an expert. We are to show the presence of wisdom by good deeds practiced with humility. Only obedient deeds, not mere talk, prove the presence of wisdom.

Humility refers to a submissive spirit opposed to arrogance and self-seeking. The person with humility is not a doormat for the desires of others, but controls and overpowers the natural human tendency to be arrogant and self-assertive. Non-Christian Greeks felt that this type of humility was a vice. Christianity made meekness into a virtue. "Meek" in Matthew 5:5 is the adjectival form of the noun translated here as humility. Jesus promised the "meek" they would inherit the earth. Jesus meant a believer who relates to God with dependence and contentment will reap God's abundant blessings.

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3:14. Bitter envy and selfish ambition prove that a person is following the route of false wisdom. Envy describes a determined desire to promote one's opinion to the exclusion of the opinions of others. Selfish ambition pictures a person who tries to promote a cause in an unethical manner. This person becomes willing to use divisive means to promote a personal viewpoint. Bitter rivalries develop out of these practices.

James warned that people who had envy and selfish ambition could boast about it or deny the truth. Boasting describes the malicious triumphant attitude gained by one party over its opponents. Those who choose to deny the truth can end up rejecting the truth of the gospel. Envy of Jesus led the religious leaders to deny his person and power and to plot his death (John 11:47–53).

3:15. This verse uses three adjectives to describe the distinctive traits and source of false wisdom. First, negatively, false wisdom does not come from heaven or from God. Its source is earthly. It belongs to the way of life of this world. Second, false wisdom is unspiritual, belonging to the natural world and not to the supernatural world. It comes from the mental and emotional ideas of fallen human beings. Unfortunately, we Christians are too often guilty of using this twisted wisdom. Finally, this false wisdom is of the devil. Satan uses it to corrupt relationships.

3:16. The results of envy and selfish ambition are disorder and every evil practice. Disorder describes an experience of anarchy and disturbance. Such disarray affects private relationships between Christians and public meetings of believers. Every evil practice pictures an evil from which no good can come. People who cater to selfish ambition need never expect to develop any fruit which is godly, righteous, or helpful to others.

False wisdom promotes self-assertion and independence. It destroys a spirit of mutual concern. Where Christians “do their own thing” instead of caring for one another, a community of support and mercy can disintegrate (see 1 Cor. 1:10–17). Paul outlined a solution for this epidemic of selfish living, telling us to look out for “the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4).

3:17. True wisdom is free from self-interest and strife. This verse lists eight traits or characteristics of true wisdom. The first is purity. People with true wisdom are pure in that they have put aside the vices of a self-seeking nature and factionalism. This trait provides the secure foundation for all that follows.

The following five traits show the attitude of true wisdom toward other people. Peace-loving means it demonstrates a desire to promote peace between struggling factions. Considerate refers to being reasonable in the demands it makes on others. Submissive indicates a willingness to learn from others by being open to reason. Full of mercy is revealed by offering compassion to those in distress. Full of good fruit is shown by kind actions and helpful deeds to others.

The final two traits describe the essential nature of true wisdom in itself. It is impartial, without prejudice and unwavering in its commitments. True wisdom is sincere, genuine and open in its approaches to others. Jesus particularly showed his genuineness in his dialogues with Pilate (John 18:33–37).

3:18. Verse 18 concludes this section with a description of the effects of true wisdom. True wisdom results in a harvest of righteousness, that is, a conformity to God's will. True wisdom also lets one experience peace, the enjoyment of harmonious relationships between human beings.