

James 6

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James 3:13-4:3

The chapter break might lead us to conclude that 3:13-18 is a unit, but I think the thought extends past that. Since it is a letter and meant to be read in one sitting, I am inclined to think that James was putting 3:13 to 4:10 together as one thought.

1. WHAT WE ARE TO DO

3:13 Do not boast and be false to the truth

14 Submit yourselves to God

4:7 Resist the Devil – Draw near to God

8 Cleanse your hands

9 Purify your hearts; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom

When we do the things that we are supposed to do, why is it that sometimes things do not go as we want them to go? Many times things “go wrong” because we believe wrongly. GOD IS CALLING US TO WISDOM AND PEACE, AND THE BIBLE SAYS THAT ALL TRUE WISDOM COMES FROM GOD (3:15,17). What is wisdom? Wisdom is right living. **WISDOM IS SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THINGS.**

ILLUSTRATION: In music, there are only so many notes to use. Everyone has the same notes. Mozart, Bach, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and the Beatles saw relationships between the notes that you and I don't see. They put things together to make peace and not discord. They had the ability to see how notes could and should work together.

That is what we are after – seeing the relationship between things in life. We are after gaining wisdom. James assesses people's claims to wisdom not in theological terms, but in practical terms. It is the wise person you want to talk to when you are in trouble. James is saying that when our desires and passions, when not controlled by the wisdom that comes from above, will only destroy us.

Notice the term **meekness of wisdom**. The wise person is “open to reason” when unalterable theological or moral principles are not involved.

ILLUSTRATION: I'm sure you remember the story of Charley Babbitt who found out that when his father died he left his fortune to someone he did not even know

– his brother Raymond. Charley discovers his brother is autistic but able to calculate complicated mathematical problems in his head with great speed and accuracy. Raymond did not even understand what money was. Charley kidnaps Raymond and the two begin a long road trip that leads them to a better understanding of each other. Of course, Charley thinks he is the wise one, but it is a compelling story with lessons for us.

2. HOW WE ARE TO DO IT

It is hard to find a self-professed fool. We learn wisdom through humility and humility through submission. James says: “LET YOUR LAUGHTER BE TURNED TO MOURNING AND YOUR JOY TO GLOOM>” We become wise when we encounter trials. James says: “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Humility produces thankfulness. You are wise when you realize that everything you have comes from God.

Another step of wisdom is “SUBMIT YOURSELF TO GOD. RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU> DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU.” We can only learn the relationships between things when you see that you don’t know the relationships between things. We have to deliberately place ourselves at the feet of God.

This is how we learn – APPRENTICESHIP. In order to become a woodworker, we apprentice ourselves to a master woodcarver. At first you might sweep the floors. Eventually, he lets you do more and more. James says: HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD AND HE WILL EXALT YOU.”

3. WHY WE ARE TO DO IT

James says something interesting in 4:4 – “YOU ADULTEROUS PEOPLE!” He is not just referencing females. He says FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD. **ACCORDING TO HIM, WISDOM IS A LOVING RELATIONSHIP OF LOYALTY WITH GOD – NO SPLIT AFFECTIONS.** Assuming you are in love or have been in love, you give of yourself to please them.

Fortunately for us, God has told us what pleases Him. The law of God is an expression of His passion. He hates lying and gets excited about the truth. He cares about faithfulness. Just like your human lover, you want to find out your beloved’s passion and fulfill it.

When you fall in love, you don’t want to be independent any more. You want commitment. The Bible does not shy away from sexual imagery to picture our

relationship with God. Ezekiel 16:7, 8 tell us that God made his church to be His bride and they were unified after the covenant was made. THERE MUST BE NO PASSION WITHOUT COVENANT AND NO COVENANT WITHOUT PASSION.

APPLICATION: Is your Bible reading information exchange. Is your prayer a habit or is it putting yourself into the arms of your lover for communion. CONVERSLY, if you put yourself into the arms of the world, sin will be born,

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE? I BELIEVE JAMES IS TAPPING INTO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT METAPHORS IN THE BIBLE WHEN HE SAYS: "**DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU.**"

WHAT IS PULLING YOU TODAY? IT IS EASY ENOUGH TO TELL BY THE DIRECTION YOU ARE GOING.