

FOLLOWING HEAVENLY WISDOM

Some refer to the book of James as “The Christian Proverbs”. It is a book that covers many subjects which are important to the Christian to help them live their lives. I often challenge brethren to think of a problem that a Christian faces in his every day living that the book of James does not deal with in some way. This is why the book of James should be studied on a regular basis.

In this article we will focus on (James 3:13-18) “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (NKJV) We will first view these verses in light of the context. Then we will look at these verses as they apply to our every day living.

James three begins with a warning, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (verse 1). Teachers of the gospel will be held accountable for what they teach and their influence. A teacher can influence many with proper use of his tongue or he can cause great harm (verses 2-12). Think about the men who are leading the masses of people away from the word of God. This is being done by that little member of our body the tongue. This is why James asks the question, “Who is wise and understanding among you” (verse 13)? He presents this question to get us to stop and think. Who really a wise person? The person who is able to quote many things out of the Bible? Is it the person that has the highest IQ? James teaches us that the qualifications of a teacher should be wisdom, knowledge and submission to the wisdom that is from above. The teacher must not only know the word but his conduct must be consistent with the word of God. If the teacher is self-seeking and not seeking the wisdom from above confusion and every evil thing is there. Now the question is this, what is our motivation for teaching? What is in our hearts? It is revealed by what we teach and how we conduct our lives. (Matthew 15:10-11) “When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." We must speak the things that are pure and peaceable. Our speech and conduct toward others will be gentle and show mercy without partiality and hypocrisy. We will spend our lives sowing peace among our brethren because we have submitted our lives to the word of God.

Let us now make application to the things James taught us in these verses. First of all denominationalism exist today because teachers did not submit to the wisdom that is above. They exalted their earthly wisdom over the wisdom of God. As a result confusion and division exist. We continue to have teachers who are boasting this earthly wisdom thinking they are smarter than God. Listen to what is being taught by many of our brethren. For example on the subject of unity, “Let’s agree to disagree”. That is not the type of unity that God desires. Listen to what God desires. (1 Corinthians 1:10) “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the

same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”. The unity that God wants can only come if teachers would humble themselves to the word of God and let Him speak. Stop and think about the divisions that exist today that could be eliminated if we would have the attitude that James teaches us to have. We would have pure motives, not wanting anything for ourselves, but the good of others. Every word, every action we would do or say would be done to make peace.

Secondly, consider how we would treat each other if we would submit to the wisdom from above. We would treat each other without partiality. Many congregations have their cliques and only associate with those within their group. Also consider how we would treat our weaker brethren. We would be encouraging and seeking the best for each other. We would not be exalted with and pride and arrogance toward those who are struggling with sin. We would go to our brethren in the spirit of meekness to correct any wrong doing. (Galatians 6:1) “Brethren, if a man overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted”. Our congregations would be growing closer to God and closer to each other.

Lastly, the last verse of chapter three is an interesting statement. “Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (verse 18). That spirit which righteousness produces leads peaceable men in a peaceable way to promote peace with God and one another. This Christian character is essential in the kingdom of God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9). We must strive to live quiet and peaceable lives in a corrupt world (I Timothy 2:2). May we all submit to the wisdom from above and strive to make peace with our brethren.

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