



Earthly Wisdom Verses Godly Wisdom

James 3:13-18

Sermon Series: Walking in Wisdom

The Foundation for Walking Wisely

- Proverbs 9:10 tells us, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*
- To fear God is not to fear God’s judgment; it is to stand in awe that God has all the authority to judge and to forgive, to mercy, and to grant His grace in overflowing abundance.

Getting God's Unlimited View of Our Lives

- Wisdom is the capacity to see things from God's viewpoint.
- If we want to be wise, we must choose to see things from God's perspective. We must get God's "take" on a situation.
- Not only must we ask, "How does God see this?" but also, "What does God want me to do? When? How? With whom? For what goal or purpose?"

Getting God's View of Our Lives

- We must seek to see our individual lives as fitting into God's plan, God's purpose, and God's desires. The Bible makes this very clear:
- Proverbs 28:26 (NKJV), *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered."*

4 Main Errors of Earthly Wisdom

- 1. Wisdom is limited to the mind of man.
- 2. Wisdom is based on what can be perceived by the five senses.
- 3. Wisdom is doing what man defines as rational or provable.
- 4. Wisdom is doing “whatever works.”

I. God's Wisdom: Man's Knowledge Is Not Enough

- Intellectually gifted people are not necessarily wise. Never assume that in becoming informed or knowledgeable, you will become wise.
- It takes the Holy Spirit of God to pull back the curtains of our understanding.

Knowledge is Not Enough (cont'd)

- The Bible declares in Proverbs 4:5 (NKJV), “*Get wisdom! Get understanding!*”
- Understanding is based upon the acquisition of knowledge. Wisdom is an applying process.
- Understanding tells us what is happening-
wisdom tells us why it is happening.
Understanding gives us the facts-wisdom tells us what to do with those facts.

II. God's Wisdom: Discernment Beyond the Five Senses

- The world says that wisdom is based upon what a person can perceive with his natural senses.
- God's wisdom calls for a person to walk in the discerning power of the Holy Spirit, who is not at all limited by human senses.

Wisdom Beyond the Five Senses (cont'd)

- Earthly wisdom often leads to a skewed perspective.
- In sharp contrast, the wisdom given by the Holy Spirit yields clarity and precision.
- *Discernment is especially important in crisis times.*

Wisdom Beyond the Five Senses (cont'd)

- Job 42:12 (NKJV), *“The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning.”*
- Job’s family, fortune, and health were restored, and he lived after his time of suffering 140 years and *“saw his children and grandchildren for four generations”* (Job 42:16).

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III. God's Way: God's Way is Higher Than Man's Way

- Earthly wisdom is rooted in the belief that all of life can be understood, rationalized, and proved scientifically.
- *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways” (Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV).*

God's Way is Higher Than Man's Way (cont'd)

- *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:*

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And bring to nothing the understanding of
the prudent.” (1 Cor. 1:18-19 NKJV)*

God's Way is Higher Than Man's Way (cont'd)

- If you totally take God out of your life, the message of the gospel does not make sense. On the other hand, once you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the gospel makes perfect sense.
- The wisdom of this world has no capability to carry a person from this life into the next.

IV. God's Wisdom: What Works Best is God's Way

- Earthly wisdom proclaims: “Do what works.” Generally speaking, what works is regarded as what makes the most money or brings fame and power.
- Look at what has happened in the entertainment industry in the last 50 years.

The Outcomes of Earthly and Godly Wisdom

- James 3:13-15 (NKJV), *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.”*

James 3:16-18 (NKJV)

- *16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 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. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

The Results of Earthly and Godly Wisdom (cont'd)

- Earthly wisdom results in power struggles, personal kingdom building, greed, envy, avarice, and an argumentative spirit. As James wrote, earthly wisdom is “self-seeking”, v.14.
- Earthly wisdom results in a deep drive to satisfy human cravings and lust.

The Results of Earthly and Godly Wisdom (cont'd)

- Earthly wisdom is under the influence of the evil one. It results in blasphemy, heresy, self-justification for sin, and spiritual error.
- John wrote in his first epistle: *“For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever”*
- (1 John 2:16-17 NKJV)

The Results of Earthly and Godly Wisdom (cont'd)

- The *“lust of the flesh”* refers to those things that are sensual.
- The *“lust of the eyes”* refers to those things that are rooted in pride, greed, and a hunger for personal power and recognition.
- The *“pride of life”* refers to man’s desire to be number one and to exert his will and authority rather than yield to God’s authority.

The Results of Earthly and Godly Wisdom (cont'd)

- Godly wisdom is marked by these characteristics found in James 3:17...
- *Purity*
- *Peace*
- *Gentleness*
- *A willingness to yield to self*
- *Mercy and good fruits*

The Results of Earthly and Godly Wisdom (cont'd)

- Furthermore, these outcomes of divine wisdom function...
- *Without partiality*
- *Without hypocrisy*

Invitation

- We must ask ourselves continually:
- Is this a wise decision?
- Is this a wise use of my talents, gifts, skills, or resources?
- Is this a wise action to take in a relationship?
- Is this a wise way to live out the purpose God has for my life?