



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
James 3:13-18 | October 19, 2025
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I. Introduction to this Study

James returns to one of his favorite themes: the relationship between what we believe and how we live. This time, he focuses on *wisdom*, not as mere intelligence, or cleverness, but as a way of life that reflects one's deepest loyalties.

There are, according to James, two kinds of wisdom. One is **earthly**, driven by envy, selfish ambition, and pride. It leads to disorder, division, and every evil practice. The other is **from above**, pure, peace-loving, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruit. This kind of wisdom builds harmony rather than chaos.

Our world today rewards those who shout the loudest or "win" the argument. But James calls us to something deeper: a wisdom that bears fruit in humility, peace, and righteousness. This week, we're invited to ask: *What kind of wisdom am I following, and what kind of fruit is it producing in me and my community?*

II. Connecting with One Another

When was the last time you were in a conversation or debate where everyone seemed more focused on being right than on listening? How did that feel?

Can you think of someone you know who seems to carry a sense of calm, steady wisdom? What makes them stand out?

III. Study the Text

Read James 3:13–18

James opens with a challenge: "Who is wise and understanding among you?"

- How does his definition of wisdom ("shown by good conduct and works done in the meekness of wisdom") differ from how people usually define wisdom today?

Notice that true wisdom is demonstrated through meekness (or humility).



- Why is humility such a crucial ingredient of godly wisdom?
- How does this contrast with the self-promotion and certainty often celebrated in our culture?

In verses 14–16, James describes a counterfeit wisdom that is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

- What are the key marks of this kind of wisdom? (Hint: envy, selfish ambition, boasting, deceit)
- What kinds of “disorder” or division can flow from this mindset?

Verses 17–18 describe the “wisdom from above.”

- Which of the qualities listed (pure, peace-loving, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, sincere) feel most needed in our world today?
- Which ones do you personally find most difficult to practice? Why?
- How does this description of wisdom mirror the life and character of Jesus?

James concludes: “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”

- What do you think it means to “sow in peace”?
- What kind of “harvest” comes from living this way?
- How might peacemaking differ from simply avoiding conflict or keeping the peace?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Ask God to help you recognize when you’re operating out of pride or selfish ambition rather than humility and peace.
- Pray for wisdom from above to shape your thoughts, words, and responses this week.
- Pray for our nation and our community—that God’s people would model a better way, one marked by gentleness, reasonableness, and peace.

V. Digging Deeper

- Compare this passage with **Proverbs 3:13–18** and **Matthew 5:9**. How do these reinforce James’ understanding of wisdom and peace?
- In 1 Corinthians 1:18–25, Paul says that God’s wisdom looks like “foolishness” to the world. How does the “wisdom from above” challenge the values and systems of our society?
- Reflect on the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22–23**. How does true wisdom naturally produce this kind of fruit?

