

James 3:13-18 Seeking wisdom from above and James 4:1-10: Lover of the world or lover of God?

- I. Who is wise?
 - A. James addresses those who consider themselves wise in God and are teachers.
 1. Show by a good life you are wise
 2. This is within the wisdom tradition of the Old testament
 - B. Good and humble
 1. Good-upright, decent, godly manner
 2. Humble-meek, teachable
 - C. Contrast good and humble with selfish ambition and jealousy
 1. Bitter jealousy is negative attitudes towards a person's success
 2. Selfish ambition-excessive desire to get ahead
 3. A person who wants to lead yet their heart is full of bitter jealousy or selfish ambition is deceiving themselves.
 - D. Wise vs. foolish person
 1. In OT a wise person isn't necessarily "smart" but one who lives in the light of God's commandments. See Psalm 1
 2. The wise person can expect blessing and long life see Ps. 19:8
 3. The foolish person knows on some level what God expects of them through the law but chooses to act contrary. Their life is fleeting. Psalm 37:1-2
 - E. The nature of "foolish wisdom"
 1. Earthy-doesn't come from God but another source
 2. Unspiritual -self-love; self-promotion; self-absorbed.
 3. Demonic-similar to what motivates the demons; envy and selfish ambition; highest priority is worldly status.
 4. Outcome of this kind of wisdom: **disordered**; unstable; doublemindedness; opposite of harmony and aligned; **foul practices** result from this kind of wisdom.
 5. Godly wisdom is pure: remaining unstained from the world; the world are those with double-mindedness and loose tongues; it is the realm of disorder; to be pure and holy is to obey the commandments and seek the Lord.

6. The outcomes of Godly wisdom: peaceable, gentle, compliant; it creates goodness and harmonious actions; said, "Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength." St. Francis de Sales. It is full of mercy and good fruits including compassion. The character of a person is upright, honest, stable and trustworthy.

7. Peace-with God (righteousness). Peacemaker

II. Lover of the world or lover of God James 4:1-10

A. The war within

1. Passions-sexual pleasure; seeking honor and power;
2. Source of conflicts in the church arise from within the conflicts within the members hearts.
3. Covet and envy: they seek aggressive actions to obtain what they want; they should turn to prayer.
4. Solomon who sought God's wisdom and began his reign knowing that the Lord 's wisdom is the key to happiness and prosperity. Vs. MK. 10: 17-22: rich young ruler.

B. Love of the world

1. In OT, in Exodus 19:4-6 the Lord saved a people and called them to trust Him. In NT, the church is his Bride: the Bride of Christ.
2. What is contrary to this is called "spiritual adultery". The person forsakes the covenant with God. Turns to idols to trust and imitate.
3. To love the world is to be its friend and to be an enemy towards God. OT teaches One God and his exclusive claim to Israel's heart and affections. In NT Jesus is Lord and he is Head of the Church: laying exclusive claim to the church's heart and affections.
4. TO love the world is to foster the spirit of jealousy and envy. It is full of love for lusts, pleasures, honor, prestige, power.

5. St. Augustine:
"I do not hide my wounds from you. I am sick, and you are the physician. You are merciful: I have need of your mercy." Humility is our proper posture before the Lord. James sees the human heart torn between the world and God. TO have disordered passions and wars with each other is to indicate you are choosing the world over God.
6. Humble-to welcome the Lord's word and teaching; to be "taught" by cultivating a teachable heart;
7. To resist the devil is to resist vs. the disordered passions.
8. To purify-ritual language of worship; to cleanse; to turn to God and renounce the exterior and interior dimensions of sin.
9. Tears of repentance, contrition, sorrow; see Lk. 18:9ff. parable of the Pharisee and tax collector.



Reflection:

1. Where does James put the "blame" when it comes to the conflicts between Christians?
2. Where is the devil in all this? How does James say a Christian deals with him?
3. Describe a "lover of the world".
4. Describe a "lover of God."
5. What is godly wisdom? What are its' characteristics?
6. What is "wisdom" from below? What is its' characteristics?