

# JAMES

## CHAPTER THREE

### BEWARE SINS OF THE TONGUE

James 3:1-12

Study's indicate that the average adult speaks about 16,000 words per day!



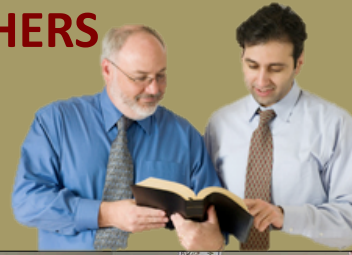
That provides hundreds of opportunities to sin and do great harm every day! At the same time it provides opportunities for great good to be done. How will we use our tongues?

**James 3:1**

## CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

### ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE TEACHERS

- “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient...” (2Ti 2:24).
- “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you...” (Heb 5:12).



**BUT, IN THIS  
CONTEXT, JAMES  
IS WARNING  
PUBLIC BIBLE  
TEACHERS**

## CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

### Many eagerly sought to be public Bible teachers:

- **Some for the praise of men** – “But all their works they do for to be seen of men... and love... to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi” – i.e., “teacher” (Matt 23:5-7).
- **Some for money** – “For there are many ...who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.” (Titus 1:11; also Phil 1:15).
- **Some without knowledge of the truth** – “Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1Tim 1:7).
- **Some who did not ‘walk their talk** – “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?”
- **Some were malicious false teachers** – Speaking deceptive and empty words (2Pet 2:1-18)

## CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

‘So you want to be a public Bible teacher. That can be good. But you should not thoughtlessly rush into this matter. Teaching is an awesome responsibility. It provides many opportunities for sin with the tongue. And you will be held accountable for what you say and do not say.’

### STEWARDSHIP

- Public teaching is not about us – not about what we enjoy doing. It is God’s work.
- Teachers have been granted public assembly time, access to the ears of many, and perhaps an open door to do good. How terrible if that opportunity is squandered!

### VUNERABILITY – to sin with the tongue.

- Many word spoken to many people.
- Opportunity for sin and for great harm

### ACOUNTABILITY (James 3:1)

- For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48)
- “So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (Jas 2:12 ).
- “For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it “ (Matt 12:36).

## TEACHERS AND STRICTER JUDGMENT

**Barnes** – not that those who were public teacher would be condemned, but that there would be a much more solemn account to be rendered by them than by other men, and that they ought duly to reflect on this in seeking the office of the ministry.

**Clarke** – should men enter into the office of teaching others ... perform it negligently, or live not according to the doctrine they teach others, such would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated

**Abbott** – The meaning is, that a great responsibility is incurred by every one who attempts to guide and instruct others.

**Family** – Right views of the responsibility of religious teachers and guides, of the difficulties of their work, the strict account which they must render to God, and the awful ruin which will come on those who are unfaithful, tend effectually to prevent improper aspirations for power in the church.

## TEACHERS AND STRICTER JUDGMENT

### RELATED PASSAGES

"...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (Lu 12:48 ).

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea." (Luke 9:42).

"Therefore let us ... resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. ... It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak (Ro 14:13, 21 ).

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matt 7:1 ).

"[You] know His will ...and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?" (Rom 2:17-21).

## HORSES' BITS



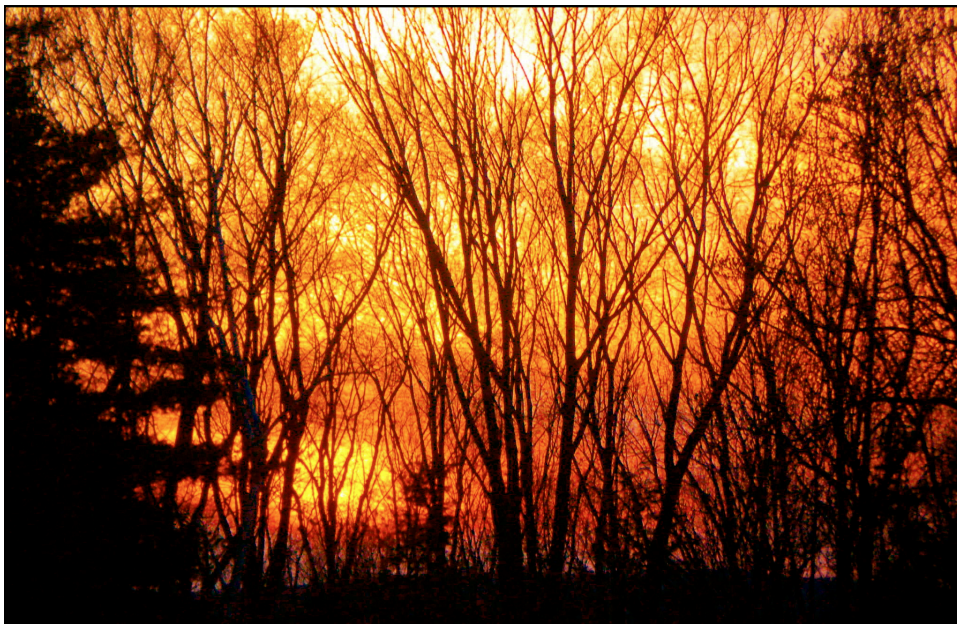
A man who is able to control his tongue can "bridle" his whole body. "Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body ... Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things" (James 3:3, 5).



## **“LOOK ALSO AT SHIPS”**



A man who is able to control his tongue can bridle his whole body. “Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.” (James 3:3, 5).



**“See how great a forest a little fire kindles!”**

(James 3:3, 5).



## HORSES, SHIPS, AND FIRE...

### What is the Point?

- The 'little' tongue, of course represents our communications – primarily verbal but would also apply to other communications (e.g., written).
- Don't be deceived by the small size of the tongue. **Its potential impact is great!**
  - Just like little bits are crucial in the domestication of horses
  - And relatively small rudders play an essential role in the operation of ships
  - And small fires can grow into a huge and destructive forest fire
- **"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things"** (James 3:5)

## THE TONGUE: UNTRAINABLE

James 3:7-8

"For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue."

*"But the tongue can no man tame - This does not mean that it is never brought under control, but that it is impossible effectually and certainly to subdue it. It would be possible to subdue and domesticate any kind of beasts, but this could not be done with the tongue" (Barnes).*



## THE TONGUE: AN UNRULY EVIL

James 3:6, 8



- “The tongue is a fire”
- It is “a world of iniquity”
- “It defiles the whole body”
- It “sets on fire the course of nature”
- “It is set on fire by hell”
- “It is an unruly evil”
- It is “full of deadly poison”

The tongue is not exclusively an instrument of evil (see v 9-12). It can be used for great good (e.g. Eph 4:29).

But the point is, it must be taken very seriously as it is capable of causing terrible harm and ultimately to eternal loss.

## THE TONGUE: AN UNRULY EVIL

### Specific sins listed in the Bible include:

- Disrespectful speech (2Pet 2:10)
- Double-tongued (1Tim 2:8)
- Unbridled, unrestrained tongue (Jam 1:26)
- Hypocritical words (Matt 15:8)
- Cursing (Rom 3:14, Rom 12:14)
- Bitter speech (Rom 3:14)
- Blasphemy (Col 3:18)
- Filthy language (Col 3:18)
- False teaching (Tit 1:11)
- Slander (1Tim 3:11; 2Tim 3:3; Tit 2:3)
- Gossip (1Tim 5:13)
- Corrupt words (Eph 4:29)
- Empty words (Eph 5:6; 2Pet 2:18)
- Judging speech (Jam 4:11; 2Pet 2:10)
- Shameful speech (Eph 5:12)
- Deceiving words (2Pet 2:3; Rom 3:13)
- Malicious words (3Jo 10)
- Idle words (Matt 12:36)
- Lying (Eph 4:25)
- Disputing/arguing (1Tim 6:4)
- Flattering (1Thes 2:5; Jude 16; Rom 16:18)

## THE TONGUE IS ALSO A SOURCE OF BLESSING

### For example:

- Persuade (1Cor 2:4; Col 2:4; Rom 16:18)
- Edify (2Cor 2:17; Eph 4:29)
- Give thanks (Col 3:17)
- Comfort (1Thes 4:18)
- Exhort (Heb 13:22)
- Speak truth (Eph 4:25)
- Encourage (1Thes 3:2)
- Glorify God (Rom 15:6)
- Rebuke (Tit 1:3, 2:15)
- Teach (1Tim 4:11)
- Source of speech seasoned with salt (Col 4:16)
- Source of sound speech (Tit 2:1, 8)
- Source of slow (retrained & careful) speech (Jam 1:19, 2:12)
- Source of authorized & lawful speech (1Pet 4:11)

## FINAL WORDS ON THE TONGUE

— from James 3 —

1. The tongue is a potent force, capable of great sin (Jam 3:3-6)
2. It is exceedingly hard to completely master (Jam 3:2, 7-8)
3. Even some “brethren” use their tongues to curse others even while, using it to praise God (Jam 1:26, 3:9-10)
4. “My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (Jam 3:10)

## “WHO IS WISE ... AMONG YOU?”

**Who is wise and understanding among you?  
Let him show by good conduct...” (Jam 3:13).**

Remember that wisdom is the ability to use knowledge to reach good decisions and to take appropriate actions

Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit” (Matt 7:15-18).

## JAMES’ PURPOSE IN JAMES 3:13-18

Some of the most used insulting words related to wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence:

- Stupid
- Ignorant
- Dumb

These verses show the difference between men's pretending to be wise, and their being really so. “He who thinks well, or he who talks well, is not wise in the sense of the Scripture, if he does not live and act well” (MH).

None of us want such words to apply to us. We want to be perceived and respected as being wise.

But some have a distorted view of wisdom. They claim wisdom even while it is far from them.

James explains:

- How to live a life that is genuinely wise and
- How to identify those who claim to be wise but are not



## **“WHO IS WISE ... AMONG YOU?”**

**There are men who are genuinely wise**

**And there there men who profess  
to be wise but are not.**

**How can we tell which is which?**

**We can know based on  
their manner of life.**

## **“WHO IS WISE ... AMONG YOU?”**

**A note on the problem of self deceit**

1. Some thought they were wise and really were not (Jam 3:13; 1 Cor 3:18)
2. Some thought their religion was pure but it was not (Jam 1:26-27)
3. Some thought they had acceptable faith but did not (Jam 2:14-16)
4. Perhaps some thought they had genuine love but did not (Jam 2:8-9)

**Self deceit is serious business and can cause our souls to be damned (1Thes 2:10-12). We need humility and a love of the truth to reduce the danger of self deceit.**



## GODLY ATTRIBUTES ARE NOT GENUINE UNLESS DEMONSTRATED

Some religious groups focus on feelings and minimize the need for any associated actions. But James in this context gives the truth about this matter:

1. Wisdom is not real unless it results in good conduct (Jam 3:13)
2. Faith is dead unless it results in works of faith (Jam 2:14-26)
3. Religion is useless without a godly life (Jam 1:27)
4. Love is just pretend unless accompanied by works of love (Jam 2:8; 1Jo 3:18)
5. Acceptable repentance includes “fruits” (Matt 3:8)

Such clear and common sense truths should make it easy to see that the ‘faith only’ doctrine is not consistent with Bible principles.

# JAMES

## CHAPTER THREE

Last week we addressed:

1. Cautions for Bible teachers
2. Cautions about the use of the tongue

And we began to look at:

3. The life of the truly wise man

## TEACHERS

James 3:1

1. Is teaching the Bible a good thing or a bad thing?
2. Should everyone be a public teacher? Why?
3. Suppose that the congregation needs teachers and you are a qualified teacher – what should you do?
4. Suppose you were needed as a teacher but you had some misgivings about the warnings of James 3:1-2 – what should you do?

## THE TONGUE

James 3:2-12

**1. James wrote:**

- Language is an amazingly powerful thing and is capable of great evil.
- Of all the temptations to sin, the temptation to sin with our tongue is one of the most difficult to totally master.

**2. What we should do:**

- Examine ourselves in light of the scriptures. We are probably not as good in this area as we think we are.
- Accept the admonition of James in verse 10 and strive prayerfully to change as needed.

# THE LIFE OF A TRULY WISE MAN

James 3:13-18

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in ... wisdom”

What conduct? Conduct that is characterized by:

- Meekness
- Purity
- Peacefulness
- Gentleness
- Willing to yield
- Full of mercy
- Full of good works
- Without envy
- Without self seeking
- Without boasting
- Not partial
- Not hypocritical

## ATTITUDE TOWARD BIBLE LISTS LIKE JAMES 3:13-18

- Meekness
- Purity
- Peacefulness
- Gentleness
- Willing to yield
- Full of mercy
- Full of good works
- Without envy
- Without self seeking
- Without boasting
- Not partial
- Not hypocritical

1. The Lord God had something to say to us so He commissioned James, the brother of Jesus to write it down for us
2. Such is the power of language that each word is rich with meaning – full of admonition and instruction in righteousness. We must be willing to look for the principle and the application for our lives
3. This section of scripture is the special mirror of James 1:23-25 at work. If we spend time at the mirror we may find needs for improvement that we did not know about.

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# MEEKNESS

**QUESTION** – Suppose you joined a conversation with two men – one meek and the other not. Describe in practical ways how you would know which was which.

### MEEKNESS IS:

- Showing patience and humility. Gentle. Easily imposed on; submissive.
- Enduring injury with patience and without resentment.
- Moderate. Quiet.
- Not assertive, bold, haughty, uninhibited, arrogant, or presumptuous

### MISCONCEPTIONS

- The modern usage is negative and includes the ideas of: overly submissive or compliant; spiritless; tame – or even weak.
- To the extent that the biblically meek appear weak, it is because they willingly restrain outward signs of power. It is not on public display and is certainly not a matter of pride or boasting.

### WORLD VIEW

- Biblical meekness is at odds with all that the world values – Assertiveness, power on display, self promotion, quick to defend ‘honor and rights’, not willing to accept less than first place, ‘if you’ve got it, flaunt it’, etc.

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# MEEKNESS

### SOME QUOTES ABOUT MEEKNESS:

- “Gentleness is an active trait, describing the manner in which we should treat others. Meekness is a passive trait, describing the proper Christian response when others mistreat us” (Jeff Bridges).
- “The man who has no opinion of himself at all can never be hurt if others do not acknowledge him. Hence, be meek. He who is without expectation cannot fret if nothing comes to him” (Henry Drummond).
- “Meekness is not a mere contemplative virtue; it is maintaining peace and patience in the midst of pelting provocations.”
- “To be truly meek means we no longer protect ourselves, because we see there is nothing worth defending ... The man who is truly meek is the one who is amazed that God and man can think of him as well as they do and treat him as well as they do” (Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**MEEKNESS**

**Our Christian walk begins with meekness toward God and His word** – “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls” (Jam 1:21).

**And that walk must be characterized by meekness toward our fellow man** – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love ... which is the bond of perfection” (Col 3:12-14).

**A life of meekness with result in a reward** – But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Ps 37:11; Matt 5:5).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**MEEKNESS****THE MEEKNESS CHRIST (Phil 2:1-8)**

- He willingly gave up the glory of heaven (Jo 17:5, Phil 2:6)
- He lived a lowly life of poverty among men (Luke 9:58; Phil 2:7)
- He did not assumed the trappings worthy of His position as God and King (Matt 21:5)
- He washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:3-17)
- He willingly endured undeserved shame and violence and did not defend Himself against wicked men (Matt 26:53, 27:14)

**READ PHIL 2:1-8**

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**MEEKNESS**

## OTHER BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS OF MEEKNESS

- Moses – “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num 12:1-3 KJV – Note contrast with Miriam and Aaron)
- Paul – “Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ--who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you” (2Cor 10:1)

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**PURITY****DEFINITION**

- Purity is the quality of being unalloyed, unmixed, uncontaminated or wholesome. Free from anything that debases, defiles, contaminates, pollutes, etc.
- In the NT it is used of moral and ethical "purity" – freedom from sin or guilt; innocence; chastity

**REFERENCES**

- **Personal purity requires ongoing effort** – “...keep yourself pure” (1Tim 5:22). “...be an example to the believers ...in purity” (1Tim 4:12). “...Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (Jam 4:8).
- **It is possible for a contaminated man to feel pure** – “There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness” (Pr 30:12 ). “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits” (Pr 16:2 ).
- **The pure will be rewarded** – “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God” (Mt 5:8 ).



## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**PURITY****HOW ARE WE PURIFIED?**

- **Initially, we are purified – cleansed of our sins – by obeying the gospel.** “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth ... love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1Pet 1:22-23).
- **We must keep ourselves pure** – The one who is washed must not return to the mire (2Pet 2:20-22).
  - Do not love the world (1Jo 2:15). Be transformed and renewed by the word instead of being conformed to the world (Rom 12:2).
  - Flee temptation (1Co 6:18, 10:14; 2Ti 2:22)
  - “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (Jas 4:8).
- **Purity necessarily involves separation**
  - As gold is separated from impurities
  - As the OT Jews were separated from the surrounding nations
  - As a married woman is separated from all but her husband.
  - Even so a Christians must separate themselves from sin. “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1Thes 5:21-22).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

**PURITY****“THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE”** (Jam 3:17)

- This passage is commonly misused as though doctrinal purity was under consideration – and to thus conclude that doctrinal purity has a higher priority than achieving peace about doctrine. While this is true, it is not what the James speaks of here. Personal, not doctrinal, purity is under consideration.
- ‘This does not refer to the doctrines of religion, but to its spirit. The meaning here is, that the first and immediate effect of religion is not on the intellect, to make it more enlightened; or on the imagination, to make it more discursive and brilliant; or on the memory and judgment, to make them clearer and stronger; but it is to purify the heart, to make the man upright, inoffensive, and good’ (Barnes; also see GNW on James, P190-191).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# PEACEABLENESS

### DEFINITION

1. The Bible speaks of (a) peace with God, (b) peace within ourselves, and (c) peace with other men.
2. It is the latter spoken of here – a co-existence with others that is free of turmoil, strife,

**ILLUSTRATIONS** – Jesus was the “Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6)

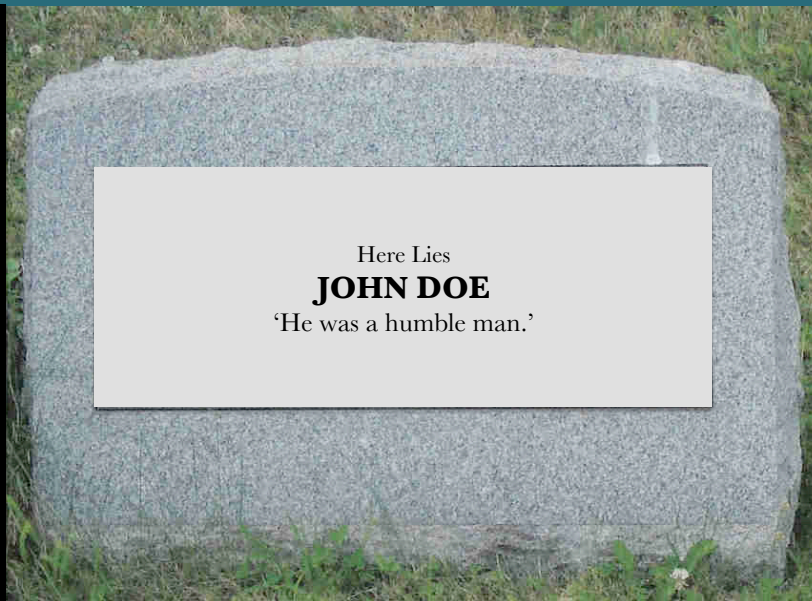
### WE MUST BE PEACEABLE

1. “Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9).
2. Pray for “for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1Ti 2:2).
3. “Speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men” (Tit 3:2).

**GOOD WILL RESULT** – “Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (Jam 3:18) – i.e., ‘The peace that peacemakers sow will result in a crop of righteousness.’ Contrast with James 1:20.

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# GENTLENESS



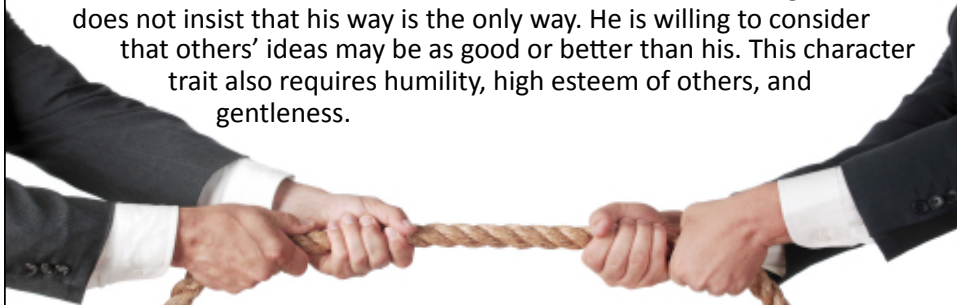
## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# READY TO YIELD

**DEFINITION** – Easy to be entreated; easily obeying, compliant

**OTHER TRANSLATIONS** – Submissive, open to reason, reasonable, easy to be persuaded, compliant, easy to be entreated

**THE MAN WHO IS “READY TO YIELD”** is not stubborn or arrogant. He does not insist that his way is the only way. He is willing to consider that others’ ideas may be as good or better than his. This character trait also requires humility, high esteem of others, and gentleness.



“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil 2:3-4).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# FULL OF MERCY

### DEFINITION OF “MERCY”

- Compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; clemency
- A disposition to be kind and forgiving
- Compassion, pity, or benevolence: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them

### THE MERCY OF GOD

- Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” (Jas 5:11).
- “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us ...” (Eph 2:4-9).

### MERCY ILLUSTRATED BY BIBLE CHARACTERS

- Master and debtor servant (Matt 18:21-27, esp. see v33-34)
- Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37, esp. see v37)

### WE MUST BE MERCIFUL

- Lu 6:36 “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# FULL OF GOOD WORKS

- **Truly wise men are busy doing good** – like Dorcas. “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good work and charitable deeds which she did” (Acts 9:36).
- **That is one way that Christians glorify God** – “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:16; also 1Pet 2:12).
- **We are created for good works** – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).
- **We are to maintain** good works (Tit 3:4), be rich in them (1Tim 6:18), pursue them zealously (Tit 2:14), as a pattern of life (Tit 2:7).
- **Without good works**, we have no true wisdom (Jam 3:17) and no genuine faith (Jam 2:26).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# WITHOUT ENVY

### DEFINITION

- Envy is a resentful emotion that occurs when a person lacks another's (perceived) superior quality, achievement or possession and wishes that the other lacked it.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

- The Jewish leaders were envious of the attention that Jesus received from the people (Matt 27:18)
- The leaders also envied Paul's influence (Acts 13:45)
- Other Bible examples?

### REFERENCES

- “Envy is rottenness to the bones.” (Psa 14:30).
- “Love does not envy;” (1Cor 13:4)
- “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there” (Jam 3:16).
- “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking” (1Pe 2:1).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM WITHOUT SELF SEEKING

### DEFINITION

- 'Self seeking' is a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and fractious spirit
- Related character flaws include pride, selfishness, and lack of love for others

### REFERENCES

- "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:2-7).
- "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies" (Gal 5:19-20).
- "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lu 14:11).
- "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Ro 12:10).

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM NOT BOASTFUL

### DEFINITION

- To boast is to speak with exaggerated and excessive pride, especially about oneself.
- To glorify oneself in speech; to talk in a self-admiring way.

### QUESTIONS

- Who is glorified when we boast?
- What assumption do we make about how we got our intelligence, money, etc.?

### REFERENCES

- **Boast only about God** – "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Ga 6:14) and "In God we boast all day long, and praise Your name forever" (Ps 44:8).
- **We are not saved by our own works** – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).
- **Whatever we are or have is a gift of God** – "For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM IS NOT HYPOCRITICAL

### DEFINITION

- A person who pretends to be what he is not – to have virtues, beliefs, principles, etc. that he does not really have.
- A person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings.
- Somebody feigning high principles: somebody who pretends to have admirable principles, beliefs, or feelings but behaves otherwise.

**A HYPOCRITE** is a dishonest person, He cares more about his appearance before men than about the reality of his character.

### REFERENCES

- “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking” (1Pe 2:1; also 1Tim 2:1; Rom 12:9).

### ILLUSTRATIONS

- Jesus frequently accused the Pharisees of being hypocrites (e.g., Matt 23:14).
- Peter “played the hypocrite” (Gal 2:11-14)
- There is a difference between one who honestly tries to live right but fails and one who is a hypocrite.

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM DOES NOT LIE AGAINST THE TRUTH

### OTHER TRANSLATIONS

- Don’t deny, slander, or cover up the truth. Don't say that you are wise when it isn't true. Don’t speak falsely in defiance of the truth.

### LYING BOASTS

- Some boldly claim to be wise even while their conduct shows that their claim is false.
- Such boasting claims are in opposition to the plain facts. For a foolish man to make such a claim is to “lie against the truth.”

### OTHER LIES AGAINST THE TRUTH

- Claim to have faith but do not have works – It is a lie
- Claim to have love but no service – It is a lie
- Claim to repent with no life change – It is a lie



CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM  
**DOES NOT SHOW PARTIALITY**

**DEFINITION**

- Biased attitude or behavior based on a outward factor such as apparent wealth, popularity, race, age, etc.

**REFERENCES**

- “You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. (Le 19:15)
- “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ... if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (Jam 2:1, 9).

**JAMES**  
**CHAPTER FOUR**

## THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

- Chapter 3 ends with instructions about behavior that will minimize strife:
  - It is peaceable, gentle, and ready to yield (v17)
  - Those peacemakers who behave this way will sow seeds of peace that produce a crop of righteousness (v18). Note the contrast with Jam 1:20; “For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- Chapter 4 starts with a description of the kind of character that results in the very opposite of peace – wars, fighting, and murder (v1-2).
  - Some strongly desire (or lust) for pleasures
  - This lust sets up a raging war within them (Jam 1:13-15; Rom 7:23). But the outcome for them is likely to be an overwhelming defeat by the enemy – by Satan.
  - They are obsessed with obtaining pleasures by whatever means possible – hook, crook, or even prayer!

## THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

### DEFINITION

- Lust is an emotion or feeling of intense desire in the body. The lust can take any form such as the lust for knowledge, the lust for sex or the lust for power. It can take such mundane forms as the lust for food as distinct from the need for food. Lust is a powerful psychological force producing intense wanting for an object, or the circumstance fulfilling the emotion.
- To have a longing, craving or eager desire for forbidden things

### USAGE

- This English word is used 11 times in the NKJV New Testament – always with a bad connotation
- It is used to refer to a strong desire for evil or forbidden things (1Cor 10:6).
- Often, but not always, it is used to refer to sexual desire (e.g., Matt 5:28).
- Sometimes the thing being lusted for may not be evil in and of itself. The intense desire becomes sin because of the worldliness and selfishness that is at its root. A desire for pleasure (Jam 4:1, 3) – for example, a good meal – is not necessarily wrong but it certainly can become sinful.

## THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2



Lust is all about self and the satisfaction of its pleasures. Its demands drown out consideration of the needs of others and of the will of God. This is true whether the object of the lust is inherently wrong or not. It is in contrast with contentment.

## THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

### EVE

- “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” (Gen 3:6).

### DAVID

- “Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.” (2Sam 11:2).

### AHAB

- “So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food” (1Kings 21:4).

### ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

- Acts 1:1-11

## THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

- Lust causes war between nations
- Lust causes strife between people; even Christians (1Cor 3:3)
- Lust causes war within the hearts of Christians (Jam 1:14; Rom 7:13-24)



I want what I want when I want it and I will have it!

## THE PROBLEM OF LUST

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?” James 4:1-2

**PAUL** – “Now the mixed multitude who were among them [Israel] yielded to **intense craving**; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: “Who will give us meat to eat?”” (Nu 11:4). Paul remembered such past failures and warned, “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that **we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted**” (1Co 10:6). Instead, he instructed his readers, “**Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh**” (Gal5:16) [and do not walk] “in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God” (1Th 4:5). He further described these lustful ones by saying “**whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things**” (Phil 3:19).

**PETER** – “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may **be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust...**” (2Pe 1:3-5).

**JOHN** – 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever**” (1Jo 2:16-17).

## DEFECTIVE PRAYERS

James 4:2-4



What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer.

(From "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," Joseph M. Scriven)

- **"...you do not have because you do not ask."** (And whatever we ask we receive from Him..."- 1Jo 3:22 )
- **"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."**
  - Praying for needs is not wrong (Matt 6:11)
  - Praying for riches for personal consumption is condemned (Luke 12:13-20; Eph 4:28).

## FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

James 4:4

### JAMES WROTE

- "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? (Jam 4:4-5).

### RELATED PASSAGES

- "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1Jo 2:15).
- "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6:24).

## FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

James 4:4

**WHAT IS "THE WORLD?"** – The world (Grk: kosmos) is the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ.

- Some things in the world are inherently wrong (Rom 12:2; 1Co 5:10)
- Others may serve a legitimate purpose but can also become a stumbling block "No one engaged in warfare **entangles himself with the affairs of this life**, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2Ti 2:4 ).
  - "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1).
  - "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and **the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches** choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (Matt 12:22).
- The filth of the world – that which is inherently evil – is under consideration in this context (v5; also see Jam 1:27). But we also have to be careful about the entanglement of 'innocent' things of the world.

## THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Christians are the bride of Christ.

As such they are to remain pure and true to Him.

But there is another who seeks to seduce them away from Him and into spiritual adultery.

That interloper is 'the world.'

No 'open marriage' is permitted. God is a jealous God. We must choose ... Those who choose the world lose their relationship with Christ.

**"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (Jam 4:4).**



## “HUMBLE YOURSELVES”

Jam 4:6-10

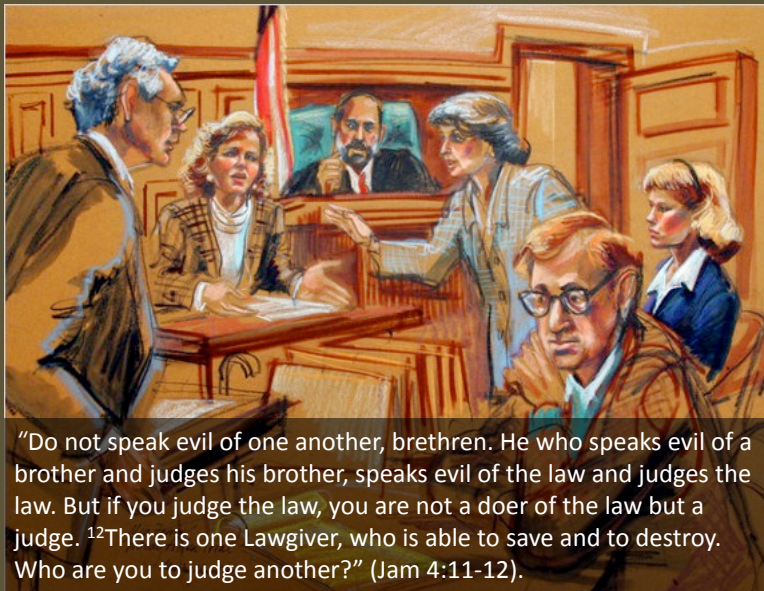
**When rebuked by the Lord** there are two possible responses

1. Proudly and rebelliously reject His correction and continue as before
2. Humbly submit to His will with true repentance and a renewed determination to serve Him faithfully
3. God will resist the first and bless the second (v6)

**Therefore...**

1. Submit to God
2. Resist the devil – and he will flee from you (1Pet 5:8-9)
3. Draw near to God (Heb 10:22; Matt 15:8)
4. Cleanse yourself – your hands and your heart (2Cor 6:14-7:1)
5. Be sorrowful (Matt 5:4)
6. Humble yourself before God – and He will lift you up (1Pet 5:5-6)
7. Do not speak evil of one another (Matt 7:1-5; Luke 6:37; Rom 14:10-13)

## DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER



“Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup>There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” (Jam 4:11-12).

## DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand... <sup>10</sup>But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup>For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” <sup>12</sup>So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us not judge one another anymore...” (Rom 14:4, 10-13).

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. <sup>2</sup>But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup>And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?” (Rom 2:1-3; Also Luke 6:37).

## ACKNOWLEDGE GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

**“If the Lord wills ...” (James 4:13-17)**

“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; <sup>14</sup>whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup>But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil” (Jam 4:13-16).

### THE PROBLEM IS NOT:

- Commerce nor financial success (Prov 31:10-31; Ecc 2:24; Eph 4:28)
- Simply verbalizing our future plans (Rom 15:24-25 but see v32 & 1Cor 4:19)

### INSTEAD IT IS:

- Failing to consider the fleeting nature of our lives
- Failing to recognize our dependence on God
- An inflated and arrogant assessment of our ability to control our own destiny based on our strength, wisdom, etc. (Consider 2Cor 1:8-11)

The intent is not to command a repetitive formulaic means of speaking but to foster a godly frame of mind – one that rejects arrogant self-reliance and instead reflects a humble dependence on the Lord.

*“Therefore, to him who knows to do good  
and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

James 4:17

**With regard to arrogant boasting (v16)  
With regard to any other of God’s commandments**

**Knowing is good, but not enough (Rom 2:17-23)**

**Good intentions alone fall short (2Cor 8:10-11)**

**Hesitation and procrastination are condemned**

**DO NOT USE**

## CHARACTERISTIC OF [TRUE] WISDOM

# MEEKNESS

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all **lowliness and gentleness [meekness-KJV], with longsuffering, bearing with one another** in love" (Eph 4:1-2)

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness [meekness-KJV]" (1Tim 6:1).

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but **gentle, showing all humility gentleness [meekness-KJV]** unto all men" (Tit 3:2).

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls" (Jam 1:21).

"Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1Pe 3:4).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1Pet 3:15).