

Wednesdays in the Word
Digging Deeper
August 5, 2020
James 3:13-18
Christian Common Sense

God chose to use the common language of the day, known as Koine Greek, to disseminate His Word to the world. Though Hebrew and Aramaic were spoken in the homes and synagogues of the Jewish believers, when living out their daily lives it was quite convenient to speak Greek as it was well known and widely understood by the society at large. The book of James was written as such and can still be accurately translated to this day. Knowing this, directs us to look at our text and give deference to the original tongue as precisely described by the work of James Strong in his 1890 concordance. This exhaustive dictionary is still the benchmark by which all other translative efforts are judged. Let's read through James 3:13-18 in God's word and then we'll give it a more open structure to allow for Greek idiomatics.

V13. Who is skilled in using God's Word? May you reveal to others a beautiful manner of living through your occupation with a mildness of disposition displayed in a diverse and Godly knowledge. 14. However, if your feelings betray a piercing, pungent, boiling jealousy or self seeking divisiveness, dare you not to boast of yourselves or falsely deceive, for these things are joined together against the clear and moral truth of God. 15. That so-called wisdom is not from the new beginning given you by God but it is instead, worldly, beast-like and demonic. 16. This evil zeal and self elevation brings about instability, disorder and every foul and worthless deed. 17. Godly wisdom is first this; it is absolutely clean and holy. It is then united with the mind of God. It is appropriately mild, compliant, empathically kind and as pleasant as freshly plucked, vine ripened fruit. It is never uncertain or pretentious. 18. This fresh fruit which is acceptable to God is to us the scattered seed of unity.

Breaking things down this way tells us something very quickly. We would like to think of wisdom as some higher knowledge that we magically acquire from God so we can walk around spouting scripture and giving advice to all the lowly earthlings around us. It is obviously not that at all. It is rather, other-centered, humble, gentle, loving, and entirely pleasing to the Lord. So what is this wisdom and how do we get it? You're getting it right now and you're growing in it constantly. When we try to bear fruit for God it is like a tree squeezing its muscles hoping fruit will pop out of its branches. We all know this cannot happen. It has been said many times that fruit grows naturally out of trees that were created to bear fruit. Look back through verses 10-12. We were created to bear fruit and we really must stop trying. As Jesus tells us to be connected like branches to a vine in John 15:1-5, our only personal effort ought to be constantly turning to God each moment of the day just as in the same way you turned to Him on the day you got saved. This is all that faith has ever required us to do. By walking through our day with Him and staying in fellowship with His people and His Word it will bring about the natural production of the fruit of righteousness and wisdom. We understand wisdom to be, perhaps higher intelligence and even more so, applied knowledge. We might think of it as common sense. While it is all these things, it is something a bit more unique when we perceive it through God's Word. It is God's wisdom. It is His mind and His heart. It is really a lot more simple than we often

make it out to be. The heart and mind of God as applied to us exists solely for our redemption. God's wisdom is understanding Him in such a way that we are equipped to share Him and His gospel with those around us. It is having the right words at the right time. 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 3:15. It is sharing and caring with those in need. It is displaying an other-centered love that is in no way natural to us. It is personified in Jesus Christ. He lives in us and indeed we live in him. Here it is in a sentence. **Godly wisdom is being consistently connected to Jesus Christ in a way that He is able to display Himself through us to the unsaved world.** As we look back at the description given us in today's text we will see that it is Jesus Christ and Him alone who perfectly displays this wisdom and righteousness. He is Wisdom. Proverbs 1:1-8. The wonderful one liners in Proverbs speak of the Wonderful One in Whom all wisdom is fulfilled. He is our model. He is our example. Our growth in Him is simply that of being like a child with our parent. We spend time with our parents when we are little and we learn to be like them by doing the things they do. When it comes to following Him, Jesus loves copycats. Wisdom is useless to the one who has it but is all-powerful to those with whom it is shared. We should absolutely learn and grow in intelligence and knowledge as much as possible. But those things save no one. When we grow in the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ we automatically produce the fruit of wisdom which will lead to the Salvation of others. We are told earlier in James that wisdom is exemplified by patience. James 1:2-5. They go hand-in-hand. Learning patience is difficult or even impossible without the gift of God. But if, as we learn patience, we endure, then we will notice as we look back on our lives that we have grown both in our salvation and our wisdom. This same patience will bring us to a point in time when we will see the salvation of our loved ones and it may be the very wisdom God has imparted to us that leads them there. James 5:7-8, Galatians 6:9. Then we can all fly away together.