

James Part 8

Arrogance / Meekness

James 3:13-18

Memory Verses: James 3:17

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

This morning we are in James chapter 3 and we are reminded that the main theme of this book is Faith Works. So far in James chapter 1 we've seen how our faith works in our trials and temptations. Chapter 1 ends with a commission to not be merely hearers of the word only but to also be doers of the word. In James chapter 2 we saw how faith works in the way we treat people without partiality or discrimination. Chapter 2 ends with a warning that faith without works is dead.

Last week in James chapter 3:1-12 we saw the dangers of the tongue and how our speech tells us who we really are. Your tongue shows us the direction you are headed, the people that you hate, and the state of your heart. And so, how are we to control our tongues in such a way that it reveals a heart for God and a faith in him as our Lord and Savior? We give him control of our speech. We pray **Psalm 141:3**; "set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth and keep watch over the door of my lips." We acknowledge that we cannot control our words... so we hand the reins and the rudder over to a much more experienced rider and captain... Jesus. Nothing can derail our testimony or what God is doing amongst us faster than loose lips... so surrender your tongue over to the Lord.

This morning we pick up where we left off in chapter 3. Read with me **James 3:13-18**. Where as the first part of James 3 teaches us the relationship between our heart and our speech, the second part of James 3 teaches us the relationship between our heart and our attitude. **Proverbs 14:33** tells us that wisdom rests in the heart of man. Likewise, **Proverbs 3:5** says to trust in the Lord with all your heart and not to lean on your own understanding. It is clear that the seat of wisdom is the heart. One with a heart for God will have a godly wisdom. One with a heart for self will have a worldly wisdom. And depending upon where your wisdom comes from will determine your attitude and your attitude will determine your conduct. **Verse 13** makes that point clear; by one's conduct and works they show the attitude they have developed based on their particular bent of wisdom.

Have you ever thought of that before; that where your wisdom comes from determines your attitude about yourself, your family, your job, your community... basically your entire worldview? One saying of a previous pastor that has stuck with me is this, "**your attitude, not your**

aptitude, will determine your altitude." For those of you who are not down with the alliteration or have no idea what aptitude means (which is ironic by the way), let me rephrase. How high you go in life is much less about what you know and much more about your point of view. And that point of view, that attitude, or worldview, is formed over years by either the wisdom of this world or the wisdom of God.

For example; there are three pastors that come to my mind. Two are men who started very small churches in their own homes and grew those ministry's to over 20,000 people in weekly attendance. They were great speakers, wrote a lot of books, and knew a lot of stuff. They had amazing aptitude. But, two years ago both were fired from the very churches that they started decades earlier. Why? Because of their attitudes. Ability can take you far... but sooner or later, if you have a bad attitude, no matter how well you run your organization, people will get sick of the way you treat them and show you your walking papers. Both of these men, though they were pastors who claimed they had a godly wisdom, actually had formed selfish, self indulging worldviews of arrogance that clearly had roots in worldly wisdom.

The third pastor is your very own. I started my faith journey at 7 years old and immediately it became clear to me that one of the greatest struggles of my life would be my attitude. If I didn't get my way... it wouldn't just ruin my day... I would make dang sure that it would ruin yours too. As a kid if I lost a game I would cry... as a teenager if I lost a game I would fight... as a college student being disciplined and trying my best to be like Jesus... If I lost I would still pick up the basketball and punt it across the parking lot. And so, in college, I remember getting hit with two sobering doses of reality. The first one was when I returned early to my dorm my sophomore year. I was on the leadership team my freshman year and assumed I was still on the leadership team my sophomore year. But when I showed up a week early for team training, I was told that because of my attitude the prior year that I would not be on the leadership team my sophomore year. I was crushed... it was a wake up call but I still wasn't fully awake. So my senior year God sent my fiance to give me another. Lisa, pulled me aside, took off her engagement ring and put it in her hand and basically said that if I couldn't get my attitude together and start acting like the man of God that she needed me to be, then we were gonna be done. It was clear that she had had enough of my bad attitude, and so had I. You see, even though I was a Christian, my wisdom came from the world... it was earthly. It constantly said to me; Shevi, you get yours no matter what. You do whatever you have to do to achieve your goals, you let people know that you aren't here for them but they are here for you. And, I and everyone else around me had had enough. So I had to change.

Does that mean that I don't still struggle with having a selfish and arrogant worldview? Of course not. I fight against it everyday... but I win

those battles a whole heck of a lot more than I used to. How? Because I've learned to recognize that it's not about me. The world doesn't revolve around me. I've learned that God isn't counting on me... rather, I must count on him. My wisdom now comes from a different place and it has radically changed my attitude. If you've ever struggled with a selfish, self-centered, prideful, and arrogant attitude, this message is for you. It's time to change where you get your wisdom from. The main point this morning is this... **The source of your wisdom will shape your worldview.**

This morning we are going to see that you can either choose to draw your wisdom from the world and shape an attitude of arrogance, or you can choose to draw your wisdom from God and shape an attitude of meekness. Which one will you choose?

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first one... **Worldly Wisdom Produces Self-Centered Arrogance.** Look again with me in **vs. 14-16**. Worldly Wisdom teaches self-advancement, and is the complete opposite of Godly wisdom. It views life from a limited perspective and produces a limited worldview. Rather than seeing things within the scope of eternity, it teaches people to see in terms of immediate impact. Worst of all, worldly wisdom teaches mankind to place themselves at the center of all things. You are the most important thing. Fulfilling your desires should be your most important pursuit. The meaning and purpose of life is to collect life experiences and to be happy at all cost. Worldly wisdom says; do what feels good, follow your heart, obey your thirsts, and don't worry about tomorrow, just live for today.

Worldly wisdom is motivated by self-focused ambition; it measures everything by how it affects you. It is focused on how you can promote yourself, benefit yourself, justify yourself, defend yourself, and advance yourself. Worldly wisdom caters to a microwave generation who knows what they want, want it now, feel entitled to it, and will do whatever it takes to get it. **In all circumstances, worldly wisdom is impressing upon you to ask one question; "how does this benefit me?"**

In **verse 15** you'll notice that Worldly Wisdom does not come from God, or the Spirit. James wants you to understand without a shadow of a doubt that worldly wisdom is just that, worldly. There are many who say that their worldly wisdom was given to them by God... but a wisdom that puts humanity at the center of purpose and meaning is not from God's teachings nor the Spirit's leading! You will not find anywhere in scripture where it teaches that selfish ambition, and jealousy are God's means of reaching the World with the Gospel and bringing himself supreme glory. Nor will you find anywhere in the Bible or throughout history where the Spirit of God has impressed on someone to live selfishly for the sake of building the Kingdom. Worldly wisdom cannot

come from God because it is the enemy of God. Rather, worldly wisdom can only come from two places. Our sinful nature which is our flesh... or the author of lies which is Satan. Either we allow our sinful flesh to pull us toward a mindset of self focused gratification, or we allow Satan to lure us into a false narrative where we justify self-centered living. Regardless, worldly wisdom is nothing less than sinful and demonic.

In **verses 14 and 16** you will also see that Worldly wisdom manifests itself in self-centered arrogance. The attitude which comes from worldly wisdom is one of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition – in a word; arrogance. Arrogance is an attitude that is disposed to exaggerate one's own worth, importance, or superiority. Arrogant people are bitter because when they look at others they either see someone who has what they themselves only deserve, or they see others who are so beneath them that they aren't worth their time. They would never admit that they are indeed jealous of others, but their need to have more or be better than others consumes their lives. Their ambition is to be number one at all costs, and it comes through in every word, action, look, and gesture.

And, according to **verses 14 and 16**, arrogance produces bad conduct in the form of boasting, lying, disorder, and every vile practice. Boasting and lying are typical of someone who has an arrogant worldview. It is this behavior that keeps people at a distance. Even if you are not a Christian, no one wants to be around someone who is constantly boasting and lying about how great they are. And, disorder is what happens to their surroundings, everywhere they go. For those Christian pastors I mentioned earlier, who were fired, their arrogant attitudes first produced disorder in their staffs who couldn't understand why they weren't respected and appreciated. And of course, when the leadership of a church is in disorder, it leaks into every facet of the church. One man's arrogance almost destroyed a whole church of over 20,000 people! Think about that! And, then of course come vile practices of every sort. For some, the vile practices of arrogance can simply be disunity, harsh words, and unloving actions. But, for others, vile practices can include any sin. You see, arrogance says, the rules don't apply to me. I recently watched a movie about the true story of a superintendent in a long-Island New York school system who typified this type of worldview. He was bitterly jealous that everyone around him was making millions of dollars and had very nice houses and cars. He thought that he was the only one who could lead that school system from number 4 in the country to number 1. So you take those two things into account and add the ability to manipulate the system and you get what happened. This superintendent, over the course of about 10 years, stole from the school system and the taxpayers of his county, over 2 million dollars.

Worldly wisdom says that you are the best around... makes you feel special... but in the end it doesn't care about you... in fact it wants to crush you under the weight of your own mistakes. It corrupts you until it crumbles

you. Arrogance has never helped anyone but the arrogant... and in the end it doesn't even help them. **A worldview that says it's all about you is the most dangerous, destructive, and deadly attitude on earth.** It destroys marriages, it destroys relationships between parents and children, it destroys careers, it can destroy whole countries, and it can destroy churches. We must reject worldly wisdom because... **the source of your wisdom will shape your worldview.**

So we must learn from another wisdom. **Godly Wisdom Produces God-Centered Meekness.** Look again at **verses 13, 17-18.** In contrast to worldly wisdom which says everything revolves around you, godly wisdom submits that everything revolves around God. Instead of human pleasure, at the center of purpose and meaning is God himself. Godly wisdom teaches us to think in terms of the eternal rather than the temporary. Where worldly wisdom says now, Godly wisdom says forever. Worldly wisdom says that the greatest way to find satisfaction is to satisfy ourselves with the world. Godly wisdom says that **the greatest way to find satisfaction is to satisfy ourselves with God.**

In **verse 16** we see that in contrast to worldly wisdom that comes from our flesh or Satan's demons, godly wisdom comes from above. It is a heavenly wisdom that can only be granted to us by God. The more we submit to his Spirit living inside us, and the more we spend time in his Word and in prayer, the more of this wisdom we absorb. Remember what we read in **James 1:5-6** – if anyone lacks wisdom ask and it will be given. If you need a good dose of godly wisdom... all you need do is go to him in prayer as ask for it.

In contrast to worldly wisdom that manifests itself in self-centered arrogance; **verses 13 and 17** tell us that Godly wisdom manifests itself in God-centered Meekness. In verse 13 we see that the attitude that we are aiming for is that of meekness. For some meekness can mean quiet or overtly submissive. It can be seen as a weakness but, do not be fooled. For the believer, meekness is defined in verse 17 as purity, peaceful, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy, full of good fruits, impartial, and sincere. It's interesting to note that this list, here describing meekness, is almost the same exact list we find in the beatitudes (**Matthew 5:3-12**).

This is the type of attitude is not only attractive to believers, but non-believers alike. Who wouldn't love the person described here. Someone who doesn't unfairly judge you, or judge you based on your mistakes, but has mercy on you, is patient with you, and seeks to live peacefully with you and everyone they come into contact with. They don't argue, but listen to your views and opinions. They don't push away from the table, they pull closer to it. They are open to reason, gentle, and sincere. They genuinely care about you. Why? Because they love you. Why? Because they love God. **Meekness is the God glorifying attitude**

of those who see God as their purpose and people as their pursuit. Godly wisdom results in an attitude of meekness because godly wisdom teaches that we don't have to fight for ourselves... God fights for us. And, when we don't have to pursue our agenda we are freed to pursue God's agenda and that of others.

Therefore, as **verse 18** shows us, meekness produces good conduct. That good conduct is described here as righteousness and peace. When we listen to the wisdom of God it changes our whole attitude and worldview... an attitude and worldview that creates righteous marriages, careers, relationships, and churches. In every circumstance, a God-Centered meekness will do the right thing and set the right tone. And where does doing the right thing in all circumstances lead... to peace. When you treat your neighbors right, there is peace in the neighborhood. When you treat your co-workers right, there is peace in the workplace. When you treat your brothers and sisters in the church right, there is peace in the church. Righteousness leads to peace.

But what about the times that it doesn't. Yes, sometimes doing the right thing leads to conflict. The Bible warns us that because of Christ the world will hate us, even when we are righteous and peaceful. So, in those times, we should never back down on the truth for the sake of peaceful times. Christ first, peace second. **Romans 12:18** tells us to try to live in peace the best you can.

The bottom line is this... Godly wisdom points to God and his glory as the means for accomplishing all things. It doesn't matter if I am advanced, as long as his agenda is. Meekness is the attitude and worldview of all who drink from the well of this wisdom. **The source of your wisdom will shape your worldview.**

Application

So, once again. Worldly wisdom comes from the flesh and demons. It says you are the only thing that matters and that you should do whatever you have to do in order to be happy, regardless of who's in your way. It manifests itself in a self-centered arrogant attitude culminating in a self-centered arrogant worldview which ultimately produces boasting, lying, disorder, and every vile practice. It promises you everything and leaves you with nothing.

Godly wisdom comes from above, from God. It correctly asserts that the main thing that matters is God because God is the only thing that can truly satisfy. It manifests itself in a God-centered attitude of meekness culminating in a God-centered worldview typified by purity, peacefulness, gentleness, reason, mercy, impartiality and sincerity, which ultimately produces righteousness and peace. It promises you eternal satisfaction in God and pleasure forevermore.

Conclusion

So let's go back to where we started in **verse 13**. Who is wise and understanding among you? Show your wisdom through your attitude. Basically... choose which stream of wisdom you want to drink from and prove it's value through your worldview. But be warned one will end in disorder and vileness, while one will end in righteousness and peace.