

Feb. 16, 2014

The Maturing Christian James 3:13-18

You may have noticed that I have had you to stand at the beginning of the service as I read the key scriptures for the message. I am hoping that when we stand and read from the Bible that you understand that something important is being read.

If you had the opportunity to sit behind a curtain and have God, the creator of the heavens and earth, speak directly to you, how intently would you listen?

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Ponder for a moment how amazing is it that you can be sitting here this morning and realize that you are actually hearing God speak to you.

Well, think about that as we stand and read from the scripture this morning, because that is exactly what is happening. We are hearing the inspired Word of God.

All Stand and Read Scripture

James 3:13-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

INTRODUCTION:

The book of James is very **fascinating** to me because of the **straight forward approach** he uses to help us **mature in Christ**. It is my favorite book in the New Testament.

Prayer

PURPOSE OF LIFE?

As humans, all of us at some point have no doubt asked ourselves, “What is the purpose of life”. Without knowing “**Godly Wisdom**” we have to turn to the **wisdom of man** for answers. Don’t waste your time on “**flesh pleasing**” worldly advice.

In order to know how to live our life for Christ, we must have a **source of wisdom**. That “source of wisdom” is the Bible. The Bible consists of 66 books written by 40 authors inspired by God over a period of thousands of years.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁴ You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the **wisdom** that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped for every good work**.

The first step of knowing **why** we are here on earth is to understand that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Do you have full assurance that the entire Bible is inspired by God?

We are currently studying external evidences of God’s inspiration of the Bible in our Wednesday night Bible Study. If you would like to have more assurance in God’s Word, I would encourage you to attend Wednesday night at 6:30. I think you will find the study fascinating.

We all start out as **babes** in Christ by **acknowledging the scriptures** as God’s Word and **accepting Christ** as our Lord and Savior. This is the beginning of attaining the **Godly Wisdom** that James and Paul are talking about.

When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we turn away from our worldly ways which are dictated by **worldly wisdom** and start living based upon **God’s wisdom**.

This is **why** we are here, the **purpose of our life**. It is to recognize that God is our Creator and He wants us to **love, serve, and glorify Him**.

Listen carefully this morning as James, being inspired by God, explains how to attain and recognize maturity in our Christian lives.

BODY:

I. Signs of a Mature Christian

James 3:13-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

We study God's word and learn WHY and HOW we are to live, but too often, I'm afraid, we only take away a conceptual understanding and we DO little. Sometimes we need a list of practical things that we can DO to get beyond the conceptual understanding and have a true SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

James is telling us not only how to **identify** a mature leader, but also what **characteristics we should develop** if we are maturing in Christ.

James says a GENERAL description of one who is mature in Christ would **"show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."**

He has already explained to us how our faith must be active and obedient. Our works should be a manifestation of our Biblical faith. Our deeds should show gentleness (meekness and love).

I could expound on what our Christian behavior should be, but I believe the scriptures can do it much better.

If you want a list of practical things we can do that manifests our faith, mark Romans 12 and read it carefully. It explains what our **Christian Behavior** should be like if we are maturing in Christ.

(Briefly expound on each verse.)

Romans 12

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

12 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.* (Serve Christ as your Lord and Savior) ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, (Turn away from worldly things and live your life based on God's wisdom) so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; (Do not be conceited) but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (Study and know God's Word and Live it as best you can)⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly:* (We all have different talents) if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; (If God has given us the ability or knowledge to prophecy, do it to the best of our ability) ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; (If our talent is helping others or teaching or encouraging others, do it to the best of our ability) he who gives, with liberality; (If God has blessed you with riches, give accordingly) he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹ *Let love be without hypocrisy.* (Do not be a hypocrite. Let your love be real.) Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;* ¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; (Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, and mind.)¹² rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. (do not consider yourself better than someone else) Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. ²⁰ "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." (This is no doubt an example of "gentleness of wisdom" referred to by James). ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If we all could apply this chapter to our lives, we would truly be blessed.

II. Signs of a Worldly Person

Next James tells us how to identify people who are worldly.

James 3:14-16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

If you are jealous of other people or are serving the Lord for selfish reasons instead of serving Christ, James is telling us that we have not “turned from worldly ways” and we are not living our lives by the Wisdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

He goes from general to specific.

III. Wisdom of God.

James 3:17-18

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

When we start living based upon God's wisdom. A real change occurs in our life. We no longer put ourselves first in everything we do. All of a sudden the deeds of the flesh like immorality, sensuality, strife, jealousy, anger, and disputes are replaced by the fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Examine your life. Is it filled with the fruits of the Spirit or do you still exhibit deeds of the flesh. **Put your faith in God's wisdom!**

CONCLUSION:

Matthew tells us that we will know a Christian by his fruits.

Matthew 7:15-20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁵ "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷ So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ So then, you will know them by their fruits.

God, through the pen of James, is telling us if we are serious about maturing in Christ, we must get our wisdom from God.

The Family of God

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.