



Relationally Wise

James 3:13-18 // March 10, 2019 // Willowdale Jennersville

Sermon Summary: Who is wise and understanding among you? That's how James starts off verse 13. The answer he gives might surprise us. He doesn't talk about someone with great book knowledge or a lot of degrees. He says that the one who is wise must *show* it by their good life and by deeds done in the humility of wisdom. In other words, wisdom isn't wisdom unless there's selfless action tied to it. Wisdom benefits others – not just the one who is wise.

James shows us that there are two different kinds of wisdom. The first is earthly wisdom. It is marked by bitter envy and selfish ambition. This type of wisdom is “earthly, unspiritual, and demonic” (v. 15). It produces disorder and evil. The second is the wisdom that comes from heaven. James gives us a beautiful list of what this wisdom looks like in verse 17. It is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere. This type of wisdom helps create a community that is healthy and robust and on mission for the Kingdom of God.

Discussion Guide:

1. Take time to read through James 3:13-18.
2. Look at verse 13. Who is someone that you would consider to be wise? In your opinion, what makes them wise? What surprises you about James description of what wisdom will look like in someone's life? How does the wise person you thought of measure up to what James says about wisdom in this verse?
3. Focus in on verses 14-16 for the next few questions. What do you think it means to harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart? How could that be damaging for that individual? How could that be damaging for the community they are a part of?
4. Think of a person that you've either experienced or heard of, who thought they were wise but used their “wisdom” for the benefit of themselves. What causes a human to live like that?
5. James uses the word “disorder” to describe what is found as the product of earthly wisdom. Describe how you see disorder in the world around you and how it is tied to bitter envy and selfish ambition.
6. Take the rest of your time together to focus on the words James uses to describe wisdom that comes from heaven as listed in verse 17. With Christ at the center of your bullseye, think about and answer how each of these characteristics could impact (1) your life and (2) the world around you for the Kingdom. If you haven't listened to the sermon yet, the descriptions of the words found there could be helpful.
 - Pure
 - Peace-Loving
 - Considerate
 - Submissive
 - Full of Mercy and Good Works
 - Impartial
 - Sincere