



The Book of James: Chapter 3:13-18

- **PRAYER:** Father, reveal the depth and understanding of Your Word to us tonight!

New Living Translation (NLT)	English Standard Version (ESV)	Passion Translation (PAS)
<p>¹³ If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.</p> <p>¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness (James 3:13-18 NLT-SE)</p>	<p>¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18 ESV)</p>	<p>¹³ If you consider yourself to be wise and one who understands the ways of God, advertise it with a beautiful, fruitful life guided by wisdom’s gentleness. Never brag or boast about what you’ve done and you’ll prove that you’re truly wise. ¹⁴ But if there is bitter jealousy or competition hiding in your heart, then don’t deny it and try to compensate for it by boasting and being phony. ¹⁵ For that has nothing to do with God’s heavenly wisdom but can best be described as the wisdom of this world, both selfish and devilish. ¹⁶ So wherever jealousy and selfishness are uncovered, you will also find many troubles and every kind of meanness.</p> <p>¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is always pure, filled with peace, considerate and teachable. It is filled with love and never displays prejudice or hypocrisy in any form ¹⁸ and it always bears the beautiful harvest of righteousness! Good seeds of wisdom’s fruit will be planted with peaceful acts by those who cherish making peace. (James 3:1-12 PASSION)</p>

- KEY WORDS:

- **Wise**

- S G4680 *sophos* 20x

- **Mounce**...wise generally, 1 Cor. 1:25; shrewd, clever, Rom. 16:19; 1 Cor. 3:10; 6:5; learned, intelligent, Mt. 11:25; Rom. 1:14, 22; 1 Cor. 1:19, 20, 26, 27; 3:18; in NT divinely instructed, Mt. 23:34; furnished with Christian wisdom, spiritually enlightened, Jas. 3:13; all wise, Rom. 16:27; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 25...wisdom.

- **Vines**...is used of (a) God, Rom. 16:27; in 1 Tim. 1:17 and Jude 25 *sophos* is absent, in the best mss. (see the RV), the comparative degree, *sophoteros*, occurs in 1 Cor. 1:25, where “foolishness” is simply in the human estimate; (b) spiritual teachers in Israel, Matt. 23:34; (c) believers endowed with spiritual and practical wisdom, Rom. 16:19; 1 Cor. 3:10; 6:5; Eph. 5:15; Jas. 3:13; (d) Jewish teachers in the time of Christ, Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; (e) the naturally learned, Rom. 1:14, 22; 1 Cor. 1:19, 20, 26, 27; 3:15-20.

- **Meekness**

- S G4240 *prautes* 11x
- **Mounce**...meekness, mildness, forbearance, 1 Pet. 3:15; gentleness, kindness, Jas. 1:21; 3:13; Gal. 5:23... gentleness; humility.
- **Vines**...1. *prautes*, or *praotes*, an earlier form, (4240) denotes “meekness.” In its use in Scripture, in which it has a fuller, deeper significance than in nonscriptural Greek writings, it consists not in a person’s “outward behavior only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it is closely linked with the word *tapeinophrosune* [humility], and follows directly upon it, Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; cf. the adjectives in the Sept. of Zeph. 3:12, “meek and lowly”; ... it is only the humble heart which is also the meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him. This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect” (Trench, Syn. Sec.xlii). In Gal. 5:23 it is associated with *enkrateia*, “self-control.”
- The meaning of *prautes* “is not readily expressed in English, for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and pusillanimity to a greater or less extent, whereas *prautes* does nothing of the kind. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find a rendering less open to objection than ‘meekness’; ‘gentleness’ has been suggested, but as *prautes* describes a condition of mind and heart, and as ‘gentleness’ is appropriate rather to actions, this word is no better than that used in both English Versions. It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.
- “In 2 Cor. 10:1 the apostle appeals to the ‘meekness ... of Christ.’ Christians are charged to show ‘all meekness toward all men,’ Titus 3:2, for meekness becomes ‘God’s elect,’ Col. 3:12. To this virtue the ‘man of God’ is urged; he is to ‘follow after meekness’ for his own sake, 1 Tim. 6:11 (the best texts have No. 2 here however), and in his service, and more especially in his dealings with the ‘ignorant and erring,’ he is to exhibit ‘a spirit of meekness,’ 1 Cor. 4:21, and Gal. 6:1; even ‘they that oppose themselves’ are to be corrected in meekness, 2 Tim. 2:25. James exhorts his ‘beloved brethren’ to ‘receive with meekness the implanted word,’ 1:21. Peter enjoins ‘meekness’ in setting forth the grounds of the Christian hope, 3:15.”*

- **Ambition**

- S G2052 *eritheia* 7x
- **Mounce**...the service of a party, party spirit; feud, faction, 2 Cor. 12:20; contentious disposition, selfish ambition, Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3; Jas. 3:14; by impl. untowardness, disobedience, Rom. 2:8; Jas. 3:16...ambition.
- **Vines**...self-seeking, rivalry,” self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes “party-making.” It is derived, not from *eris*, “strife,” but from *erithos*, “a hireling”; hence the meaning of “seeking to win followers,” “factions,” so rendered in the RV of 2 Cor. 12:20, KJV, “strifes”; not improbably the meaning here is rivalries, or base ambitions (all the other words in the list express abstract ideas rather than factions); Gal. 5:20 (ditto); Phil. 1:17 (RV; KJV, v. 16, “contention”); 2:3 (KJV, “strife”); Jas. 3:14, 16 (ditto); in Rom. 2:8 it is translated as an adjective, “factious” (KJV, “contentious”). The order “strife, jealousy, wrath, faction,” is the same in 2 Cor. 12:20 and Gal. 5:20. “Faction” is the fruit of jealousy.¶ Cf. the synonymous adjective *hairetikos*, Titus 3:10, causing division (marg., “factious”), not necessarily “heretical,” in the sense of holding false doctrine.

• **Jealousy**

- S G2205 *zelos* 16x
- **Mounce**...generous rivalry; noble aspiration; in NT zeal, ardor in behalf of, ardent affection, Jn. 2:17; Rom. 10:2; in a bad sense, jealousy, envy, malice, Acts 13:45; Rom. 13:13; indignation, wrath, Acts 5:17 earnestness; envy; jealousy; zeal.
- **Vines**...“zeal, jealousy,” is rendered “jealousy” in the RV (KJV, “envying”) in Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Jas. 3:14, 16; in 2 Cor. 12:20 (KJV, “envyings”); in Gal. 5:20, RV “jealousies” (KJV, “emulations”); in Acts 5:17 (KJV, “indignation”); in 13:45 (KJV, “envy”); in 2 Cor. 11:2 it is used in the phrase “with a godly jealousy,” lit., “with a jealousy of God” (RV, marg.). See Envy.

• **Peace**

- S G1515 *eirene* 92x
- **Mounce**...peace, Lk. 14:32; Acts 12:20; tranquillity, Lk. 11:21; Jn. 16:33; 1 Thess. 5:3; concord, unity, love of peace, Mt. 10:34; Lk. 12:51; meton. the author of peace, Eph. 2:14; from the Hebrew every kind of blessing and good, Lk. 1:79; 2:14, 29; meton. a salutation expressive of good wishes, a benediction, blessing, Mt. 10:13... peace.
- **Vines**...“occurs in each of the books of the NT, save 1 John and save in Acts 7:26 [(at) one again] it is translated “peace” in the RV. It describes (a) harmonious relationships between men, Matt. 10:34; Rom. 14:19; (b) between nations, Luke 14:32; Acts 12:20; Rev. 6:4; (c) friendliness, Acts 15:33; 1 Cor. 16:11; Heb. 11:31; (d) freedom from molestation, Luke 11:21; 19:42; Acts 9:31 (RV, ‘peace,’ KJV, ‘rest’); 16:36; (e) order, in the State, Acts 24:2 (RV, ‘peace,’ KJV, ‘quietness’); in the churches, 1 Cor. 14:33; (f) the harmonized relationships between God and man, accomplished through the gospel, Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17; (g) the sense of rest and contentment consequent thereon, Matt. 10:13; Mark 5:34; Luke 1:79; 2:29; John 14:27; Rom. 1:7; 3:17; 8:6; in certain passages this idea is not distinguishable from the last, Rom. 5:1.”*
- “The God of peace” is a title used in Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20; cf. 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11. The corresponding Heb. word shalom primarily signifies “wholeness”: see its use in Josh. 8:31, “unhewn”; Ruth 2:12, “full”; Neh. 6:15, “finished”; Isa. 42:19, marg., “made perfect.” Hence there is a close connection between the title in 1 Thess. 5:23 and the word holokleros, “entire,” in that verse. In the Sept. shalom is often rendered by soteria, “salvation, e.g., Gen. 26:31; 41:16; hence the “peace-offering” is called the “salvation offering.” Cf. Luke 7:50; 8:48. In 2 Thess. 3:16, the title “the Lord of peace” is best understood as referring to the Lord Jesus. In Acts 7:26, “would have set them at one” is, lit., “was reconciling them (conative imperfect tense, expressing an earnest effort) into peace.”

- **CULTIVATE WISDOM...**

“Wisdom is the power to see and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it.” ~ J.I. Packer

“If whatever men know comes through their brain without the Holy Spirit regenerating their spirit, then their knowledge will help them not one whit. If their belief rests in man's wisdom and not in God's power, they are merely excited in their soul.” ~ Watchman Nee

“Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.” ~ Charles Spurgeon

"Perfect goodness can never debate about the end to be attained, and perfect wisdom cannot debate about the means most suited to achieve it." ~ C.S. Lewis

"The highest and most profitable learning is the knowledge of ourselves. To have a low opinion of our own merits, and to think highly of others, is an evidence of wisdom." ~ Thomas a Kempis

– **PERSONAL APPLICATION:**

- What is the main difference between the way our contemporary culture defines “wisdom” and how God defines it in his word?
- In many of Paul’s writings he pairs up mercy and grace when he wants to bring encouragement to a group of people. What is the connection James is making, in a negative sense, between selfish ambition and jealousy?
- How might you discern “earthly” wisdom? “Demonic” wisdom?
- What are the “seeds of righteousness” that peacemakers sow?
- What is it that you actually DO, personally, to cultivate wisdom in your life?