



WEEK 5 - SUNDAY 20 JULY

Welcome to the study of the Book of James

It is suggested by scholars that this letter (Epistle) was written by James who is thought to be the brother of Jesus. According to John 7:3-5 James was not a believer. He only became a true follower after the Resurrection. According to the Galatians he headed up the Jerusalem Church. The Book of James outlines the faith walk through *genuine religion* (1:1-27), *genuine faith* (2:1-3:12) and *genuine wisdom* (3:13-5:20). We will even pick up in our readings the discourse on faith in action..... hence our theme LIVING AS A CHRIST FOLLOWER. It is about “Walking the Talk.”

Week 1. Trails and Temptations – 22 June.

Week 2. Listening and doing – 29 June.

Week 3. Faith and works – 6 July.

Week 4. Taming the Tongue – 13 July

Week 5. Two types of Wisdom – 20 July.

Week 6. Worldliness and Riches – 27 July.

TWO TYPES OF WISDOM

Everyone would agree that GODLY WISDOM is best for us. While remembering that fact, we need to remember that WORLDLY WISDOM is based on human knowledge, experience, and reasoning. While we use practical knowledge, experience, and human reasoning to navigate everyday life, GODLY WISDOM should still always be sort.

Worship Song: Trust In God - Elevation Worship: <https://youtu.be/QS04WbSnxok>

Readings: Psalm 119:1-6 / James 3:13-18 / Matthew 7:24-27

Psalm 119:1-6

¹Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.

²Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart –³they do no wrong but follow his ways. ⁴You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. ⁵Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! ⁶Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

James 3:13-18

Two kinds of wisdom

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Matthew 7:24-27

The wise and foolish builders

²⁴ 'Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.'

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS: REV ZAMANI SIKUPELA

The passage, PSALM 119:1-6 highlights the blessings that come from living a life that is aligned with God's law and seeking Him with one's whole heart. This passage emphasizes the importance of walking in God's ways, keeping His commandments, and finding joy in obedience. The simple message here is that the Bible gives us God's wisdom. Wisdom from our Creator on how to live rightly in his creation. Wisdom on how to walk in a way that both pleases God, blesses other people, and brings us a personal contentment that no other way of life can possibly offer. Psalm 119 is urging us to move God's words from the pages of our Bibles and transpose them into our hearts and minds.

James 3:13-18 is a text that refuses to let us escape into comfortable Christianity. James is saying, "You want wisdom? Great, but understand it's not about how many books you've read, or degrees you've amassed, or business ventures you've succeeded in". He says we can be sure we are not wise if our lives are filled with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. "If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth". This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice".

What does envy, jealousy, and selfish ambition come from? These come from having a sense of one's self-importance. These attitudes come from believing that we must look out for our interests. These attitudes come from seeing others receive what we think we ought to have. Worldly wisdom says, "I will take care of myself". Worldly wisdom says, "I deserve this" and "I demand that". "I demand respect". "I deserve attention". This is how the world teaches us to think and act. But James condemns such thinking. He says that wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. When we act and think like this, we are acting like we are people of this world, and not of Jesus. We are no longer thinking godly. We have limited our vision and thoughts to the things on this earth. We are ignoring the riches of heaven and are merely thinking about the temporal things of the earth.

In Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus uses the parable of the wise and foolish builders to illustrate that true wisdom lies in hearing and obeying Jesus' teachings, while foolishness is found in hearing but not acting on them. This passage emphasizes that those who build their lives on the foundation of Christ's words will stand firm against life's challenges, while those who ignore his words will face ruin. In essence, the passage teaches that wisdom is not merely intellectual assent to Jesus' teachings but requires active obedience and practical application of those teachings in daily life.

All these above scriptures point us to God's wisdom, which revolves around the idea that God's wisdom is the ultimate source of all truth and understanding, encompassing divine knowledge, moral guidance, and the ability to produce the best possible outcomes. It contrasts with human wisdom, which is often seen as limited, flawed, and even detrimental when not aligned with God's will. In essence God's wisdom emphasizes the importance of aligning one's life with divine principles, recognizing the limitations of human understanding, and seeking guidance from a higher power to navigate the complexities of life and achieve true fulfilment.

These passages of scripture invite people to a way of life that is in harmony with the created order of God's redemptive work. In the Old Testament wisdom is oriented around the fear of the Lord, and in the New Testament it is amplified and reoriented around Christ. No one is born wise; we must acquire wisdom from God if we are to be truly wise. Godly wisdom is, of course, from God and honours God.

We are to let the word of Christ indwell us so that we can instruct one another “in all wisdom”. We are to walk in wisdom and to think deeply about how we live – as people who are truly wise. We must strive to see life from God’s perspective and act accordingly. To get wisdom we must fear God, study His word and prayerfully desire to understand life from God’s perspective.

Indeed, there are two types of wisdom, and we cannot afford to confuse one with the other. It is imperative that we are clear about this fact. We have two types of wisdom: Heavenly and Earthly. There is the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. Only one could be described as true wisdom.

The earthly wisdom is bound to this earth. It stands in contrast to that which God originates in Heaven. Earthly wisdom has no understanding of spiritual concepts. Nothing is transcending or of any lasting value in earthly wisdom. Just like everything else material, it is subject to corruption and decay. The wisdom of the world is dangerous. It is deceptive. It sounds good, but it results in death.

Wisdom from above, however, is pure. It is unstained by human pride. Heavenly wisdom is gentle and responsive, full of mercy and good fruits. It perseveres through adversity, practising righteousness for the glory of God and the good of neighbours, not the glory of self. Its source and results are opposed to the earthly wisdom. Heavenly wisdom is characterized by humility, purity, peace, gentleness, friendliness. It is free from prejudice and hypocrisy and leads to a harvest of good deeds and peace. Those who cultivate this wisdom will see the fruit of righteousness.

Prayer: Dear God, kindly grant me Your wisdom today, and remind me to stop often and pray. Give me a heart that pursues wisdom, Amen!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What kind of wisdom do you have?

Those who have earthly wisdom boast of theirs. While those who have heavenly wisdom show theirs by their good conduct done in meekness.

2. What kind of wisdom do you want?

If earthly, then no effort is necessary – just do what the world tells you. Just do what feels right. But if heavenly, then we must be diligent – to seek such wisdom from God. To demonstrate such wisdom by our conduct.

3. Have you come across people who have an incredible knowledge of things, but are not wise is how they are living their lives?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

Monday: **MEMORY VERSE:** Psalm 53:1 *“The fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, and their ways are vile, there is no one who does good”*.

PRAYER: Lord, I confess that there are times when I doubt your presence. Forgive me for my unbelief and help me to walk in faith, Amen!

Tuesday: **MEMORY VERSE:** Isaiah 5: 20-21,23. *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent”*

PRAYER: Heavenly God, help me to always seek your truth. Give me a hunger, a craving, to dig in and learn your ways, Amen!

Wednesday: **MEMORY VERSE:** Proverbs 18:15 *“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out”*

PRAYER: Dear God, grant me a discerning heart that seeks knowledge and understanding. May my ears be open and attentive to the wisdom of others, and may I always be eager to learn and grow in wisdom, Amen!

Thursday: **MEMORY VERSE:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 *“For the message of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. 21, For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.....25, For*

the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men”.

PRAYER: O Lord, God, may I never try to impress anyone with my wisdom, instead, let me impress them with my faith in your wisdom, Amen!

Friday: **MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 6:21 *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

PRAYER: Lord, I pray that my heart will always be aligned with your will and that my treasure will be found in the things that matter to you, Amen!

FOR THE KIDS:

Written by Magogodi Nkuna

Week 5 - The First Voice

Scripture: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* — James 1:5 (NKJV)

Explanation

We all have that one person we turn to when life gets confusing—someone whose advice we trust, whose experience we value. And while those people are a gift, their wisdom is still human. It’s shaped by their past, their perspective, and their limitations.

But James 1:5 reminds us that there is a source of wisdom that’s not bound by time, experience, or human understanding. God’s wisdom is perfect, complete, and always available. He doesn’t withhold it. He doesn’t shame us for asking. He gives it freely—because He wants us to walk in clarity, not confusion.

So, while it’s good to have trusted voices in our lives, God should be the first voice we seek. Before we call a friend, before we Google it, before we spiral in our own thoughts—ask Him.

Reflection Questions

- Who do I usually turn to first when I need advice?
- Have I made space to hear from God before seeking others?
- What would it look like to make God my first voice?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the people You’ve placed in my life to guide and support me. But remind me that true wisdom begins with You. Help me to seek You first, to trust Your voice above all others, and to walk in the wisdom You so freely give. Amen.