Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Spiritual Wisdom
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 80-79

I want you, if you will, to open your Bible this morning to the third chapter of James. James, chapter 3. And I want to read to you the final verses in this chapter and then look at the subject of spiritual wisdom. In James 3:13, the word of God says, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy. And the seed, whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Now here is some marvelous teaching on the subject of spiritual wisdom. Before we look at it, just some general considerations. Wisdom is a magnificent word. It speaks of all that is best and all that is desirable. In fact, we would certainly agree that it is the highest attainment a person can achieve. Cicero, the philosopher said in about 52 B.C. that wisdom is the best gift of the gods and is the mother of all good things.

Scripture certainly would affirm that exhorting with these words in Proverbs 4:7, "Acquire wisdom and with all your acquiring, get understanding." The best illustration I know of that is Solomon. If you'll turn in your Bible to 1 Kings chapter 3 we can note this. In 1 Kings Chapter 3 a most remarkable thing happened in the life of this man.

The Lord came to him in a dream at night, verse 5, and said to Solomon, "Ask what you wish me to give you. Ask what you wish me to give you." Remarkable opportunity. Then Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great loving kindness to thy servant David, my father, according as he walked before thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart for thee. And thou hast reserved for him this great loving kindness that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, oh Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. Thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. So give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of thine? And it was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing."

God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you." The wisest man ever because he asked for the right thing.

Go to chapter 4 verse 29. Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind like the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the suns of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt for he was wiser than all men. And then it lists a few there who were known as very wise.

His fame was known in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs were one thousand and five. He spoke of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the Hyssop. That's a bush that grows on the wall. He spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom. The wisest man that ever lived and he knew all about trees and he knew all about shrubs and he knew all about animals and he knew all about birds and he knew all about snakes and creeping things, insects and fish. He knew all about life and he could make proverbs and he knew all about music and he could make songs. And his breadth of wisdom was like the sand of the sea.

In chapter 5 it says in verse 12, "And the Lord gave wisdom to Solomon just as he promised him and there was peace between Hyrum and Solomon. And the two of them made a covenant." In chapter 10 verse 23, one other Scripture to note his wisdom, that indicating he had wisdom in political relationships, wisdom in the area of national security and peace. In 10:23, "So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart."

When Solomon was given the unbelievably wonderful privilege of receiving from God anything he asked, he asked for the best thing. He asked for wisdom. And what he got was an immense capability to understand this world, how animals act, how plants act, how nations act, how men and women act, and he had a vast capability to discern on the human level. If you read, however, the book of Ecclesiastes, you will remember that he said all of that wisdom, without the knowledge of God is vanity, vanity and vanity - emptiness. But he pursued the right thing - wisdom.

When God pensively cried out over the apostasy of Israel in Deuteronomy 32:29, God said, "Oh, that they were wise." Job sought diligently for wisdom as the highest, most noble and valuable reality.

And the psalmist called for the kings of the earth to be wise and God gave Ezra wisdom to lead Israel. And God granted Daniel and his friends wisdom and skill in learning and understanding. And so much of it that the king said they possessed excellent wisdom.

And in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul prayed for every Christian that God may give you a spirit of wisdom so that you may have the eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know wisdom. God calls all people to true wisdom. But who has it? That is James' question in verse 13. "Who among you is wise and understanding?"

That question is asked in Job 28:12. Who is really wise? Who really has divine wisdom? Who has the wisdom of God? Who has the knowledge and the understanding and the skill in issues of eternity? And by the way, not all those who claim to have wisdom have it. Not all who claim to have it have it. And that's James' point. In verse 13 he says, "Who among you is wise in understanding?" Not those who claim it, necessarily implied, but let him show by his good behavior, his deeds in the gentleness or meekness of wisdom. You can't just claim it. You can't just speak it. You have to show it. Divine wisdom, spiritual wisdom shows up in a changed life.

Please notice again verse 13, "Let him show it by his good behavior, by his deeds." Now you'll notice the word behavior there is general. It means action, movement, activity - could be translated lifestyle. It's a very general sort of comprehensive word. "Deeds" is very specific. It speaks of an individual act. So this man who has spiritual wisdom, divine wisdom will show it by the general lifestyle which is the composite of specifically wise acts. Each individual act consistent with the whole of a wise lifestyle gives evidence of true wisdom.

And you will notice and you must make a mental note of this, that wisdom, in God's view, is not what you know, it is how you live. And you are not wise unless what you know has shaped your life. In fact you'd be the biggest fool of all to know it and not let it control your life.

Furthermore, in verse 13, there is an attitude behind this lifestyle and this matter of specific acts. There is this general attitude in the gentleness of wisdom. The word gentleness there is most often translated meekness. It basically has the idea of humility. And so what he is saying is the truly wise person shows it in his lifestyle generally, in the specific acts of his life which are holy, Godly and obedient, morally virtuous and also in the attitude of his life which is gentle and meek. He has a humble heart.

James, by the way, knew well, and so do you probably, the arrogant and superior attitude of people who are wise in their own conceits. People who think they're wise are proud and arrogant, conceited. People who are truly wise are humble, gentle, meek. Those who are truly wise show it in these ways, gentleness, meekness, humility, specific acts of obedient virtue that make up a composite lifestyle that honors God.

Now, I want us to look into this with James and then at the end I want us to kind of pull it together and apply it to our lives in a broader way. Before any of us can claim to be spiritually wise, we perhaps ought to accept the warning of Isaiah 5:21 which says, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes." And let's go back then and look very carefully at what true wisdom is. To help us, James makes a contrast.

In verses 14 to 16, he shows us false wisdom or worldly wisdom. In verses 17 and 18 spiritual or divine wisdom. These two wisdoms are in conflict. If we had time we could study 1 Corinthians 1:17 clear through 2:14 and there you have the wisdom of God contrasted with the wisdom of men and God says that the wisdom of God is to men foolishness, but the truth is the wisdom of men is to God foolishness. There is a very vivid contrast in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 between these two wisdoms.

Well James, in a more condensed passage is dealing with the same contrast. So, as we look at our own lives to determine whether we possess the greatest possession you can possess, spiritual wisdom, let's follow the contrast and see where we find ourselves. First of all, false wisdom is laid out in verses 14, 15 and 16. James begins by analyzing worldly wisdom, false wisdom.

Before we look at that, let me take you back to Ecclesiastes because I want you to have a perspective. Most likely Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes and remember now, he was brilliant. He was very, very wise in worldly ways, in dealing with people and understanding creation, nature, all of that.

But I want you to notice what he says, chapter one verse 16 of Ecclesiastes. And we are as you know in the wisdom literature, the wisdom, the wisdom literature is Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. But in 1:16 he says, "I said to myself, behold I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me. And my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

He had a great mind. He probably had one of those memories and minds that never forgets and that can absorb an immense, almost incomprehensible amount of data collate it all, bring it all down and make application to it at the strategic time and place - tremendous capability. So, he says, I had all that. And I set my mind to know wisdom and by contrast to know madness and folly. I realized that this also is striving after wind because in much wisdom, there is much grief and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain. It wasn't productive totally. It was a striving after wind. There was something empty about it.

You go into chapter 2 and all they way through chapter 2, he talks about the fact that I had this and I had that and I tried this and tried that and when it was all said and done, wisdom was a little better than folly, but wisdom really wasn't that great. In verse 17 he says, "I hated life. I hated life." Verse 18 he says, "I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun. Pretty bad.

Despairing. Nothing better, verse 24, for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself his labor is good. Just carry on with the routine.

He sums it up in chapter 4, verses 2 and 3 in a most astounding way. "So," he says, 4:2, "I congratulated the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are still living. Better to be dead." All that wisdom and you still would rather be dead? Well, better off that both the living and the dead is the one who has never existed. Boy that's a pretty despairing approach to life. Pretty bleak. But all of the worldly wisdom composite that he had could not satisfy the need for spiritual wisdom. So, worldly wisdom, false wisdom is unfulfilling. But it's more than that.

Let's go back to James. It's more than just unfulfilling. It's more than just natural and not spiritual and therefore doesn't deal in the dimension where man's heart has the greatest hunger that is to know God. Human wisdom, more than just being unfulfilling is wicked negatively. And we're going to see that.

First of all, look at verse 14. "If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. Now here you have the motivation for false wisdom. The motivation for false wisdom. Why do people want wisdom? Jealousy, selfish ambition, arrogance. It's a selfish motivation.

The little phrase in your heart tells us he's talking about motivation here. He's saying, "You have bitter jealousy, selfish envy in your heart." That's deceit of emotion. Bitter jealousy - the word there means - choose the bitter water means harsh, bitter.

And this is exactly what you have here, the idea of a harsh, bitter, sort of self-centered individual who is resentful toward others and pursues wisdom to elevate himself above others. It's self-focused, it's resentful of anyone who threatens its territory, its accomplishments or its reputation. And then he even says, selfish ambition, selfish ambition, personal ambition. This is a personal ambition. This is a party spirit, it's a Greek word for rivalry or for prideful selfishness.

The term originally meant to spin. It was used of women who were sewing. It came to mean work done for pay. And then it came to be any kind of work simply for what you could get out of it. And then it finally became a word for selfish - self-aggrandizement. So there are people who want to pursue wisdom for their own selfish reasons to - out of bitter jealousy ascend above someone else or who are just plain arrogant. It is not of God. It is selfish. It is self-centered. It is ego fulfilling. It is for personal gratification at any cost. It lacks selflessness. It lacks that meekness, that gentleness, that verse 13 talks about.

So proud, selfish motives for all of life become the motivators, the pushers that cause many people to pursue natural earthly wisdom.

And he says, in verse 14, and we're just touching over this somewhat lightly because I want to get to another point. But what he says here is "Do not be arrogant." The idea here is because you have attained natural wisdom, because you have attained a certain amount of worldly wisdom, don't become arrogant. You have nothing to be arrogant about, gloating over others as if you are triumphantly superior.

And then he adds, "And so lie against the truth." The fact of the matter is, while you claim arrogantly to possess wisdom, your lying because you don't have the true wisdom. I think about this so often when I look at our world, our world that is literally maniacal in the belief that education is the issue in everything, that if people can just become sufficiently educated they can really have true wisdom.

You hear people say that all the time. Well, the problem in our world is people aren't educated. If they just had more worldly wisdom. Alfred Whitney Griswold died in 1963, former president of Yale University. I quote him, "The source of better ideas is wisdom and the surest path to wisdom is a liberal education." That is the illusion of our society, that people can pursue this secular world's information and therefore attain true wisdom.

Told the young people at the Master's College on Monday, "You are sitting in a place where the goal of everything we do is to teach you spiritual wisdom. There is not a secular college or university in the world that dispenses spiritual wisdom - not one. They give you information. They do not have as a goal to disseminate to you spiritual wisdom that can shape your life. The wisdom that is not of God is borne out of rivalries and party spirits and arrogance and boastfulness and pride and self-aggrandizement and wanting to succeed and wanting to excel and jealousy and rivalry - all of that is what catapults people into the pursuit of those things, to ascend, to fulfill their own ambition.

And when they get there, they think they're wise and they arrogantly parade their wisdom, but the fact is, they are lying against the truth because they are not wise, not in the truest sense. They claim arrogantly to possess wisdom, but they don't, not God's wisdom, not the true wisdom.

The second thing James points out is in verse 15, moving from the motive, he moves to the characteristics of this false wisdom. He says this wisdom is not that which comes down from above. This wisdom that the world has - it isn't from above. It is three things - earthly, sensual is a better translation, earthly, sensual, demonic. Boy, what a statement. Here is the specific definition of the wisdom of man. This wisdom without humility, without righteousness, without the knowledge of God, this wisdom descends not from above. What does that mean? Doesn't come from God. Doesn't qualify to be called divine wisdom. Doesn't qualify to be called spiritual wisdom. It does have some functions in this life. Sure. On a natural level and he says that. It is earthly. It does have some function. It's earthly. It makes a contribution to earthly life. But would you please notice those three things? It is earthly, it is sensual and it is demonic.

When he says it is earthly, he means that its extent is limited, listen, to time and space. It's extent is limited to time and space. It comes from and it limited to the falleness of the cursed earth. It is limited to the finite system of unregenerate men who do not know God. It is wisdom without spiritual illumination. It never rises above the ground. It goes no higher than the mind of man. It has those limitations.

So as man expands and expands his earthly wisdom, he never gets above ground-level. And so he never learns the life-transforming, eternal, divine, spiritual truths of the wisdom of God.

Secondly he says it is psuchikay, soulish, sensual, pertaining to the soul's life. Whenever that word is used in Scripture, it speaks of the responses to the natural world. The *psuchikos*man is the natural man, the sensual man, the man with a fallen mind.

So human wisdom, sociology, philosophy, psychology, all of that, all of human wisdom is purely - listen carefully - humanistic. It never rises above the ground again. It applies to the natural world because that's all it can perceive. And it can only touch, stimulate on the natural level. From man's fallen unsanctified heart and unredeemed spirit, it can only illicit a sensual, not a spiritual response.

Thirdly, this is quite fascinating, it is demonic. It is demonic. By the way, these three things parallel the world, the flesh and the devil. It is demoniacal. That, by the way, is an adjective used only here in the New Testament. What is he saying? Well, as to its source it comes from demons and demons are involved in it. It proceeds from evil spirits. You say, "Well why do you say that?" Because Satan is the prince of the power of the air and ruler of this what? World. The systems philosophically, psychologically, sociologically even religiously that are a part of this world are Satanically instigated, inspired systems. Demonic, natural, earth bound wisdom never touches God. So it never touches reality. So it never touches spiritual truth. It never touches eternity. It never touches deity. It never touches the divine. It never changes lives. So we see a smart man who is uncontrollably wicked.

The results of false wisdom are in verse 16. In verse 16 he says, the results are just exactly what the motivations were, for where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. Goes back to the motivation. So let's go back and see where it all starts. The two motives - jealousy and selfish ambition - what are they going to produce? First of all, they're going to produce disorder. That's a very strong word. In fact, in the Greek, the word means literally, disorder coming from instability, disorder coming from instability.

James loves this word, he uses it two other times, once in 1:8, once in 3:8, speaking of the impact of double-mindedness, and the impact of an uncontrolled tongue - confusion, disorder, chaos, confusion, over and over again. Instead of producing harmony in the world, instead of producing intimacy and love and unity and fellowship, the worldly wisdom brings chaos, disorder, confusion

because it never can touch what is divine, what is supernatural, what is Godly, what is spiritual. And, he says, as a result, what comes out of it every evil thing. Now that's an interesting translation 'cause the word is actually not a word for wicked or evil, but it's the word phalloi, phallus, which means useless.

And it's kind of the same word that in the Greek expresses what Solomon meant when he said vanity. It's worthless. It's useless. At best it's worthless, at worst it's vile. It's not looking at the product as - from the aspect of its active or passive malignity - not the idea of looking at how wicked it is, but looking at it from its good for nothingness viewpoint. The impossibility of any true gain every coming from it. The point is, human wisdom produces absolutely nothing.

Now you ask yourself the question - look at the world around you. We are wiser, supposedly than we have ever been. We've got higher grade of technology than we've ever had. We've moved so far along the educational ladder that it's almost inconceivable. But we are as animalistic as we have ever been. We are as dangerous to one another as we have ever been. We are as vile and wretched and wicked as we had ever been because human wisdom never touches any of that stuff - none of it.

That's why you can proliferate universities across the world and you will never change man. Never. It doesn't change on the basis of that. That is purely earthly, purely appealing to the sensual level and it is orchestrated in the demonic orchestration of the world system over which Satan rules which produces chaos and every evil thing. That's human wisdom. That's human wisdom.

And what is so silly about it is that people boast that they have it. And they don't really have it, they're just lying against the truth. Enough of that, let's look at the true wisdom. The true wisdom - verse 17, "But the wisdom from above is first pure then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy, and the seed is fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. The wisdom that is from above, true wisdom, divine wisdom, spiritual wisdom, wisdom from God is first pure. That sets it apart as to motive. That's its motive.

That word, agne, means sincere spiritual integrity. It has the meaning of clear or clean from all vices. It isn't motivated by bitter jealousy. It isn't motivated by selfish ambition. It isn't motivated by arrogant self promotion. It isn't motivated by prestige. It isn't motivated by the desire for power or the desire for money or whatever. It is motivated by purity. It is motivated by purity.

Spiritual wisdom is sought out of a pure heart. Pure heartedness is the primary motive for true wisdom. Secondly, what are its characteristics? It is peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. I don't want to beg those words. They're very clear. Peaceable means just what is says, peace promoting, peace loving. Gentle, by the way, is almost an untranslatable word - epiacase. It's almost untranslatable. But perhaps as good as any translation is the idea it's a word that mean it steps in to correct things when they need to be corrected.

True wisdom is a corrective. It speaks not only of its desire to step in and correct, but it steps in and corrects with gentleness. It knows how to forgive. In fact some have translated it sweet reasonableness. It is the ability to step into a situation to correct it with a kindly consideration and a tenderness.

Thirdly, he says, this true wisdom is not only peaceable and gentle, but it is reasonable. That means literally willing to yield - easily persuaded, not stubborn, compliant, teachable, submissive. Then he says it is full of mercy, concern for those who suffer, concern for those who fall. It manifests itself in alms, this word in acts of pity and compassion for those who suffer. It is like the mercy of God.

Then he says it is full of good fruits. It is beneficial in effect. Good fruits means good deeds, spiritual deeds, works that honor God, obvious. Then it's unwavering viakernameans to divide. This means it's undivided in its commitment. I love that. It doesn't vacillate. It's not partial.

And then lastly, it's without hypocrisy - sincere, genuine, not phony, no pretense, no mask, no hypocrisy, real stuff. So, when a person claims to have true wisdom, has pure motives, behavior that reveals a love for making peace, a humble, patient, non-retaliatory spirit, a sweet reasonableness, a willingness to yield in obedience, to submit, a habit of merciful compassionate acts toward others, a variety of righteous deeds that minister spiritual good to those around, an undivided commitment to God's truth without partiality. And all of this is sincere and genuine. Now we have a person who has what? True wisdom.

And what are the results? Verse 18, "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." The peacemakers who've just been describes as such in verse 17, sow the seed of true wisdom and its fruit is what? Righteousness. Its fruit is righteousness. There it is my friends.

True spiritual wisdom is not what you know. It's the way you live. And you are only wise when you live a righteous life, when you live a righteous life.

As I wrap this up, I want you to listen very carefully. How do I gain this true wisdom? How do I gain it? I'm gonna give you several points. Point number one - recognize it comes from God. Recognize it comes from God. God, the only wise God possesses all wisdom. In Romans 11:33 Paul said, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." It comes from God. Wisdom was God's creation.

Look at Proverbs 8 just briefly. Here is wisdom speaking. Wisdom here is personified and wisdom is speaking in the first person. And wisdom says in Proverbs 8:22, "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his way, before his works of old. From everlasting I was established, from the

beginning." I love that.

As long as there has been God, there has been wisdom. The Lord possessed me. I belong to him. From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth when there was no depths I was brought forth. When there were no springs abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth. While he had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first dust of the world, when he established the heavens, I was there. When he inscribed the circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when he set for the sea its boundary so that the water should not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, when I - then I was beside him as a master workman and I was daily his delight. God, in eternity past, all the way through to creation was delighting in wisdom which was his constant companion. What a beautiful expression.

In James 1:5, James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Therefore, listen carefully, to know true wisdom, one must pursue God. God is the source. Wisdom comes from God. In order to have true wisdom you must pursue God. In order to live the life that James describes as truly wise.

Look at, briefly, Job 28. In Job 28 I want you to just notice a couple of verses in a chapter you ought to really read repeatedly. In this whole chapter, Job is saying, men dig into the ground to get precious metals and iron and copper and jewels and they'll dig and they'll go way down into the earth and they'll go through all of this tremendous work. And they'll do everything. They'll dam up the waters and they'll go places where the bird's eye has never been and no foot has ever stepped. And they'll do that to receive earthly riches. But in verse 12 he says, "But where can wisdom be found? They look all over and they find this stuff, but where can they find wisdom?" And he goes on to say they can't. And then in verse 23 he says, but God understands its way and he knows its place. He knows where it is. God - ever and always the source of wisdom.

Second point - point number one, God is the source of wisdom, point number two then to know wisdom begins with a right relationship with God. Wisdom begins with a right relationship with God. I must know God if he is the source of wisdom. The only way I can know God is through the Lord Jesus Christ and through him I come to the knowledge of God and through the knowledge of God I come to wisdom.

And so says the psalmist in Psalm 16:7. "I will bless the Lord who has counseled me. Indeed my mind instructs me in the night. I have set the Lord continually before me. The Lord is there and he's teaching me. He's teaching me." In Psalm 32, and there's so many verses like this, but in 32:8, "I will instruct you says the Lord. I will teach you in the way which you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you." You see, when you enter into a relationship with a living God through Jesus Christ, then God begins to teach you his true wisdom.

In Psalm 36:9, the Psalmist says to God, "For with thee is the fountain of life in thy light we see light." Not only is there life in you, but there's illumination in you. That's wisdom. We see. We understand. It becomes clear to us. Source of wisdom is God. Then if we want to know true wisdom, we pursue God and that begins with a right relationship to God through Christ. Secondly, true wisdom begins with a right relationship to God.

It progresses through fearing God. Several times in Proverbs and Psalms it says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Andre Geed, a French novelist who died in 1951 wrote this. "Wisdom begins when the fear of God ends." That's wrong. That's blasphemous.

Wisdom begins when the fear of God begins. What do we mean by that? Oh, by the way, another erstwhile contemporary philosopher by the name of Phil Donahue says, "Fundamentalists are stupid and arrogant, believing what they believe is right and they alone know the true wisdom." Wisdom is the life of God in the soul of man resulting from a relationship by grace through faith that produces a fear of God. What is a fear of God? A compelling hard attitude of adoring worship. It doesn't mean I sit in a corner shaking. I means that I adore God, I reverence God, I worship God, I exalt God. If you want true wisdom, God has it. You pursue it first through a relationship with him and second through a developing worship of him.

Thirdly, following the fact that God is the source, wisdom begins with a relationship with God, it progresses through fearing God, it is perfected by obedience. It is perfected by obedience. In Psalm 1:11, a most important verse is given us. Psalm 1:11 and I'm just going to read you one verse, verse 10. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Then listen to the next line. "A good understanding have all those who do his commandments." What a great statement.

It begins with a relationship. It progresses through fearing God. It is perfected in obedience. Perfected in obedience. We are not many noble and not many mighty. And we are no the intellectual elite of the world. Certainly I'm not. But I know wisdom. I know the true wisdom.

And you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and as recipients of the gift of salvation and the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, we have wisdom. We have wisdom that is from above, wisdom that is motivated out of pure heartedness wisdom that is peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits unwavering and without hypocrisy.

We have wisdom that produces in our lives righteousness because we know God, we fear God, we obey God. Wisdom is to be found with God and nowhere else. And unless the quest for wisdom brings a man into a relationship with God, and then brings that man to his knees in awe and reverence of God, knowing and confessing his own helplessness to make himself wise,

acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior so that in that established relationship, and that ongoing relationship, there is complete commitment to obedience than that man without those things is a fool no matter how much he knows.

The Bible places no value on knowledge that is cerebral. No value on knowledge that is cretal. Nothing is really known until it shapes your life. For this reason, the way of wisdom is ultimately the way of righteousness, the way of obedience. It's why Colossians 4:5 says, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom." With wisdom.

I feel so often we are intimidated with the imagination that the elite of the world have some kind of wisdom that we don't have. The truth of the matter is their wisdom at best is earthly, sensual, demonic. It cannot elevate them above the dirt they stand on. But you and I have wisdom that is from above. If we know God, fear God and obey God.

Father we thank you this morning for the great confidence that you have given us this wisdom, not because of our intellectual capability, but because by grace you have drawn us to the Savior. We thank you for the true wisdom.

And Lord, we would pray this morning for anyone in this congregation who may have some earthly wisdom, but not the true wisdom, who may have the thought that they have arrived at a certain level of understanding and comprehension, but they lie against the truth for they truly know nothing. For the best that they can know is earthly, sensual, demonic. It is nothing but a part of the world order ruled by Satan and cannot elevate them beyond it.

Oh Lord may they know your wisdom, the true wisdom, the spiritual wisdom that you give to those who come into a right relationship to you through Jesus Christ who reverentially fear you. Who worship you as an awesome God and who are committed to obey.

Father we pray that no one would turn their back on the true wisdom for the false. For, those of us who have that true would pursue it in every dimension of our life so that in shaping us, it makes manifest the very life of Christ that others may see and believe. We pray in his dear name, Amen.

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