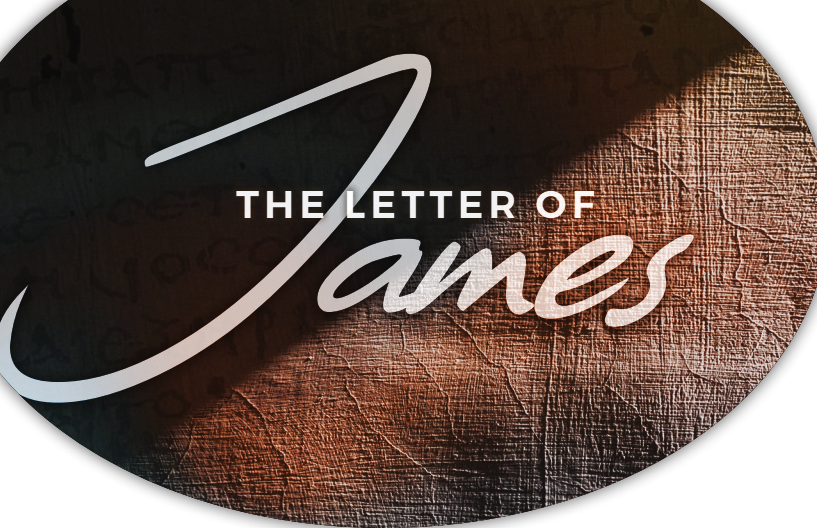




THE LETTER OF *James*

OCTOBER 4, 2026

Live Wisely

JAMES 3:13-18

The popular saying, “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt,” was first written by Maurice Switzer in his 1907 book *Mrs. Goose, Her Book*. The statement reminds us that what we say can reveal what is really going on inside of us.

James has already spent considerable time addressing the power of our words. In James 3, however, he moves from words to wisdom. The question is no longer simply, “What are you saying?” but, “What kind of wisdom is shaping the way you live?” It has been said that James is the epistle of applied Christianity. His primary concern is that genuine faith is not merely something we profess—it is something we practice. Real faith manifests itself in our works.

James repeatedly brings Christianity down to everyday life. Does your faith help you face trials with rejoicing? Does it help you resist temptation? Does it move you from being merely a hearer of the Word to being a doer of the Word? Does it affect the way you speak to others? And now James asks: Does your faith demonstrate true wisdom? James 3:13 begins with a question: “Who among you is wise and understanding?”

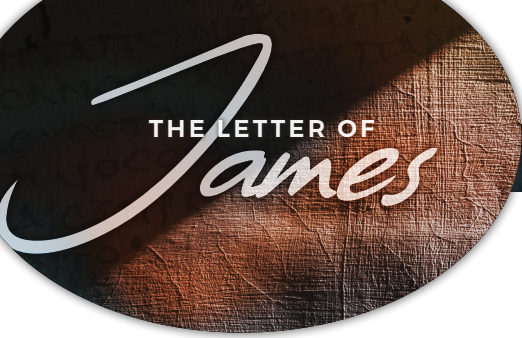
James is writing to Jewish believers who are living in a Greco-Roman world where wisdom was highly valued. But the culture around them defined wisdom primarily in human terms. Human wisdom could be measured by education, intelligence, influence, eloquence, status, or philosophical knowledge.

But James gives us a different standard. For the Christian, there are two kinds of wisdom: wisdom that is from below and wisdom that is from above. One is earthly; the other is heavenly. He makes an important point: wisdom is not merely what you know—it is demonstrated by how you live. You can claim to be wise, but your attitudes and actions reveal the kind of wisdom that is controlling your life.

The question before us is not simply, “Are you knowledgeable?” The question is, “Are you living wisely?” Where do you find true wisdom? What does wisdom from above look like? And what difference does heavenly wisdom make in the life of a Christian?

James teaches us that godly wisdom will always become visible in godly living.

James 3:13–18 calls us to examine our lives and ask: What kind of wisdom is shaping the way I live?



1. True wisdom is visible! (3:13)

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts.

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. Wisdom is knowing how to apply knowledge.

Knowledge is knowing the truth.

Wisdom is knowing how to live the truth.

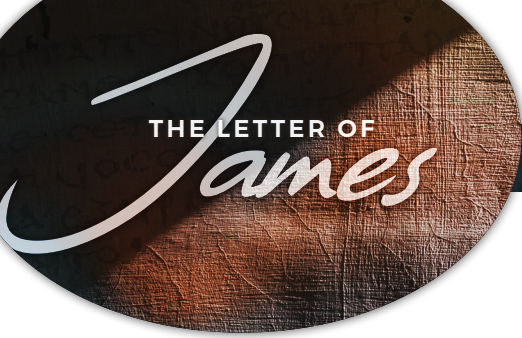
(Proverbs 4:5–7; Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 111:10)

- Actions demonstrate wisdom
- Attitudes demonstrate wisdom

2. True wisdom is discernable (3:14-18)

- **Wisdom from below (earthly) (3:14-16)**

- The description
 - ▶ Earthly
 - ▶ Natural
 - ▶ Demonic
- The outcome
 - ▶ Unrest
 - ▶ Ungodliness



- **Wisdom from above (heavenly) (3:17-18)**

- The description
 - ▶ Pure
 - ▶ Peaceable
 - ▶ Gentle
 - ▶ Reasonable
 - ▶ Full of mercy
 - ▶ Good fruits
 - ▶ Unwavering
 - ▶ Without hypocrisy
- The outcome
 - ▶ Peace

Take away: 4 truths to remember

- Godly wisdom is practical
- Godly wisdom is humble
- Godly wisdom is spiritual
- Godly wisdom is fruitful