

Peaceable Wisdom...
August 8, 2017

James, in the final paragraph of his third chapter, describes two different kinds of wisdom, within the context of the church and believer's relationships with one another. There is wisdom that is man-centered, demon inspired, divisive and destructive. The other wisdom is God-centered, divinely inspired, unifying and constructive.

James says, ***“But 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. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”*** (James 3:14-18, ESV)

Far too often have I seen the presence of those who want to divide the church of God into camps of support and opposition. This spirit of division is not "wisdom" – it is just the opposite, and it is time for churches to start recognizing the spirits that are present in their midst.

Ralph Martin, in his commentary on James, says this: “It is an appeal to all who in the name of professed religion – whether Jewish, Christian, or Islamic – measure the strength of their zeal for God by the intensity of their hatred of their fellow human beings on the West Bank or in Northern Ireland or in Beirut or in Tehran.”¹

It is the time that we stop measuring how strongly we love God by how right we are or how much we oppose those who differ from us.

In applying the wisdom that comes from God, believers, teachers, leaders should strive for unity within the body of Christ and stop seeking to divide people up.

I was in conversation one time with a member of the church. We were discussing an issue that the church was facing, and he told me that it was good that our business meeting was postponed so that he would have time to lobby people to his position before the vote. Godly wisdom does not seek to divide the body up through lobbying.

I believe it is the time that we start calling people out when they exhibit the kind of wisdom that is earthly, unspiritual and demonic. Those that are seeking to divide should not have a platform in our churches to espouse their views. We should rather seek individuals who are simply promoting the truth of God's word and reject those voices that divide.

It is time we seek wise leaders who strive for peace. May we be those kinds of leaders today.

¹ Ralph P. Martin, *James*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 124