

Seeking Wisdom

*Who is wise and understanding among you?
Show by your good life that your works are done
with gentleness born of wisdom. —James 3:13*

READ: James 3:13-18

REFLECT: Cicero, a Roman philosopher of the first century BC, said: “Wisdom is the best gift of the gods, it is the mother of all good things.” Wisdom was also King Solomon’s first choice when God offered him a gift (even though he later made serious mistakes in his use of wisdom).

James’s descriptions sound clear. Wisdom from God is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. Earthly wisdom, however, is unspiritual, boastful, false. It reeks of bitter envy, selfish ambition, disorder, wickedness.

So how do we find heavenly wisdom? Our text suggests the best chance of discovering godly wisdom is through three things: First, conduct; a lifestyle that reflects our spiritual and material worlds points toward wisdom. Second, godly works that sow peace. Third, meekness, or a gentle life focused on God in all people. This trait is perhaps the most important sign of wisdom. It has to do with attitude and inner being. Wisdom from above reflects itself in character that radiates from the center of who we are.

It is possible and even likely that, like Solomon, those who have received wisdom from God will not always practice the wisdom from above. We falter and fail and need to find forgiveness to start again. Yet with God’s help, James reminds us, our attitudes and actions can reflect God’s wisdom.

—Bernie Wiebe

RESPOND: *God, forgive our foolishness; help us to discover more of the true essence of godly wisdom from above.*