A Little Knowledge Can Be Dangerous July 23, 2023

*James 3:13-18 Series: Show Me It’s Real*

Someone who lives in a humble and wise way will give more evidence of his standing before God than any number of words could ever do. – Bede

Intro: Super-chickens seem like the answer.

1. How’s your search for wisdom going?
2. We’re all looking for answers

v. 13 *Who is wise and understanding among you?*

1. Wisdom is weighed by a person’s character not their report card

v. 13 *By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.*

* The super-chickens experiment ended poorly. Do you see similar examples of that in our world today?
* What are some of the voices in your life that are influencing you rightly or wrongly?
* Are there people whose character you have ignored because you valued what they were saying?
* Meekness and humility were character traits that were looked down upon in ancient Greek culture. How do we tend to undervalue these qualities today?

1. Beware the loud, self-promoting voices in your world
2. If it’s all about you, it’s not about the truth

v. 14 *if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth*

1 Corinthians 3:3 *For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?*

Philippians 1:17 *The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.*

1. “Wisdom” without character comes from the serpent

v. 15 *This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.*

Genesis 3:6 *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

Philippians 3:19 *Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*

1. Selfish voices are asking for trouble

v. 16 *For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*

* What are some ways that Christians could act with jealousy and strife in the church?
* How are you tempted to set your mind “on earthly things”?
* Why does selfishness lead to “disorder and every vile practice”? Have you experienced anything like this?

1. True wisdom promotes purity, humility, and peace
2. True wisdom never comes with an attitude

v. 13 *let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom*

v. 17 *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.*

Titus 3:1-2 *Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.*

1. If you want righteousness, look for a peacemaker

v. 18 *And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

1. Look up to find wisdom

v. 15 *the wisdom that comes down from above*

v. 17 *the wisdom from above*

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 8:33 *Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.*

Proverbs 12:1 *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.*

* The pastors, politicians, and influencers that seem to be most celebrated by the Christian world today seldom reflect the qualities of James 3:13 or 17. Why do you think that is?
* What’s the difference between “keeping the peace” and “making peace”?
* Where do you need to grow in your pursuit of wisdom?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study James 4:1-12

Notes