

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

June 23, 2019

## Digging Deep

by Frank Himmel

At the end of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stressed the importance of acting on His teaching, not merely listening to it. He used two builders to make the point.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall (Matthew 7:24-27).

In Luke's account, Jesus said the wise builder "is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock" (Luke 6:48). Consider the importance of digging deep.

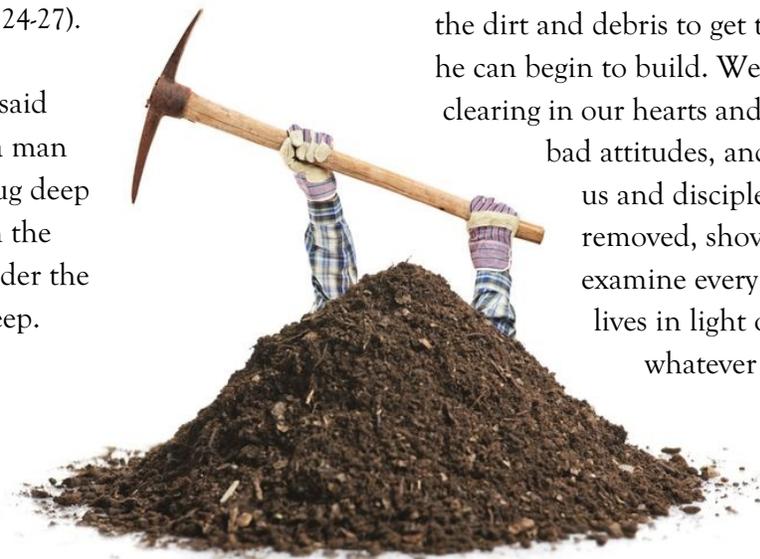
Digging deep rules out following Jesus in a superficial way. Some are content

to believe in Jesus in a broad sense while making no real commitment to living as He directs. Discipleship is not a surface-level acceptance of the Lord; it is yielding all in order to follow Him wherever He directs (Luke 14:25-33). It is a "deep" commitment.

Digging deep suggests the depth of our faith. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus likened some hearers' hearts to shallow soil. The word readily produces a plant, but because there is no depth of soil (Mark 4:5) it withers amidst affliction or persecution (v. 17). Since faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17), deeper faith can come only by digging more deeply into the word. "Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity ..." (Hebrews 6:1).

Digging deep also points to thorough repentance. In Jesus' illustration, the builder digs deep in order to remove everything that is unsuitable. He clears away the dirt and debris to get to the solid rock. From there he can begin to build. We may need to do a lot of clearing in our hearts and lives, too. Erroneous beliefs, bad attitudes, and sinful habits lie between us and discipleship. They must all be removed, shovelful by shovelful. We must examine every corner of our hearts and lives in light of the gospel and make whatever changes it calls for.

Discipleship is work.  
Don't take shortcuts.  
Dig deep. ■



# Are You Wise?

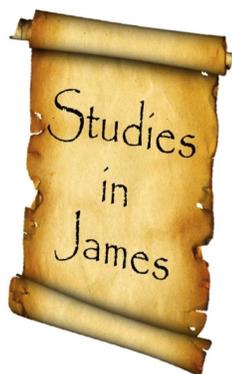
by Frank Himmel

“Who among you is wise and understanding?” (James 3:13a).

On what basis do we answer this question? Often we relate someone’s wisdom to what he knows. That is important, but James says the real answer is in our behavior, our application of knowledge (vv. 13b-17).

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.

In this section James may still have teachers in mind (cf. v. 1), but his remarks are appropriate for anyone who may think he has superior understanding or judgment. Wisdom is shown in good behavior, in deeds done in meekness, “a healthy understanding of our own unworthiness before God and a corresponding humility and lack of pride in our dealings with our fellow-men” (Moo). Anyone who teaches or



in any other way acts from a heart of jealousy or selfish ambition is **not** wise, regardless of his claims. His bad attitudes make his claim of wisdom a lie against the truth. He may be wise in one sense, but it is the wrong kind of wisdom.

James contrasts the two kinds of wisdom. One is earthly, both in its outlook and its source; it is natural or sensual, making human feelings and reasoning supreme; and it is demonic, its real source! The other wisdom is from above, from God (1:5).

Earthly wisdom is jealous and ambitious, and often arrogant. It says, “Promote yourself and your ideas.” In so doing it doesn’t mind at all creating an uproar. Heavenly wisdom operates much differently. It is pure, always leading to purity of life. It is peaceable—not to the point of compromising truth, but operating peaceably as much as possible. It is gentle and reasonable. It is full of mercy and good works; it does not merely talk about doing good, it does good. It is unwavering. That may mean it is stable, unlike ever-shifting worldly thinking, or the idea may be consistency in application, “impartial” (NIV). It is without hypocrisy.

To no one’s surprise, these opposite kinds of wisdom produce opposite outcomes. Earthly wisdom results in disorder and evil deeds. One example is the Corinthian church’s assemblies, where brethren were making a display of their gifts (1 Corinthians 14, esp. v. 40). Heavenly wisdom, on the other hand, results in peace. “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (v. 18). ■

## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	David Gray	Howard Moore
SONG LEADER	Sam Walters	Greg Winget
OPENING PRAYER	Bruce Hollander	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mike Zachry	
CUP	Josh Baucom	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Stephen Lefort	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Adam Gibson
CLOSING PRAYER	Clifton Lefort	Justin Candella