

Holy Spirit and Wisdom

¹³ If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous (envious) and there is selfish ambition (rivalry, contention, competitiveness) in your heart, do not cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy (envy) and selfish ambition (rivalry, contention, competitiveness), there you will find disorder (confusion, disharmony) and evil of every kind. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. James 3:13-18 (NLT)

The New Testament book of James has much to say about God's wisdom (e.g., see James 1:5, 17; James 3:13-18). Anyone can receive God's wisdom and discernment for any situation by asking and seeking God for His divine wisdom, and God will give all His divine wisdom generously (James 1:5; see also 1 Kings 3:9-10; Proverbs 2:3-6; Matthew 7:7).

God's Holy Spirit activates divine wisdom, understanding, good judgment, insight, and common sense in His faithful people (James 1:5, 17; e.g. see also Exodus 28:3; Exodus 31:3-5; Exodus 35:30-35; Deuteronomy 34:9; Proverbs 1:2-3; Daniel 5:11, 14). The Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (see Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9), and the Holy Spirit directs and guides God's people in the wisest paths as we obey God's Holy Scriptures and pray (e.g. see Mark 13:11; Galatians 5:16;). The Holy Scriptures teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, also known as the Godhead. The Holy Trinity consists of God the Father, God the Son-Jesus, and God the Spirit (e.g., see Genesis 1:1-3; 26-27; Matthew 28:19-20; John 14:16, 26; 1 John 4:2, 13-14; Jude 20-21).

God graciously gives His divine wisdom and Holy Spirit to all who wholeheartedly repents, turn from sin, and believe in His Son Jesus as Lord and Savior – Jesus is Lord (see Acts 2:38-40; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 13; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 7-8). The Holy Scriptures declare that Jesus is the ultimate source all divine wisdom because Jesus is the wisdom of God (see 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). Through our repentance and faith in Jesus (God's Son), believers not only receive salvation, justification (declared righteous), and holiness but also spiritual wisdom (e.g. see Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:30). The first step toward true wisdom is the receiving of Jesus as your Lord and Savior. He was the unique bearer of the Holy Spirit (see Mark 1:10; Luke 4:18-19). Jesus has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge as the fullness of God (see Colossians 2:2-3, 9).

Divine wisdom is not just acquired information but practical insight and discernment with spiritual implications that comes directly from God (James 1:5, 17). The purpose of wisdom is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives and also to instruct them to do what is right, just, and fair (see Proverbs 1:2-3; Proverbs 2:6). The respect, trust, and reverence of the LORD are the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (see Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10-12).

Amazingly, the book of James' teaching on divine wisdom is very similar to the Apostle Paul's teachings on the evil fruits of our sinful nature (flesh) and the good fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:13-26). Similar to the Apostle Paul's teaching, the book of James deals with godly behavior and good character of God's faithful people (see also Ephesians 2:10). The book of James teaches that true faith, religion, and divine wisdom means walking by the Holy Spirit and not of our sinful nature, the flesh (see James 1:19-27; James 2:14-26). The book of James shows God's true spiritual wisdom and Christlike living are inseparable (e.g., see James 2:18-20). For both James and the Apostle Paul, wisdom is not merely intellectual but also behavioral. Anyone who obeys God's wisdom produces good fruit of righteousness and peace, not sin and wickedness.

According to the book of James, wise people live a life of goodness and humility (James 3:13-14; see also Matthew 5:5, 13-16; 1 Peter 2:12). Jealousy, bitter envy, greed, competitiveness, and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom as such evil deeds are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the Evil One (James 3:15; see also Galatians 5:19-21). Wherever there is jealousy or selfishness, there will be disorder, discord, chaotic frenzy, disharmony, and every other kind of evil and wickedness (James 3:16). Such self-seeking behavior only creates rivalry and division in the church, which God hates (see Proverbs 6:16-19). Bitter envy, discord, and selfish ambition are inspired by the devil.

Most importantly, James teaches that God's wisdom is pure and true, full of quiet gentleness, peace-loving, merciful, courteous, sincere, full of good deeds and good fruit (James 3:17; see also Matthew 5:5-9; Luke 6:36; Romans 12:9-21; Galatians 5:22-23). God loves peacemakers (Matthew 5:9; see also Romans 14:19; 1 Timothy 2:2-4; Hebrews 12:14). Moreover, God's wisdom allows discussion and a willingness to yield to others (James 3:17). James teaches believers of Jesus that these peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness (James 3:18; see also Proverbs 3:13; Philippians 1:11).

References

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