

The book of
JAMES Devotions
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Monday: Wise and Understanding

PRAY: Ask God to speak to you from His Word.

READ: James 3:13

¹³ Who is **wise and understanding** among you? Let them **show it by their good life**, by **deeds done in the humility** that **comes from wisdom**.

UNDERSTAND: *get a deeper understanding of the key words*

- **Wise and understanding:** In the first twelve verses of chapter three James deals with the problem of taming the tongue. Verse thirteen begins with the solution to that problem which is wisdom and humility.
- **Show it by their good life:** Wisdom is shown by the kind of life we live. Our wisdom will be visible by the decisions we make and the things we do.
- **Deeds done in the humility:** Anything we do for Christ or for others should be done in humility. If our motives are not pure, we will do things to gain attention and acceptance. Jesus taught that those who do the right things with the wrong motives are hypocrites (see Matthew 6:1-6).
- **Comes from wisdom:** Humility is a natural result of wisdom.
- More on Wisdom: James 1:5; Proverbs 1:7; 2:6,12; 3:13; 8:11; 9:11; 11:2
- More of Humility: Matthew 23:12; Ephesians 4:2; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6

APPLY: *What is this passage calling me to do?*

Who do you consider wise and understanding?

Why do you consider them wise and understanding?

Read Proverbs 13:20. What can you do to spend more time learning from those who are wise? Who do you need to spend less time with?

PRAY: Ask God to give you more wisdom and humility.

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Tuesday: Envy and Selfishness

PRAY: Ask God to speak to you from His Word.

READ: James 3:14-15

¹⁴ But if you harbor **bitter envy** and **selfish ambition** in your hearts, **do not boast about it or deny the truth.** ¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is **earthly, unspiritual, demonic.**

UNDERSTAND: *get a deeper understanding of the key words*

- **Bitter envy:** In the Greek *pikros zēlos* refers to harsh jealousy. This is a result of harboring envy for a period time. Envy builds up and eventually leads to being bitter and harsh. Envy is a worldly mindset (see 1 Corinthians 3:3).
- **Selfish ambition:** In the Greek *eritheia* is often used to describe political partisanship and division. James uses this word to describe intense rivalry that has its root in pure selfishness. Paul often wrote about selfish ambition (see Philippians 2:3). Paul also includes this in his list of the acts of the sin nature (see Galatians 5:19-21).
- **Do not boast about it or deny the truth:** Those who are proud of their envy and selfishness should remember Paul’s warning in Galatians 5:21 that those who live this way will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- **Earthly** (Greek: *epigeios*): the opposite of godly, limited by a worldly mindset
- **Unspiritual** (Greek: *psychikos*): natural, sensuous, driven by the sin nature, an indulging appetite that is never satisfied or content (see 1 Corinthians 2:14).
- **Demonic** (Greek: *daimoniōdēs*): resembling or coming from an evil spirit. Earthly and unspiritual “wisdom” comes from Satan himself. Satan deceives us by making his version of wisdom look more attractive.

APPLY: *What is this passage calling me to do?*

What kind of things cause you to be envious or jealous?

In what areas of your life are being selfish?

How can you guard yourself from becoming envious and selfish?

PRAY: Ask God to help you see where you are envious and selfish.

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Wednesday: The Consequences of Selfish Envy

PRAY: Ask God to speak to you from His Word.

READ: James 3:16

¹⁶ For where you have **envy and selfish ambition**, there you find **disorder** and **every evil practice**.

UNDERSTAND: *get a deeper understanding of the key words*

- **Envy and selfish ambition:** The root cause of envy and selfish ambition is discontent and a desire to have more. Our culture fuels discontentment by constantly reminding us of what we don't have. As a result, we spend the majority of our lives working to get things we don't need to impress people we don't really know. Jesus taught us not to focus on earthly treasures or worry about what the world runs after (Matthew 6:19-34).
- **Disorder** (Greek: *akatastasia*): This refers to a constant state of instability, disturbance, and confusion. Envy and selfishness always lead to chaos. It keeps us in a state of constant struggle and pain. This is not how God intends for us to live. God is not the author of confusion and disorder (1 Corinthians 14:33).
- **Every evil practice** (Greek: *pas phaulos pragma*): Envy and selfishness not only leads to disorder but also to wickedness. When we are jealous and selfish we will do things that dishonor God and others.

APPLY: *What is this passage calling me to do?*

How can envy and selfish ambition lead to disorder and evil?

What negative consequences have you experienced from being jealous or selfish?

PRAY: Ask God to help you be content and satisfied in Him.

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Thursday: Wisdom Defined

PRAY: Ask God to speak to you from His Word.

READ: James 3:17

¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all **pure**; then **peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy** and **good fruit, impartial** and **sincere**.

UNDERSTAND: *get a deeper understanding of the key words*

- **Pure** (Greek: *hagnos*): reverent, clean from every fault, modest, immaculate
- **Peace-loving** (Greek: *eirēnikos*): a sincere desire to create and maintain peace
- **Considerate** (Greek: *epieikēs*): gentle, mild, kind, fair (Philippians 4:5; Titus 3:1-2)
- **Submissive** (Greek: *eupeithēs*): Submissive is not a very good translation here. A better translation would be reasonable or open to reason. Followers of Jesus should be reasonable and willing to yield to others when necessary.
- **Full of mercy and good fruit:** Mercy is practicing kindness, good will, and a willingness to help those in need. Good fruit is a reference to the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23.
- **Impartial** (Greek: *adiakritos*): This term means to be unwavering, without ambiguity or uncertainty. Followers of Jesus should be stable and unwavering in our commitment to Christ and serving others.
- **Sincere** (Greek: *anypokritos*): This term refers to being without hypocrisy, undisguised, and authentic. This is one virtue that unbelievers value. The world needs to see believers that are sincere and authentic.

APPLY: *What is this passage calling me to do?*

Which attributes in this passage do you struggle with most?

How can you improve in these areas?

PRAY: Ask God to help you become the kind of person this passage describes.

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Friday: Peacemakers

PRAY: Ask God to speak to you from His Word.

READ: James 3:18

¹⁸ **Peacemakers** who **sow in peace** reap a **harvest of righteousness**.

UNDERSTAND: *get a deeper understanding of the key words*

- **Peacemakers:** Being a peacemaker is active and not passive. We seek to make peace where there is conflict. As followers of Christ we are called to peace (Colossians 3:15). Jesus taught in Matthew 5:9 that peacemakers will be blessed and called children of God. When we live and act in peace it shows the unbelieving world that there is something different about us.
- **Sow in peace** (Greek: *speirō en eirēnē*): Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23) that the word of God or the Gospel is the seed. Like the sower we are called to scatter the Gospel to those around us. Some will accept it and others will not. James is teaching here that no matter what reaction we get, we are to sow in peace. We cannot force our faith on others nor should we get angry when others choose to reject our faith.
- **Harvest of righteousness:** James is illustrating here that when we live and act in peace it produces righteous results. We sow the seed peacefully and God is responsible for the results. When we sow in peace we find righteousness.

APPLY: *What is this passage calling me to do?*

What do you think it means to be a peacemaker?

What are some ways you can bring peace to situations and relationships around you?

PRAY: Ask God to help you become a peacemaker to those around you.

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Saturday: Prepare for Sunday

REVIEW: Take a few minutes to make a list of what you've learned this week.

PRAY: Ask God to use this time to help you get familiar with Sunday's scripture passage.

READ: James 4:1-3

¹ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

THINK: *Go ahead and underline key words and phrases.*

Start thinking about what this passage is saying.

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What do you think is the main idea?
- What parts are confusing or hard to understand?
- How might this passage help you to follow Jesus better?

PRAY: Ask God to prepare you for tomorrow's worship service.