

## “Man’s Wisdom vs. God’s Wisdom” – Part 2

May 16, 2010  
Dr. Ritch Boerckel

Scriptural Foundation: James 3:13-18, ESV

### Wisdom from Above

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

This passage describes in detail the differences between two kinds of wisdom. James teaches us that we can live our lives on the basis of man’s wisdom or according to God’s wisdom, but we cannot live our lives on both. Man’s wisdom and God’s wisdom contradict one another. They contrast in every way. We confuse these two kinds of wisdom to our own destruction. God’s wisdom is not an accumulation of information, an amassing of knowledge, or a sharpening of our intellectual perception. Biblical wisdom is life-change. Biblical wisdom is the ability to live beautifully in a misshapen world. It is the ability to live life skillfully so as to find real joy, real peace, and real life in God Himself. That is what wisdom is.

In the previous study we learned that man’s wisdom and God’s wisdom flow from two opposing sources and two different origins. Man’s wisdom gushes forth from this world in which we live, from within our own fleshly hearts, from the demonic realm. God’s wisdom, however, streams down from Heaven itself. God alone is the source of the wisdom that gives life and that provides us with lasting joy.

Our arms are too short to reach up and grab God’s wisdom on our own. No, God must be the giver of wisdom or else no one will find it, but God graciously sends it down to us. He sent His wisdom to us in His Word and through His Son Jesus Christ. When man abandons God, man abandons wisdom. We give ourselves over to a complete life of foolishness, for any wisdom that does not come from God is sure to fail us, sure to disappoint us, and is sure to lead to greater chaos and ugliness and corruption.

The faculty at Harvard University was meeting together one day to discuss the changing of the core curriculum in order to better prepare their students for life. Suddenly, an angel appeared before this astute body. The angel pointed to the Dean of the Faculty and said, “You have served Harvard with diligence and distinction. For this you will be rewarded. I am going to give you your choice of one of three gifts. You may have all the wealth in this world, or you may have all of the beauty in this world, or you may have all the wisdom of this world.” The Dean of the Faculty contemplated these options for a short time. He smiled at the faculty and augustly said, “I choose to possess all of the wisdom of all of the scholars who have ever lived throughout human history.” The faculty nodded approvingly. “Done,” the angel announced. There was a clap of thunder, a poof of smoke, and the angel vanished. The Dean gazed contemplatively out the window. The other academics waited with baited breath for him to speak. After ten minutes of awkward silence, one of the faculty nearest the Dean leaned over and said, “Hey, say something!” He looked at the faculty and said, “I should have taken the money!”

I do not know if all the money in this world is more valuable than all of the wisdom of this world, but I do know that neither is worth very much.

Jesus said, in Matthew 16,

<sup>26</sup> *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”*

There is a wisdom that will rescue your life if you find her. Seek after her with all of your heart. Find her. Get her. Hold onto her and live on the basis of that wisdom.

One author writes this true observation, “Wisdom is to be found with God and no where else. And, unless the quest for wisdom brings a man to his knees in awe and reverence, knowing his own helplessness to make himself wise, wisdom remains a close book.”

Having observed the two opposing sources of wisdom, we now continue our study by considering two opposing attributes of these kinds of wisdom and two opposing endings.

First, we will look at two opposing attributes between man’s wisdom and God’s wisdom. What is man’s wisdom like and what are some of the characteristics that mark it? James list three attributes that help us identify man’s wisdom. The first one is jealousy and selfish ambition, as we see in Verse 14,

<sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

James began Verse 13 by saying, “Who is wise and understanding among you,” and he is anticipating that those in his congregation are going to say, “We are!” But, James then says, “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth, because you do not have true wisdom.”

Man’s wisdom is motivated by jealousy and selfish ambition within our hearts. Selfish ambition literally means “pushing one’s self forward for personal gain or for personal glory”. Man’s wisdom longs to promote ourselves, our agenda, and our glory. Man’s wisdom delights in possessing a zeal to succeed for the sake of one’s own name; “I want to make a name for myself in this world.” Man’s wisdom connives, “How can I get ahead of the pack? How can I obtain more of this world’s things, more of this world’s fame, and more of this world’s influence?” Man’s wisdom does not delight in other’s achievements or in God’s glory. We want to be “king of the hill” and we are willing to knock others down to get there. That is what man’s wisdom teaches us.

Donald Trump’s show, “The Apprentice”, or the show “Survivor” are classic examples of the kind of jealousy and selfish ambition that typifies man’s wisdom. If you watch those shows you will see man’s wisdom wholly at work and wholly justified and wholly exalted.

Such ambition motivated Jacob to steal his brother’s, Esau, blessing.<sup>1</sup> Such ambition drove Saul to attempt the murder of David.<sup>2</sup>

Jealousy, coming from man’s wisdom, makes a person think that their identity and worth comes from their status, their position, and their influence. It creates fighting and conflict and gossip and a restlessness; a chaos of the soul and of the inner world.

I wonder how many Christian parents train their children from a tender age in the school of man’s wisdom thinking that man’s wisdom will bring their children a joyful future. “Hey, son, hey, daughter, you need to get good grades in school.” “Why, dad?” “So that you can get into the college of your choice and in the best college in the world.” “Why, dad?” “So that you can get a good job.” “Why, dad?” “So that you can earn a lot of money!” “Why, dad?” “So that you can live a really good life.” “Really? Does that secure a good life?” Man’s wisdom says that it does.

The mistake of man’s wisdom is not in encouraging children toward excellence in school. Children, you did not hear your pastor say that, did you? No, you did not! The mistake of man’s wisdom is in the motivation we use to push our children towards academic excellence. It is truly wise to encourage our children to work as hard as they can, to get as good of grades as they can in school, but the motivation of Godly wisdom is not to have our children to be able to climb to the top of some social ladder. The motivation is for our children to worship God throughout their lives in service to Him.

As a Christian I can tell my children that learning in school will help them to make a greater impact for Jesus Christ in this world; that learning can help open doors to influence their world with the Gospel of Jesus. For instance, if they become physicians, it is not the large salary or the worldly respect that motivates them towards that goal. God forbid that would be the case. Their motivation is found in being able to be used by God as a doctor to minister to others for the glory of Jesus and for the praise of His name.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:29-34, Genesis 27

<sup>2</sup> I Samuel 23:15-31:1-7

If they become engineers or lawyers or school teachers or politicians or carpenters or accountants or nurses or ditch diggers, or a host of other professions, they will be able to be as equipped as they possibly can be equipped to represent Jesus through the work of their hands, whatever work that is that God sets aside for them in life. God's wisdom always points to the worship of God, always, as the end goal. It is not some worldly attainment of financial security or of esteem or of some progress in the eyes of our world.

Graduates, we honor you and we want to praise God for His work of grace in your lives. I urge you to focusing upon working as hard as you can in school or in life for Jesus sake. Then yield all of the results over to God.

I remember, as a freshman in college, loosing my joy because I was not getting all "A's". That is what I desired and that is what I expected of myself and I was not hitting my goal that first year in college. I believe that the disruption of my soul really was caused because I was following man's wisdom at that time; wisdom full of selfish ambition. "Ritch, you must accomplish this in order to feel good about yourself, in order to present yourself to your family and your friends, and even to yourself. You must!" Thankfully, God was so gracious in giving me parents and friends and teachers who helped me to understand that what God desired in me was that I would yield myself wholly to Him, follow Him as committed as I possibly could, and then yield the results, whatever happened, over to Him. In that wisdom I could live in joy again.

The second characteristic that James mentions is boasting, when he says,

<sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast...

That is what man's wisdom does. Man's wisdom loves to boast about our own accomplishments and to measure them by the accomplishments of others. We love to say, "Hey, I made the honor role," or "I got first place in the competition," or "I got the promotion." There is nothing wrong with enjoying God's good gifts to us and if we make the honor role, enjoy that and give praise to God for that. If you get first place in a competition, enjoy that and give praise to God for it, but God's wisdom always gives glory to Jesus and it gives credit to where credit is due: to our Creator and to our Redeemer.

In man's wisdom we like to take the glory for ourselves and we like to boast. It closes us up to a self-focused world where everything that happens has to be evaluated upon how it relates to "me" and how it affects "me". Man's wisdom teaches us to protect our own turf and to promote our own name.

Four weeks ago, my Dad was getting ready to go to a Bible study he taught on Tuesday mornings in the church. He looked out the window for his ride to arrive and as he stepped back he tripped over a chair in the living room. He fractured his hip and he required a partial-hip replacement. The surgery went great and the recovery started out well. What began as a fairly minor problem with his lungs, turned into a grave illness and he acquired a condition known as ARDS; acute respiratory distress syndrome. He spent the last twelve days of his life in the Intensive Care Unit before God, in His kindness and in His sovereign grace, ushered him into the presence of his Savior. Psalm 116 says,

<sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

That is so very, very true. I miss him terribly already. He was my hero. My sister-in-law, Carol, would visit Dad often during his stay in the hospital and she would talk to the nurses and the doctors and the technicians who took such tender care of my Dad, and how thankful we are for each one of them. Carol would turn to those nurses and technicians and doctors and say, "I want you to know how great a man this is!" and she would point to my Dad. She would say, "He is a really, really, really great man!"

This struck me for two reasons. First, because I believe so deeply that it is true. Secondly, it stuck me because my Dad would have never acknowledged that about himself. My Dad seemed to be devoid of worldly ambition and of jealousy and of boasting. He did not chase after acclaim or acknowledgment. He received it from so many people quietly. His legacy is found not on the pages of a newspaper but in the lives of the many people he mentored and influenced. He lived a quiet life and he impacted others for Christ simply through his devotion.

I Timothy 2, says,

<sup>2</sup> ...that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...

Man's wisdom would have a hard time applying the adjective "great" to my Dad's life. Dad was not a great man because of his achievement upon an athletic field. As a teenage, he became so ill that he had to spend a year in his bed. During that year he said that he grew six inches. He said, "I went to be 5'9" and I came out of be 6'3"!"

To give you an example of his condition, when he was 6'3, he weighed 125 pounds. He had to go to a physically handicapped class because his heart would not stand climbing stairs at Woodruff High School, so he attended Central High School and that is where he graduated from. Dad was not a great man, either, because he earned high academic degrees. Out of high school, he went to work at a bank. He didn't think that college was an option. Later he went to night school while providing for his family and he eventually became certified as an internal auditor.

Dad was not a great man, either, because he made a large salary or because he was connected to influential people. To my knowledge, Peoria's public officials did not know his name.

Dad was not a great man, either, because he was naturally religious. Dad told me of the day, as a teenager, when he walked by a church and he heard people singing in there. He thought about his life and he realized that his life was a mess and it was filled with chaos and confusion. He remembered, as he walked by the church, asking God, "God, are you there at all?" He said that it was not a question of defiance so much as it was a question of hopelessness and of deep sadness. He did not think, at that time, that God was close enough to him to be found.

My Dad was not a great man for any of the reasons that man's wisdom counts greatness, but I believe that he was a great man because of what we are discussing here. By the grace of God, my Dad found God's wisdom and he rooted his life in it. God led him to Jesus as the Fountain of Righteousness and the source of all wisdom, and when he found Christ, he rejected man's wisdom because it was filled with selfish ambition, jealousy, and boasting.

My Dad would say, after trusting in Jesus and becoming married, that his chief ambition was to grow a happy family, to love God, and to love each other. He simply wanted to live life for the glory of God. His life profoundly impacted others for all of eternity because God's wisdom was found in him and I pray, and I share this with you, that it encourages you as it encourages me. Even if you do not know my Dad, I pray that this encourages you, why, because I believe that my Dad's example communicates to us that we can be men of wisdom and we can be women of wisdom.

It is not rooted in our natural talent and it is not rooted in our past accomplishments. It is not rooted in anything that this world counts as greatness, but here is what it is rooted in: it is rooted in a humble heart. Whether you have lived five years on this world, you can become a person of wisdom. Or, whether you have lived eighty-five years of foolishness on this world, you can become a person of wisdom. It is never too late, because God's wisdom comes to us as His gift through Jesus. When we humble ourselves before God, we fear God, and we give our life to Jesus God promises us that He will infuse our life with a wisdom that leads to greatness, to lasting joy, and to peace.

In I Corinthians 1, we read,

<sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being<sup>1</sup> might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

Do you realize, friend, that you can be a great person, not because of who you are and your natural abilities and talents, but because God, who is a gracious God, is willing to infuse wisdom that leads to greatness. That is awesome and that is liberating!

---

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 9:23, 24

The last characteristic James points to about man's wisdom is deceit. James calls it "false to the truth" as we read in Verse 14. Man's wisdom considers truth to be relative. We can make our own truth! If we need to exaggerate on our own resume in order to get a job, then man's wisdom says that we do what we have to do. That is false to the truth. If we need to cheat in order to pass an exam, man's wisdom closes its eyes to the cheating and praises you for the ultimate grade that is received. If we must lie to cover up our sin or our errors man's wisdom says that we must lie because everyone lies in that situation. If we need to bend the rules to get the contract then man's wisdom says that it is okay to bend the rules a little bit because that is the way that business is done in this world; if we don't do business that way we will not be successful.

Man's wisdom says that we live in a "complex world". No, we don't. It is a pretty simple whether we follow God or we follow our own way. That is how simple it is. It is not that these moral and ethical issues are so complex as man's wisdom likes to make them. God's wisdom causes us to adhere to the truth. Man's wisdom plays loose with it when it is convenient. What a huge contrast that is.

James turns to look at seven characteristics of God's wisdom, as we see in Verse 17,

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

God's wisdom is pure in the sense of being undefiled, without blemish, and morally pure. Such purity is obtained only through Christ. It is not found within our selves. Our hearts are impure until they are made pure by Jesus. We need a Savior and we receive purity as God's gift to us through Jesus. That is what God's Gospel does for us. This purity that Jesus gives to us, when we trust in Him as our Savior, transforms our life and it reflects itself in the way we think, the way we act, the way we make choices, and in the way we relate to other people.

The term "first", when James says God's wisdom is "first pure", indicates a priority in this list of characteristics and attributes. Before God's wisdom is anything else, God's Word says that it is "pure". God is holy at His root being. That is who He is: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.<sup>4</sup> God's wisdom is always holy and it is always first pure.

God's wisdom does not ever justify sin and it does not ever make excuses for transgressions or impurities, on the basis of love, or on the basis of outcomes. God's wisdom never leads us to sin against His Law. It always leads to an obedient and pure life. Oh, that God's people, that we the church, would know that God's wisdom is first pure so that we can set aside any wisdom that would not first and foremost be pure.

Recently I read an AARP<sup>5</sup> study that reminded me of our culture's downward motion away from God's wisdom. The study discovered that Americans, forty-five years and older, and I hate to admit that now includes me so that I am included in a study of the AARP, are far more open to sex outside of marriage than they were ten years ago. This study says that there has been a dramatic cultural shift in the last ten years, and those of us who are forty-five years and older can look and see how much of a shift there has been in the last thirty years, but this talks about the last ten years. In 1999, forty-one percent of the respondents believed that sexual relations outside of marriage was wrong. That is shocking because that tells us that our culture in 1999 was dismal in reference to embracing God's wisdom as, first, pure. Sixty percent, in 1999, of those forty-five years and older would say that sex outside of marriage is okay.

That percentage reveals a culture in free-fall to foolishness, but that figure dropped to twenty-two percent today. Now we have nearly eighty percent of the people you see on the street who are forty-five years and older who would say, "This is my belief and conviction that sex outside of marriage is not wrong!"

That is not considering that the twenty percent who say they believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong, but are acting contrary to their belief. Undoubtedly, many of those eighty percent who have rejected God's Law concerning sacredness of the marriage bed attend church, and if you ask them they would say, "I am a Christian and I believe in Jesus."

What does James say? How do you know whether your faith is real or not? Let me know what kind of wisdom directs your life. If the kind of wisdom that directs your life is not, first, pure then you have good reason to wonder about

---

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>5</sup> American Association of Retired Persons

your eternal destiny. That is how serious it is. It is not a matter of are we having a life where our good works outweigh our bad. It is do we have the grace of God at work and are we being transformed by the genuine work of God's Spirit? How do I know that is true and how do I know if I have been born again? What kind of wisdom is directing your life?

I have a word to young women and young men. Young women do not tolerate foolish, young men. Kick them to the curb, seriously. Do not tolerate them. Do not say, "Oh, they are so nice to me and they are such a good person, really, if you get to know them." If the young man whom you are romantically connected to in your life is not directing his life around a wisdom that is, first, pure, then it is absolute and utter foolishness to continue in that relationship. We will talk, at the end, the outcome of these two kinds of wisdom and that is where your life is headed if you connect your life to fools. Do not listen to the wisdom of this world when they ply their temptation towards you, "Oh, but we love each other! We are going to get married anyway. If you really loved me, you would."

Young men, do not tolerate foolish, young women. Beauty is fleeting, but foolishness is ugly forever. Remember that and do not be blinded by the beautiful appearance of that foolish, young woman. Foolishness is ugly forever and one day you will discover that and it might be too late.

The term purity means more than sexual wholesomeness, but it does mean less. Any person who gives themselves over to sexual sin is casting God's wisdom away like it is a piece of garbage and it is worthless. When we throw away God's wisdom, we throw away our very life and we throw away the possibility of lasting joy. How can we obtain God's purity of wisdom? It is not found inside of ourselves. Jeremiah says, "These hearts of ours are corrupt and are deceitful above all else. They are desperately wicked. How can I find purity?"<sup>6</sup> It is only in the promise of the Gospel.

Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? That is the only way you will find this purity of God's wisdom. By submitting your life to the person of Jesus Christ, He is the One who must provide it for you and He must be the Source. He offers Himself, "If you trust in me and humble yourself before me and believe in me." Jesus calls to you.

I love Ezekiel 36, where God promises this through the Gospel,

<sup>26</sup>And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

When He says, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes," He is not saying that He will twist our arm to make us do something that we do not want to do. He is saying that He is going to give us such a new heart that that heart will have new desires and we will delight to live a pure life. That is the promise of God upon the believer and that is the transformation.

Wisdom from above is, next, peaceable. The peace of the church is not more important than the purity of the church. Sometimes conflict and division in the church is necessary when impurity, either in life or in doctrine, prevails. A church that possesses God's wisdom is more likely to have God's lasting peace than the church that is willing to let man's wisdom prevail in the face of impurity. It is peaceable recognizing that so much conflict within God's family is not necessary and it is fueled by our commitment to live our lives according to man's wisdom rather than God's wisdom.

In Proverbs 6, God says,

<sup>16</sup>There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: <sup>17</sup>haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup>a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, <sup>19</sup>a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

It is a serious thing to sow discord within Jesus' church. Consider that before you gossip. Consider that before you create and stir up conflict. Consider that before you engage yourself in a fight between people and taking sides and

---

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 17:9

thus give fuel to that fire. There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an absolute abomination to Him and one of them is a person who sows discord among the brothers.

The next characteristic of God wisdom is that it is gentle. The word means kind and willing to yield and steadfast with humble patience. The gentle do not look for fights but they look for a way to avoid them. A person who is gentle can be bold and tough when necessary, but he can refrain from being bold and tough when it is not necessary. Gentleness does not mean weakness. Gentleness means mildness, even in the face of strong action.

Yesterday my family enjoyed a special treat at Starbucks. While we were there I noticed three men seated behind us who had their Bibles opened. They were about three feet away from me so I heard some of their conversation. There were two middle-aged men talking to one younger man and they were telling this younger man that it is not true that Jesus is God. He was just a man. They also told him that the Holy Spirit is a force and not a person. This young man seemed so very confused and he was trying to defend what he had believed up to this point, but it seemed as though these two men were making inroads.

As I sat there, I asked the Holy Spirit, "What is my responsibility in all of this? You placed me here. I don't go to Starbucks very often. My in-laws are in town and they enjoy Starbucks. You placed me here!" I was hoping, as I was talking to God, and half-listening to the conversation of my family and half to the conversation behind me, the Holy Spirit would let me off of the hook. I do not like to offend people. That is not my favorite joy, especially to strangers, but the Holy Spirit said that I had to go and talk for the sake of this young man. As I left, I put my hand on the young man's shoulder and said, "Excuse me, I am a pastor of a church down the road and I saw you had your Bibles opened and I overheard some of the conversation that you were having. I don't know whether you have trusted Jesus as your personal Savior or not, but I want you to know that He is God come in the flesh and the Holy Spirit is a real person, and what these two men are teaching you are contrary to biblical Christianity." I looked at one of the two men and I said, "I pray that you will come to know that Jesus is God come in the flesh so that you will know the joy of salvation." One of the middle-aged men seemed pretty perturbed at me.

I say that not to pat myself on the back, but to say that I needed wisdom and God was willing to give it to me. Not always am I so gentle when I get into conflict and I have to seek God's forgiveness. I say that to say that God's wisdom can provide a gentleness even in the face of hard circumstances, and if there is not a gentleness, even in the face of hard circumstances, you are not being controlled by God's wisdom.

Another characteristic of God's wisdom is that it is open to reason. It is willing to listen and deferring to others when it is appropriate. It is yielding to persuasion. It is not set in our way. It is not stubborn; "It is my way or the highway!" We believe that we are right; we always do. There is nothing wrong with thinking that we are right, because if we didn't we would change our opinion. But, there is something wrong with saying that we know that we are absolutely right, especially when our certainty is not based upon Scripture. We must be willing to talk about it and be open to reason.

The next characteristic of God's wisdom is that it is full of mercy and good fruits. It is eager to help those who are hurting. It is willing to forgive those who have wronged us. It is full of mercy. God's mercy seems so foolish, especially when we read the story of the Good Samaritan; that a man would stop and spend his money and put his life in danger by helping this hurt man who was a Jew. His Samaritan friends would say to him, "It is foolish to help that guy. Don't you know that he could turn on you in a moment and besides you could get hurt while you are doing this!" Friends, God's wisdom makes us fools in our acts of mercy.

God's wisdom is not discriminatory or partial. It is sincere without hypocrisy. It does not produce fakes or phonies. There is no pretension with God's wisdom.

As we look at these seven qualities we have to ask if these seven qualities characterize our lives. The point for us is not to work harder to get these qualities. The point is, if they are not there we need Jesus and we need a close walk with Him because it is God's wisdom that produces this in us. It is not our desire to work harder to get them, but if they are absent they make us humble so that we come before God everyday to seek Him.

The two opposing outcomes are found in Verses 16 and 18,

<sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice...<sup>18</sup> And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

The fruit of man's wisdom is disorder of life and every vile practice. It is a life that is away from God.

I love Verse 18 because it is a description of a harvest. God sows His wisdom into our lives and that sowing of God produces a fruit, a spiritual fruit, which has seeds within it for the next harvest. As we gain God's wisdom there is fruit in our lives and we are able to be God's instruments to sow those same seeds into other's lives. That wisdom grows in their life and they are able to sow seeds. That is how God's Kingdom is to work.

Again, I think of my Dad. When my Dad was a young man, he realized that he didn't have wisdom and he didn't have God's joy and he didn't have God's life and he needed a Savior. He found one in Jesus and God placed within him His wisdom. That produced a fruit within my Dad's life so that he was able to plant those seeds within his children's lives. God used those seeds of His grace, in my life, to produce a fruit and I have been able to take that fruit and have it be used by God to sow seeds of that wisdom in my children's lives. That will continue to go on and on and on. That is the way God's wisdom works.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave in this world? Will it be man's wisdom that will be a legacy of chaos and confusion and every vile practice? Or will it be God's wisdom – a harvest of righteousness sown in peace. That is what it is! That is what life is all about. How can we not want to have any other desire for any kind of life?

Christian, in the previous study, we talked about the fact that one of the ways God imparts His wisdom to us is through His Word. We cannot know God's wisdom apart from the diligent study of Scriptures. We have said that we need the wisdom of the Word like our bodies need oxygen. We cannot rest upon our past study of God's Word to give us present wisdom just like we cannot rest upon our past intake of oxygen to give us life. We do not say, "I have breathed a lot over my last years, so I can take a break from breathing." No, we cannot do that.

For the last nine days of my Dad's life he had to be on a ventilator. His lungs were so unhealthy that a machine had to do his breathing for him. The doctors knew that this was a very dangerous position. It is not healthy to need a machine in order to breathe. It is not a good sign, yet I wonder how many believers breathe God's wisdom through a ventilator? They need a machine outside of themselves in order to take a breath, so they come to church on Sunday morning and they listen to a sermon or a Sunday school teacher. That is great because we need to listen to teachers and to preachers, but if that is the only time that you are "breathing" something is gravely wrong. If you are not able to get up on a Monday morning and breathe and go to bed on Monday evening and breathe, something is wrong.

God is a gracious God and He gives to all men generously. He is willing to teach you how to breathe so that you don't need a ventilator and someone breathing for you to get His wisdom, His life, and His joy.

Friends, let us devote ourselves to His Word.

Last Mother's Day I went over to parent's house and I sat in my Dad's chair. He was in the hospital and my Mom had an ailing back so we were there to have lunch. I thought about my Dad as I sat in his chair and I looked down to the floor beside the chair that my Dad always loved to sit in. As I looked, there were three books. On the top was a worn and used Bible. Below the Bible were two commentaries: the Gospel of John and Acts. I thought, I want to be like that when I am eighty. I don't want to say, "I have studied the Bible all my life. Now, I can get up and tell stories. I can tell what I learned in the past." I want to be a guy who is eighty years old, if God gives me that length of life, and who says, "I need more of God's Word today. I need to get into those commentaries and get into deep study and I need to dig in there. I want to breathe!"

Do you want God's wisdom? Let us breathe. God loves to give His wisdom.