

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*Undivided Devotion: The Letter of James*

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**Heavenly or Hellish? Discerning Where Our Words are Coming from  
(James 3:13-18)**

**1. “Wisdom” from Below (vv. 14-16)**

*“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.”*

**2. Wisdom from Above (vv. 17-18)**

*“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, 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.”*

**Getting Started:**

1. What was helpful to you in this week’s sermon? What didn’t you understand?

2. When you're in a disagreement or conflict with someone, what's your gut reaction? Is it to attack, to avoid, or to do something else? Why do you think that's the case?

### Going Deeper:

3. According to James, how does a person demonstrate that they are "*wise and understanding*" (v. 13)? Why did James' congregations need to hear this (compare 3:1)? How should this impact the way we think about selecting leaders in the church (see 1 Timothy 3:1-13)?
4. Compare and contrast the "*wisdom from above*" (vv. 17-18) with the "*wisdom*" from below (vv. 14-16). How do they differ in *essence* (compare v. 14 with v. 17), *source* (compare v. 15 with v. 17) and *effect* (compare v. 16 with v. 18)? As you compare and contrast these two kinds of wisdom, what stands out to you? Why?
5. Compare what James says about the "*wisdom from above*" (vv. 17-18; see also James 1:5, 17-18) with what Paul says about the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. What similarities do you see? Why can't humans (left to themselves) control the tongue (see James 3:7-8, 11-12; compare Jesus' words in Mathew 12:33-34)? What kind of wisdom can only the Spirit of God provide (see 1 Corinthians 2:14-16)?

### Application:

6. Jeff provided a list of diagnostic questions to ask, to discern if you're responding to people with the "*wisdom*" from below. Which of these stood out to you? Why?
7. Jeff provided a list of diagnostic questions to ask, to discern if you're responding to people with the "*wisdom from above.*" Which of these stood out to you? Why?
8. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?