



LET'S BEGIN HERE

In this penetrating letter, the author, James, made clear that the wisdom we ought to seek and desire is the wisdom that comes from God. God's wisdom forms in us by His Spirit the fruits of the Spirit. Those byproducts are produced and grow in us as a result of our faith. In this second lesson on godly wisdom, let's take a closer look at the genuine results of putting the wisdom from the Scriptures into action.



Getting Started: Water for the Desert of Our Lives

When searching the Scriptures, a helpful first step is to gather resources that will guide you in your study. Make certain you have a Bible dictionary and a concordance handy, as well as a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible you're studying. For this study of James, we recommend you get a copy of *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: James, 1 & 2 Peter*. You'll find a description of that and other resources on the last page of this study.

NOTE: From time to time throughout this study, you'll notice bolded page numbers in parentheses next to a question or comment. These page numbers correspond to the section in *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: James, 1 & 2 Peter* where that particular point is discussed.

Read through all of James chapter 3. Read it slowly, as if you're reading it for the very first time.

Quotable

*The wisdom
from above
produces in us
first the fruit
of purity, then
peace, and
then gentleness.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



The Wise, the Unwise, and the Otherwise (Part Two)

James 3:14–18



Helpful Hint

Remember: *Observation* is a critical beginning technique you will want to use to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Paying particular attention to James 3:14–18, make some initial observations about what you see—for instance, *are there any repeated words? Did James use any connecting words that offer clues into what he was emphasizing?* Take some time to make notes on a separate sheet of paper about what you discover.



Your Turn in the Scriptures

One of the most helpful processes to pursue when looking at a passage of Scripture is to determine the genre it represents. James, for example, is an epistle, or letter, that is part of the New Testament. But in content, it has echoes of much of the Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament.

Wisdom Literature is found mainly in the *poetry books*—Job through Song of Solomon, including the Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Take a few moments to scan through the pages of a few of these books. Look for the theme of wisdom and how it is developed. In the space provided, make some notes about what you see, writing down specific Scripture passages that you find helpful.

What connections do you see between Old Testament principles on wisdom and what James was teaching?

Summarize in one sentence the overall biblical teaching on the value of gaining godly wisdom in contrast to trusting in human wisdom. (Hint: See 1 Corinthians 1:18–25.)



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Now take a few minutes to respond to the following questions using the study resources you have available.

James took great care in explaining the characteristics of divine wisdom in James 3. He mentioned several. Let's take a closer look at each.

But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy (James 3:17, emphasis added).

Purity

What is the significance of purity in the New Testament? What other passages in the New Testament come to your mind on the fruit of purity in the Christian life?

An excellent correlating passage is 1 Peter 3:1–2. Read that passage and make some notes about how Peter's teaching compares to James 3:17 in respect to purity of motives.

Peace

What form of the word *peace* did James use in this verse? What do you feel is the significance of someone who is *peaceable*? In other words, explain how you cannot be *peaceable* without having the fruit of *peace*.

How might being peaceable as a result of God's wisdom in your life help you be a more effective member of the body of Christ?



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James 3:14–18

Gentleness

Read through your commentary on this section in James 3. Locate the information on verse 17. Most commentaries offer specific insight to main words in the passage. In this case, what do you find on the word translated “gentleness”? How would you differentiate between being “peaceable” and being “gentle”?

Reasonableness

James described a fruit of God’s wisdom as “reasonableness.” Again, by turning to the Old Testament, you can find many of these New Testament principles on full display in the lives of those who walked with God by faith.

Abraham is a sterling example of reasonableness in action. Read the story in Genesis 13:1–9. What evidence do you see of Abraham employing reasonableness in his response to the situation? Be as specific as possible in your response.

Using the above questions as a guide, and using the resources you have, explain the significance of the remaining results of embracing the wisdom of God. Include in your response an Old Testament passage where the principle is on display and a correlating New Testament passage

Full of mercy and good fruit

Old Testament passage: _____

Details of the story or example: _____

New Testament passage: _____



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Unwavering

Old Testament passage: _____

Details of the story or example: _____

New Testament passage: _____

Without hypocrisy

Old Testament passage: _____

Details of the story or example: _____

New Testament passage: _____



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for offering Your wisdom to us from Your Word. Thank You that Your perfect wisdom has ultimately been revealed in the person of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Make me more and more into His likeness. For the praise and glory of Your great name, amen.



JAMES Hands-On Christianity

The Wise, the Unwise, and the Otherwise (Part Two)

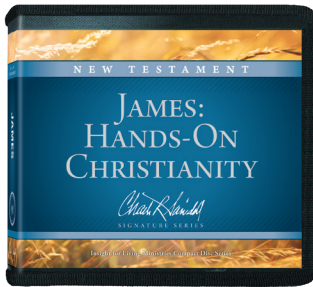
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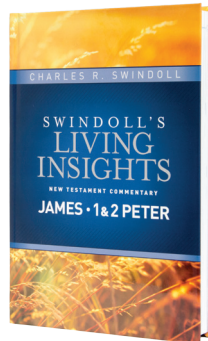
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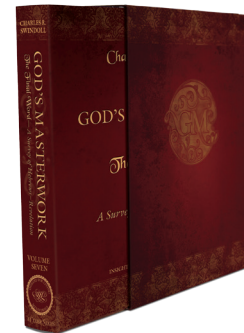
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2016 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Charles R. Swindoll based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts. It was released as a Message Mate through Insight for Living Ministries.



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