

James 3

Last time we looked at the first part of James chapter 3, where James was warning them not to be many masters, many teachers and instructors in the church. He had just told them in chapter 2 that they need to justify their faith with works, if they want people to believe that they believe. But he's telling them that this is one work that isn't something that they should pursue for that reason. This is not something that will justify your faith, but will be more likely to get you condemned, because in many things we offend all.

He said that they offend people with what they say. And that's not good, you want people to hear the word and receive instruction. And so if you want to be a teacher in the church, then you need to be somebody who can bridle your tongue. Because just like a small helm steers the whole ship, your little tongue is supposed to direct the whole body.

And although it is so small, the tongue is like a little flame, and it can cause a huge fire. So you have to have a good control of your tongue, because just a little thing you say can cause a whole world of iniquity.

And so if you don't have a tongue that's under your control, then James says that you should stay away from this. Because you can't tame a tongue. He said it's set on fire of hell, and you aren't going to be able to tame it.

But a teacher in the church should be consistent. They shouldn't be both blessing God and cursing men. They shouldn't be sending forth both sweet water and bitter. They should be speaking just the sweet water of the word of God.

And so he's warned them against this, told them who should not be a master, what a teacher should not be like. And now in verse 13 he's going to tell them what they should be like, what that sweet water is. He's going to tell them what a teacher should do. And also some more about what they should not do.

Verse 13

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

So James says that you shouldn't be a teacher in the church just as some good work to try to justify yourself. You shouldn't just do that because you can. Not just everybody should be doing it.

But someone who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge.

So this is something that is a gift, that you are supposed to be endued with from God. Not a ministry that you just decide to go into.

You need to be a wise man endued with knowledge. The Bible says that Solomon was endued with prudence and understanding. (2 Chronicles 2:12) And so remember how he asked God for wisdom, and he received it.

So this is supposed to be a wisdom from above, James is going to say.

You are supposed to be endued with it by God.

Now, the term endued is only used 5 times in scripture. And that's a very fitting number, because 5 is the number of divine appointment in the Bible. And when you are endued with something, God has divinely appointed for you to have it. So that fits perfectly.

The only other place in the NT that it talks about being endued with something is in Luke 24, where Jesus is speaking to his disciples just before his ascension:

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued** with power from on high.

So he had begun to open their understanding, but he told them to wait until they were endued to go out and preach. Until they were endued with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

He had expounded the scriptures to them, opened their understanding. But just because they understood the scriptures didn't mean that they should go out and preach. They'd heard it right from the Master himself. But Jesus told them, wait until you're endued with power from on high.

And so just because you have an understanding of the scriptures, doesn't mean that you should be a teacher in the church. It depends on whether you have been endued from on high.

And so Paul lists being a teacher among the spiritual gifts:

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly *teachers*, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

So he said that is a gift of the Spirit, just like healing, or working a miracle.

You can't work a miracle without being endued from on high. And how much less then can you be a teacher, without being endued with wisdom and understanding from God? He said that's a gift that's higher on the totem pole than miracles. That's a greater dose of the Spirit, that's a more important and more edifying thing. That's a greater work of God. And so it can't be done without being endued. James says that if you tried that, you'd create a whole world of iniquity. You'd set everything on fire.

So "Who is a wise man and *endued* with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

So James is still talking about showing works. Having a working faith. But this isn't a general way that everybody can show their faith, can show their works. This is only a way that those who are endued with knowledge should be showing their works.

And even they need to be careful how they do it. They need to show *out of a good conversation* their works with meekness of wisdom.

2 Corinthians 1:12 [Paul said this:] For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly **wisdom**, but by the grace of God, we have had our **conversation** in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

And so Paul said that he rejoiced because they hadn't spoken fleshly wisdom. Their ministry, their conversation, what they said and did, wasn't based on fleshly wisdom. But it was by the grace of God.

And so that's the same kind of good conversation that James is exhorting them to here. Not to fleshly wisdom, but to meekness of wisdom from above.

This is a ministry that they should have by the grace of God, not just from their own fleshly wisdom.

And so those that have that gift need to follow that grace.

They need to be heeding the admonition he just gave, and having a good conversation, not sweet water and bitter. And also what he said about meekness before. The teacher needs to have meekness of wisdom. He needs not to be speaking his own words, but wholly submitted to the word of God, speaking it meekly, being slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

Verse 14

James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

So again, he warns them against bitterness. To have a good conversation, to speak the word of God, not sweet water and bitter.

And you see, when you try to have many masters, that will lead to bitterness. When many people try to minister of their own fleshly wisdom instead of the wisdom and calling of God, he said you'll have bitter envying and strife in your hearts.

You'll have many masters all competing for attention, competing for followers, and they'll be bitter, envying one another, and stirring up strife between themselves.

So he said don't do this if you haven't been endued with wisdom, but instead you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts.

He said glory not. Don't glory in your wisdom, don't glory that you can teach, don't glory in being a master, if you have bitter envying and strife in your heart. If that's so, that job's not for you. Don't seek that glory.

Glory not, and lie not against the truth.

He said if you do that, you'll be lying against the truth.

Instead of speaking the word of God, you'll be speaking lies that are contrary to it.

You'll end up bitter against teachers who are really teaching the word, and you'll contradict them, and lie against the truth.

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with **envy**, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, *contradicting and blaspheming*.

So that's what those that *oppose* the gospel do. But if you have envy and strife in your heart, and you become a master of the church, you'll do the same thing. You'll lie against the truth.

And there's actually a story of somebody like this in scripture, who wanted to be a master, wanted to be an apostle, wanted to have the gift of God, when it hadn't been given to him. Do you remember Simon the sorcerer, who bewitched the people of Samaria? And he believed when they all turned to God, and was baptized. But afterward:

Acts 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,
19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.
20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.
21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.
22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.
23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of **bitterness**, and in the bond of iniquity.

So he wanted the gift of God, and he thought it could be purchased with money. And Peter told him that he was in bitterness. Just as James here warned of having bitter envying and strife in your hearts. He was envious at the apostles, and wanted the gift of God for himself. But it isn't something that you can purchase with money. You can't just go to seminary and acquire it. Peter told him that the thought of his heart was wicked. He was in the gall of bitterness, with bitter envying and strife in his heart. He wanted to be able to glory in the gift of God. And Peter said it can't be purchased with money, you've got no part nor lot in it.

You know, once again this is contrary to religion. In most religions, if you have the money, or follow the right set of steps, men will make you a master. They'll make you a priest, or teacher, or bishop, or pastor. But that's not the way God's church works. Men don't ordain the gift of God. It can't be purchased with money. It is a special gift that God endues people with. It's his doing, it's by his grace, it's from above. It is a gift of God. And if you don't get it that way, but instead have bitter envying and strife in your heart, then glory not, and lie not against the truth.

We find an example of what this envying and strife is like in 1 Corinthians chapter 3. James said that a little fire will kindle a whole great matter. And that's what happens, when there is a teacher like that, or just some people like that within the church who want to glory. The whole church ends up getting embroiled.

1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you **envying**, and **strife**, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

So in the church in Corinth they'd chosen up sides, striving about these different ministers. One person is for Paul, another is for Apollos. Paul says that they're walking after their flesh. They're carnal.

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

You believed these different ministers, as the Lord gave to every man. They were ministering of the ability which God giveth, the gift that he gave to each of them.

It isn't their own selves that they were promoting, they were just ministers of the gift of God.

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

So it is God that had given these men their gift, their ministry. And so it was God that was working here through each of them.

That's the way that it should be. You shouldn't have people teaching just because they want the glory of it, just for envy and strife. They should be doing it as the Lord gives to every man.

But the Corinthians were stirring up envying and strife even so, because they all had envying and strife in their hearts, and they were walking after their hearts, they were carnal.

Paul goes on to say, in verse 18:

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

So Paul says don't try to teach us out of the wisdom of this world, and think that you're going to be a minister to the church. One who's not ministering as God gave to every man, but this world's wisdom. Don't do that.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

So glory not, and don't deceive yourself, lie not against the truth.

Be not many masters, ministering the wisdom of this world, the wisdom of envy and strife.

Verse 15

James 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

He said if there is envying and strife as a part of your wisdom, then you aren't the wise man, endowed with knowledge, that James is talking about. That's not wisdom from above, that's not wisdom you've received of God. He hasn't endowed you with that, with wisdom that causes strife. That wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish.

You didn't get that from God. You got it either from the world, the flesh, or the devil. But you didn't get it from God. So sit down and stop talking. All you are doing is stirring up strife. Don't try to be a master. Glory not, and lie not against the truth.

That isn't from above.

Remember how James said:

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from **above**, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

So that's not the kind of gift that comes from above, from God. Every good gift is from above. You may have asked him for wisdom, as James directed, but that isn't wisdom that comes from him.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

So he told them then, not to be swift to speak, to be a speaker, a teacher, a master. But to be swift to *hear*, and *slow* to speak, and slow to wrath. Not to stir up envy and strife.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Instead of speaking, he wanted them to receive the word with meekness.

And so he's telling them that again here. Be *hearers* and doers of the word. That's what they should strive for. Not to be a *teacher* of it, unless they've received the wisdom that is from above, unless they've been endowed with wisdom and knowledge. Then they can show out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom.

But if they have envy and strife in their hearts, then glory not, that wisdom isn't from above, it is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Jude 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

*20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto
eternal life.*

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

*23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the
flesh.*

*24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the
presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

*25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and
ever. Amen.*

Verse 16

James 3:16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

That wisdom is not from God, that teaching is not from God, that word is not from God, because
it causes confusion, and every evil work.

Every good gift and perfect gift is from above. But this is not good and perfect.

Instead of being a good work, this is going to cause every evil work.

And so in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says in so many words that God is not the author of confusion:

1 Corinthians 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a
psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be
done unto edifying.

He said, you come together, everybody has something to say.

And he's not necessarily saying that that is bad. If God is giving you all of that, that is good. But
you shouldn't just have something to say because you want to have something to say. Let all
things be done unto edifying.

Only let those speak that are actually going to edify the church.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by
course; and let one interpret.

So he said be not many speakers in tongues. At the most two or three at a meeting of church.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself,
and to God.

But they should only be speaking if there is an interpreter, someone to translate what they are
saying in an unknown tongue. That's a gift of the Spirit.

And if there isn't an interpreter, someone with that gift, then what they are saying isn't edifying
anybody else, so they shouldn't be allowed to say anything.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

And the same for prophets, let just two or three of them speak.

Be not many prophets.

And let somebody who has the gift of discernment, discerning of spirits, another prophet, stand by and judge. And only let those speak that are deemed worthy by them.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

And again, only one at a time. If God reveals something to somebody else, then let them speak, and the other person stop.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

And he said, if God gives you all the gift of prophecy, so that you prophesy one by one like that, that's great. That's edifying the church.

But otherwise, be not many masters, many speakers in the church.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of **confusion**, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

And they *can* hold their peace when it is another's time to speak, when God has given somebody else something to say, to edify them with.

God only intends for one to be speaking at a time, so if they keep talking, they'll be speaking their own words, and not God's.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

That wisdom descends not from above.

It is earthly, sensual, and *devilish*. Not from God.

And so it says:

Isaiah 41:29 Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and **confusion**.

It is not God that authors confusion. But false gods, devils, and false prophets, those that follow them. That is where confusion comes from.

And we see an example of that in Acts 19:

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

So it would be found out that their works were nought, just wind and vanity.

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with **confusion**: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was **confused**; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

So that's what false gods, false teachers, and devilish wisdom do. They cause confusion, and raise up strife. The whole city was in an uproar.

That's what happens to the church when people are many masters, not endued with wisdom from above, but teaching wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

But they shouldn't be speaking that wisdom that causes strife, and confusion, and every evil work.

So let them be but a few masters, who speak the word with meekness.

Now, what are these "evil works," that he's talking about, in particular?

Well, things like Demetrius did there.

And he wasn't alone. Paul speaks in Timothy, about another man, who was a coppersmith, named Alexander, and about his *evil works*:

2 Timothy 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much **evil**: the Lord reward him according to his **works**:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

So just like Demetrius the silversmith, this man greatly withstood Paul's words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

And in fact, Paul was thrown to lions there in Ephesus. But he was delivered.

Remember how he said in 1 Corinthians 15:32 that "after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus."

So this man got Paul thrown to the lions. But God delivered him, and he fought with the beasts and overcame them.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every **evil work**, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

And so that was an evil work, a work done by somebody to try to bring evil upon him, and keep the word of God from being spoken. By somebody trying to lie against the truth, and promote vain religion, for filthy lucre's sake, instead of the word of God being preached.

That's an evil work.

Paul says:

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

So just as James told them to rejoice, Paul told them to rejoice.
And he also gave them some warnings:

2 Beware of dogs, beware of **evil workers**, beware of the concision.

“Beware of dogs,” ewww, that’s not very nice.
But he says that there are these dogs, and evil workers, and the concision.
And he explains what he’s talking about:

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

So he’s talking about the circumcision, those that are following the Jewish religion, and have confidence in the flesh.

They are teaching sensual wisdom, fleshly wisdom.
And so he lists them along with evil workers, and dogs.
Because that wisdom leads to envy and strife and every evil work.

Do you notice something about these evil works?

These evil works were works.

They were works done in the name of religion, in defense of religion. Whether paganism or Judaism.

These were works, religious works. But they were evil.

They were to do evil, do harm to other people that they disagreed with, because of envy and strife.

That’s the way that the term evil works is consistently used in the NT.

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own **works** were **evil**, and his brother's righteous.

Remember how we talked about this as we went through Hebrews.

Cain slew his brother because his own works were evil.

And what was that evil work? It was a religious work, a work done in the name of service to God.

He offered sacrifice, an offering of the fruit of the earth.

And God rejected it, John says that work was evil, and his brother righteous.

And so Cain killed his brother, because of envy. He envied that God had accepted Abel’s offering.

John said, he was of the wicked one. His works were evil, his wisdom was devilish.

And so you see, this is what James is talking about here when he says evil works.

He's talking about people trying to do a work, being a master in the church. But doing it for envy and strife. And that will cause confusion. That's not a faith justifying work, that's an evil work, and it will lead to more evil works.

You'll envy your brothers that God has accepted their work, and you'll maybe even try to kill them.

That's pretty much the history of religion.

Verse 17

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

So that was what earthly wisdom is like. But this is what the wisdom from above is like. If your wisdom isn't like this, then it isn't from God, you haven't been endued with knowledge, and you shouldn't be a master in the church.

PURE

He said, it's first pure.

You know, people are OK with that peaceable and gentle stuff. That's really popular today, everybody wants to be peaceable. Let's all just get along, in one big ecumenical family.

And James has to go and throw a monkey wrench into it for them.

He says that the wisdom that is from above is *first pure*.

First pure, *then* peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated.

Even people's Bibles today, they want their Bible to be peaceable and gentle. But they're not pure. So you know that they're not from above. The words of the LORD, are pure words. The wisdom from above, is first pure.

And so we talked a lot about purity as we went through Psalm 12.

And really, this is what Psalm 12 was about: pure wisdom, versus earthly wisdom.

Psalms 12:1 Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

They were speaking vanity, and it had led to great strife and confusion in Israel.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

So they wanted to all be their own masters, speaking their own words.

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

But God gave his pure words, to keep men faithful.

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

So don't exalt vile men. Don't be many masters. When that happens, the wicked walk on every side. It leads to confusion and every evil work.

And so your wisdom must be the wisdom from above, that is first pure.

And Paul also cites pureness as the first sign of his apostleship:

2 Corinthians 6:3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

So he spoke of giving no offense, just as James talked about offending not in word:

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

He said regardless of circumstances, we approve ourselves as the ministers of God. And here's how:

6 By **pureness**, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

And so the first thing that Paul said approved them as ministers of God, was pureness. The wisdom that a master speaks must be first pure, it must be from above.

That's the defining characteristic.

If you'll think back, James actually used the term pure once before in his epistle, at the end of chapter 1. He said:

James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 **Pure** religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

So he talked about somebody seeming to be religious, but bridling not their tongue. Not having true religion, pure religion.

And now he speaks of people seeming to be masters, but not bridling their tongue, not having true wisdom, pure wisdom.

Really, he's talking about the same thing, just from a little different angle. He's once again warning them against religion, against teaching their own wisdom, earthly wisdom, sensual wisdom, devilish wisdom. Because that is what the religious teach. And it leads to every evil work.

But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure. Pure religion, that includes a meek and bridled tongue, speaking the knowledge that it's been endowed with from God, from God's word, not the wisdom from below. Not the fires of the tongue, set on fire of hell. But the wisdom from above.

PEACEABLE

First pure, then peaceable.

In the sermon on the mount Christ said:

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the **pure** in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called the children of God.

So again, pure, and peaceable.

Again:

Mark 9:50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have **peace** one with another.

So they should first have the salt of the pure word, the savor of true faith, and then also have peace one with another.

It needs to be pure. But then it also should be peaceable.

There are a lot of people that want to be peaceable, but not pure. And there are also a lot of people that want to be pure, and not peaceable.

But if your wisdom is pure, if it *is* wisdom from above, then it should also be peaceable.

As it said:

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of **peace**, as in all churches of the saints.

If it is the wisdom from above it will be pure, but it will also be peaceable. God doesn't create confusion, but peace.

And you say, what exactly does that peaceable wisdom look like?

Well, most people will point out any time that something is "causing division" in the church, and they'll say that's wrong. It is the fault of that doctrine, and whoever is teaching that doctrine, and they need to stop.

But just because some wisdom is peaceable, doesn't mean it will never result in division or strife. That's not what peaceable means.

As James said above, in many things we offend all. People are going to get offended sometimes. We talked about that last week.

They'll be offended because the wisdom you are teaching is pure, but that doesn't mean that it isn't also peaceable.

You see, to be peaceable is simply not to have a purpose or intent of causing division. To not be divisive in nature. That is, a wisdom that isn't about dividing people into different groups, that doesn't place people in different camps.

To give an example of how the Bible uses the term, think back on the story of Sheba the son of Bichri, a man of Benjamin, who opposed David after he came back from defeating Absalom. So there is this division, this strife in Israel.

And so David sent Joab the captain of the army to go to the city where Sheba was, and destroy him.

And here is what a wise woman of that city told Joab as he was fighting against them:

2 Samuel 20:19 I am one of them that are **peaceable** and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

And so she said that she was peaceable. She and her city didn't have anything against them.

They were peaceable. Why was Joab attacking them?

They weren't trying to divide off and follow another king, they were faithful to the throne of David.

And so they turned Sheba over to Joab when he requested, and he stopped fighting against their city.

So she was peaceable, she wasn't trying to divide off, to cause a rift, a split.

And yet someone was fighting against her city. But it wasn't her fault, she was peaceable.

And so in saying that the wisdom from above is peaceable, that is what James is talking about.

That the wisdom from above doesn't teach that there is a division in the body of Christ. It doesn't tell them to be at strife against their brothers.

It doesn't tell them to be of Paul, or of Apollos.

It is a peaceable wisdom, that doesn't divide the church up, doesn't teach that the body is divided, doesn't seek for that, but it is peaceable.

Paul talks about that:

Ephesians 2:14 For he is our **peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making **peace**;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

So Paul said that by his death Christ abolished the enmity, the doctrine of enmity. The commandments contained in ordinances.

Ordinances that specified a middle wall of partition to be between them, to be between Jew and Gentile.

Ordinances that set some people apart.

But Christ is our peace, he abolished that, and reconciled us both into one body.

He made peace, and preached peace to all far and near.

And so you see, the wisdom that was earthly and sensual, the wisdom in the law, was a wisdom that wasn't peaceable.

It put difference between Jew and Gentile.

It put them at strife, where the Jews were in a separate division, they were better than the Gentiles, they were special.

But the faith of Christ, the word that Christ has now preached, is a peaceable wisdom. A wisdom where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.

And that is something that is radically different from religion. Both Judaism and the rest of the world's religions.

All religions teach wisdom that is not peaceable. That delineates divisions among adherents.

Some people are holier than others, some people are in a special group.

They'll teach that you need to separate yourself from everything and everyone, and by being divisive, by dividing yourself from the rest, you are more holy, that has more merit.

It is a wisdom of division. Not a peaceable wisdom.

And that is the kind of wisdom that these Jews that James is writing to are used to hearing.

They are used to the wisdom of Judaism, which wasn't peaceable.

And he's telling them not to keep speaking that kind of wisdom. Not to keep teaching the kind of divisive wisdom taught by religion.

But instead to have the peaceable wisdom, from above.

The wisdom that is pure, and that is for everyone, a wisdom that doesn't place people into divisions, but treats all people equally. A peaceable wisdom that doesn't lead to strife and envy.

So again, he's still warning them against religion, still warning them against holding onto aspects of Judaism. But instead to recognize the wisdom that is from above, that is pure and peaceable.

And so let them not be many masters, if that is the kind of wisdom that they're going to teach, that they've just brought over from religion. Instead their teachers should be those endowed with wisdom from above, that they might be peaceable.

GENTLE

It is first pure, then peaceable, and *gentle*.

1 Thessalonians 2:1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

So he said they preached with much contention. There were those that opposed the gospel, and they contended against them.

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

They weren't lying against the truth, or speaking filthiness:

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

But they were meek, speaking the word of God that he had endued them with.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

And he said, "we didn't make a lot of ourselves, as apostles. We gloried not, and lied not against the truth."

7 But we were **gentle** among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

But instead they were gentle.

Not puffed up. Not glorying. Not making themselves seem high and unapproachable as the ministers of God.

But they were gentle.

Just as a nurse cherishes her children.

He said, "we just wanted to pick you up and hold you to our breast. We were close and intimate. We weren't somebody you were scared of, but somebody that gave you comfort, and the milk of the word."

They were gentle.

They contended much with those that opposed the gospel, and didn't seek to please men. They were first pure.

But then they were also gentle.

And so in 2 Timothy Paul tells Timothy how he should behave as a minister of God, and he tells him to be gentle:

2 Timothy 2:23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be **gentle** unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

So when others try to strive against you, you shouldn't strive with them, with your brethren. You should be gentle unto all men, and apt to teach. Speaking pure wisdom to them, that is peaceable and gentle. In meekness. Seeking not to have strife, but that they might hear and recover themselves from the snare of the devil, from that devilish wisdom that causes strife, and that they might repent, and acknowledge the truth of the wisdom that you speak, from above.

So it isn't peace and gentleness by shutting up. But by teaching God's word, the wisdom from above, with meekness, and not striving. Avoiding those that will try to strive, and bring up foolish and unlearned questions. But avoiding strife, and instead teaching the word, with gentleness unto all men.

Just as Paul said, they were gentle as a nurse cherisheth her children. Giving them milk. Speaking the word to them. That they might grow. That is gentleness.

EASY TO BE INTREATED

For the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated.

To be gentle is to be easy to be intreated. Just as the nurse picks up and holds the babe that cries. She is easy to be intreated. She hears, and offers nourishment.

So should a teacher hear, and offer the sincere milk of the word.

He should be willing to forgive, show mercy, and accept repentance. And also to recognize when he has not been offering the milk that he should, when he has not been speaking the pure wisdom from above. He should be easy to be intreated, and full of mercy.

GOOD FRUITS

And he should also be full of good fruits.

Matthew 7:16 [Jesus said:] Ye shall know them by their **fruits**. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth **good fruit**; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil **fruit**.

So he told them “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

And in the same way, by your own fruits you should know yourself, whether you are fit to be a master, whether you are speaking the wisdom from above. If it is the wisdom from above, then it should be full of good fruits.

And that wisdom that isn't from above isn't.

We've seen how Jude describes that:

Jude 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose **fruit** withereth, without **fruit**, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

So Jude described those wicked people, who had come into the church, teaching wicked and filthy doctrine, as have fruit that withered, so that they were without fruit.

And so the wisdom from below doesn't bear good fruit. What fruit it does seem to bear withers before it ever gets ripe.

But the wisdom that is from above is full of good fruits.

WITHOUT PARTIALITY

Without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Remember in chapter 2 James warned of being partial in themselves, and being judges having evil thoughts. He rebuked them for treating the rich special, putting him above a poor man.

And he says, the wisdom from above doesn't do that.

The wisdom from above isn't divisive, it is peaceable, and not partial. It doesn't divide people up that way, and treat some of them different. It is gentle, and full of mercy, and without partiality.

WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

And without hypocrisy.

And that's what James has been combatting here all along. Hypocrisy.

He's been telling them that they need to be consistent. Their words need to be consistent with their actions. Their actions need to be consistent with their words. And their words and actions need to be consistent with the word of God.

They need to not be saying one thing and doing another, and they need to not be partial, treating some people differently. They need to be without hypocrisy.

And so the wisdom from above is without hypocrisy. It is peaceable, gentle, and without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

You don't treat one group of people special, and another group differently. You don't treat others one way, but hold yourself to a different standard. It is without hypocrisy.

In the sermon on the mount Jesus said:

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

So the same thing that James said before, about how you'll be judged without mercy by others, if you show them no mercy.

And that's also relevant to what he's saying here about others condemning you, because you've offended them. They're going to especially judge a master, more harshly.

So they especially have to be careful. They can't be hypocrites:

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou **hypocrite**, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

So if you are trying to correct your brother, but you've got your own bigger problem, then you're a hypocrite.

Jesus said, don't try to correct your brother, first get yourself on track. You've got the bigger problem, and you can't see to help him until you fix it anyway.

And so James says the same thing. Don't be a master then. Because you need to speak the wisdom that is from above, and the wisdom from above is without hypocrisy.

1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and **hypocrisies**, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

So you need to lay aside hypocrisies, and envies and strifes, and receive the word.

And so the teacher of the word needs to be someone who is speaking that wisdom without hypocrisy.

And you know, Jesus described the hypocrites of his day. Here are some things that accompany hypocrites:

Matthew 15:7 Ye **hypocrites**, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

So they say they serve God, but they aren't doers of the word. They say they are serving God, but they worship him in vain, because they don't keep his commandments. They don't teach his doctrines, instead they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They're deceiving their own heart. Their religion is vain. And that's what it is. Just religion. Not the word of God, but the commandments of men. They're hypocrites.

Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

So you see, their religion was vain. They didn't have pure and undefiled religion, where you visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Instead they devour widows houses. They're hypocrites.

Matthew 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Religious. They have all of this ceremonial outward holiness and cleanliness, but within they are filthy.

So again, they're hypocrites. Religious hypocrites, who don't do the word, just the commandments of men.

But the wisdom that is from above is without hypocrisy.

Paul warns Timothy of the same things:

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
2 Speaking lies in **hypocrisy**; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

They'll speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrines of devils, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

So their wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish.

It has hypocrisy.

It's just vain religion, telling you what to eat, and what not to. That's what religions do. Like Islam or Catholicism. They'll tell you abstain from eating this or that at certain times.

But that's not wisdom from above. That's the wisdom of hypocrisy. That's devilish wisdom.

Likewise, they'll tell you to abstain from marrying. They'll tell you that if you want to be a priest, a bishop, a master in the church, that you can't marry.

And again, Paul calls that a doctrine of devils.

That's not the wisdom from above. That is just vain religion, of devilish wisdom. With lies and hypocrisy.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, the peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Verse 18

James 3:18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

This is basically a summary of what he's said in this chapter.

He told them in the last chapter that they need to be having faith, a faith that is a working faith. That their righteousness should be bearing fruit.

But he's been warning them against being many masters, against thinking that that is the way that many people should be showing their faith.

He said no, you're going to offend people that way, you're not going to bridle your tongue, and you're going to be condemned. Not justified.

You're going to stir up strife. That's not faith. That's not a good work. That's not the fruit of righteousness.

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

It is those that speak the peaceable wisdom that is from above, that sow the fruit of righteousness.

Those that are endued with knowledge.

So be not many masters. Only those that have been given the wisdom from above, and endued with that knowledge. That will sow the fruit of righteousness in peace. Not with strife and envying.

So what is the fruit of righteousness, exactly?

Well, it is the fruit that comes from righteousness, the fruit that righteousness bears.

He said earlier "full of mercy and good fruits." So that could be any fruit. But again, he's talking about the fruit of faith, the evidence of faith, the justification of faith, and not thinking that just anybody can get that through being master.

He's stating a general principle, the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, and applying it specifically to the particular fruit he's just been talking about. Being a teacher of the word.

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, so if you are going to be sowing that fruit of righteousness, then you need to do it in peace.

If you think back, Paul said this in Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the **peaceable fruit of righteousness** unto them which are exercised thereby.

So Paul told the Jews that their chastening yields the fruit of righteousness, and that that is a peaceable fruit. That in the end, they'll receive peace, they'll enter into God's reset. They'll not more be experiencing chastening and persecution.

So the fruit of righteousness ultimately yields peace. And so it must also be sown in peace, not with strife and envying.

And so like in the parable of the sower, there are those that are called to sow the word, to sow the fruit of righteousness. And they should sow it in peace.

Amos 6:12 Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned *judgment* into gall, and the **fruit of righteousness** into hemlock:

13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

So there it paralleled the fruit of righteousness, with judgement. Speaking justice. And he said that instead of bearing good fruit, their fruit was hemlock. It was a deadly poison. Instead of speaking true judgement and righteousness, he said that they rejoiced in a thing of nought. Their mouth was full of naughtiness, and they gloried in their own strength. They were glorying, and lying against the truth.

And so that is what James is warning against here. That's not how the fruit of righteousness is sown. It is sown in peace of them that make peace.

They each need to be bearing the fruits of righteousness, so that all men can see and justify their faith.

But the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace.

And so if they are going to be a master, if that is the fruit that God has called them to, to speak his word, then they need to do it with peace, as one that makes peace.

And if it isn't, if they are going to stir up envy and strife, then they surely are going to offend all, they're not going to be justified, they're going to be condemned.

So be not many masters, but who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let *him* show out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom.

Not with envy and strife. Not with hypocrisy and partiality. But first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and the good fruits of righteousness, sown in peace, of him that makes peace.