

Introduction

1. Read about Neal, kind, loveable man in small town who was considered quite simple.<sup>1</sup>
    - a. People would approach him w/offer of dime or nickel. Every time take larger coin.
    - b. One day man couldn't take anymore. *Don't let these people fool you any longer.*
    - c. *Nickel is larger but dime is worth twice as much money.* Neal whispered, *I know that.*
    - d. *But if I start taking the dimes, they'll stop offering me money.*
  2. Sometimes the people we think are foolish turn out to be wise. (And vice versa.)
    - a. This man = world-famous geneticist & Harvard graduate. Brilliant man. (Show)
    - b. He is serving a 14yr prison sentence for child abuse. His lawyer said (at news meeting),
    - c. *Nothing about having an I.Q. of 176 means you have good judgment.*<sup>2</sup>
  3. We assume if we are smart we are automatically wise. But that is just not always true.
  4. What is true wisdom? How can we tell a fool from a wise person? James takes up in 3:13.
  5. There it is. How know if we are wise/understanding vs. not. (Show Title/Text)
  6. James answers 3 questions: *What is wisdom? How can you tell a fool? How can you tell a wise person?*
- I. **WHAT IS WISDOM (v. 13)?** - Wisdom has two qualities.
- A. Wisdom Is How You Behave. - Let him show by his good conduct his deeds.....
    1. show = make known character of something by [observable means].<sup>3</sup>
    2. True wisdom results not so much in what one thinks or says as in what one does<sup>4</sup>
      - a. Heard it said, *Wisdom is not what you know, but what you do w/what you know.*
      - b. *A smart person knows what to say; a wise person knows whether or not to say it.*<sup>5</sup>
      - c. And we might add knows how to say it and when to say it.
    3. Now we know why James follows his teaching about the tongue w/teaching on wisdom.
    4. It takes wisdom to be able to use our tongues properly.
  - B. Wisdom Is How You Relate.
    1. Notice the one feature of wisdom that James points out is meekness, gentleness.
    2. Has to do w/how you carry yourself in relation to others. Meekness is a relational word.
    3. Wisdom has to do w/how you handle yourself in relationships.
    4. Key word is meekness, gentleness. A wise person relates to others meekly.
      - a. Meekness gets a bad rap. Meekness = weakness. Meekness is a joke to many.
      - b. We think meek person is 1 who is wimpy, pushed around, no backbone, etc.
        - i. In 1st 5 books of O.T., meekness only used of Moses (Num. 12:3). No wimp.
        - ii. Only time Jesus described His personality = meek (Mt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1).
      - c. Meek was used of tamed animals, soothing medicine, a mild word, a gentle breeze.<sup>6</sup>
        - i. Wrangler at Lk Ellen said quarter horses = 800-1300lbs. Powerful animals.

<sup>1</sup> "The Wisdom of the Simple" <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/1998/december/5526.html>. Accessed 9/22/16.

<sup>2</sup> Wm. French Anderson. <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2006/october/5100206.html>. "The Buzz," World (7-29-06), p. 12. Accessed 9/22/16.

<sup>3</sup>Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT based on Semantic Domains*.

<sup>4</sup>Martin, Ralph P. *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 48: James*

<sup>5</sup> Unknown. <http://i.quoteaddicts.com/media/q3/1317766.png>. Accessed 9/22/16.

<sup>6</sup>Colin Brown, *NIDNTT*, vol. 2, pp. 256-257.

- ii. Tame horses, as powerful as they are, are mild and gentle towards people.<sup>7</sup>
- d. Meek people can be tough as nails, but mild in their dealings with others.
  - i. In some languages meekness is rendered not being harsh w/people.<sup>8</sup>
  - ii. In other instances = always speaking softly or not raising one's voice.<sup>9</sup>
- e. In face of provocation & conflict meek control emotions & show courtesy/respect.
- f. Excellent description of what meekness involves. (Show)<sup>10</sup>
- 5. Remember our conclusion on how to transform the tongue? (Show)
  - a. Clean tongue can only come from a cleansed heart, John 15:3.
  - b. Careful tongue can only come from a prayerful heart, Psalm 19:14.
  - c. Helpful tongue can only come from a meek heart, James 3:13.
- 6. Now see where meekness comes from. From Jesus & heart submitted to Him.

## II. HOW CAN YOU TELL A FOOL (VV. 14-16)?

### A. 2 Characteristics of Foolishness (v. 14):

#### ① Bitter jealousy = harsh zeal

- a. Term translated jealousy or envy is Greek word ζήλος [ze/los] = "Zealots."
- b. Zealots = Jewish party felt Roman occupation was illegal and so used violence.
- c. Zealots'd hide dagger in cloak & secretly murder Romans in crowds in Jerusalem.
- d. zeal = negatively one jealously ambitious to attain what want/promote viewpoint.
- e. Add to it the term bitter/harsh and here is what it refers to . . . .
  - *It refers to a person with a contentious spirit.*
  - *So convinced they are right they will argue and quarrel easily.*

#### ② selfish ambition = rivalry

- a. Outside NT used only of a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means<sup>11</sup>
- b. It refers to the politician who is merely interested in winning the election, thus attaining his purpose. . . . During the political race, this politician has really brought out everything that he could to convey a bad impression in the minds of others about his rival. . . . [he] seeks to push himself forward by keeping others down in the esteem of others.<sup>12</sup>
  - *It is politicking to rally others to your side.*
    - a. So determined to push our point of view/cause we seek to win others to our side.
    - b. So we spread what is unkind, unnecessary or even untrue to gain followers.

### B. 3 Sources of Foolishness (v. 15)

1. Do not boast & be false to the truth. Don't claim how wise we are. Don't deny reality.
2. If claim to be wise & not characterized by meekness, we are lying against the truth.
3. Such wisdom not come down from heaven, but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.
4. There are 3 enemies of the Christian, and they are all right here.

<sup>7</sup> A little child can stroke the nose of what was once a wild stallion w/o so much as a snort because it is tamed.

<sup>8</sup>Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The Beatitudes. <http://slideplayer.com/slide/3778946/>. Slide 9. Accessed 9/22/16.

<sup>11</sup>Aristotle alone uses it as quoted by Martin, Ralph P. *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 48: James*

<sup>12</sup>Zodhiates, op. cit.

→ **Earthly, natural, demonic = the world, the flesh, the devil**

- a. Whoever = harsh zeal for viewpoint & goes around politicking is not listening heaven.
- b. Instead listening to the unsaved world, own sinful human flesh, the devil himself.

▪ **Strong feelings + harsh zeal + politicking = Hell's wisdom. (Show)**

- a. I learned something from Marquette Police officer Craig Marker. He said,
- b. **Most people do not want to fight. Try avoid.** Assumed learned as policeman.
- c. If someone does like to fight, mix it up, be contentious = serious problem.

C. **2 Results of Foolishness (v. 16)**① **Disorder = confusion; constant unrest between people**② **Every evil practice**

- a. Backbiting, accusation, rudeness, manipulation, lashing out, striking back

Conclusion

1. Taylor University is a Christian college in Indiana. Years ago, they were pleased to learn that an African student, Sam, was going to be enrolling in their school. This was before it was commonplace for international students to come to the U.S. to study. He was a bright young man with great promise, and the school felt honored to have him. When he arrived on campus, the President of the University took him on a tour, showing him all the dorms. When the tour was over, the President asked Sam where he would like to live. The young man replied, "If there is a room that no one wants, give that room to me." The President turned away in tears. Over the years he had welcomed thousands of Christian men and women to the campus, and none had ever made such a request.<sup>13</sup>
2. Let's affirm together the necessity and power of the wisdom of meekness →
3. If we want your kids to love our Jesus they must see in our dealings the meekness of wisdom.
4. If we want your spouse to listen to your words you must treat him/her w/the meekness of...
5. If we want to win the confidence of your parents they must see in us the meekness of...
6. If we want our church to respect our leadership you must lead in the meekness of wisdom.
7. If we want our unsaved friends to know our Savior we must show them the meekness of...

<sup>13</sup> Bryan Wilkerson, in his sermon "In God We Trust (Though We'd Rather Pay Cash)," [www.preachingtoday.com](http://www.preachingtoday.com). Accessed 9/23/16.