

BOOK OF JAMES
WHO IS A WISE MAN?
JAMES 3:13

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INTRODUCTION

"A young man was promoted to fill the position of a senior officer with a brilliant record who had just retired from the company. The young man asked his predecessor for the secret to his success. The old man answered, 'Two words: right decisions.' The young man then asked, 'But how do you make right decisions?' Again the older man answered, this time even more tersely than before, 'Experience.' 'And how do you get this experience?' The young man asked once more. 'Two words' answered the old man, 'wrong decisions.' "

(ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS)

The Apostle James asked the question, "**WHO IS A WISE MAN AND ENDUED WITH KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOU?**"(James 3:13)

So many have their own opinions about what constitutes a "**WISE MAN.**" Nonetheless, what saith the Scriptures? How does Scripture define the **wise**? God's Word speaks repeatedly about this topic! In this message I want us to look at what the Scripture says about the "**WISE MAN**" so that we can examine ourselves and see how we compare!

I. A WISE MAN WILL HEAR!

Proverbs 1:5 says, "**A wise man will hear...**"
"hear" = means "**hear intelligently.**"

Particularly that means that, a wise man **hears with attention and interest!** Some people **hear, but they don't hear**—
Do you know what I mean by that?

Proverbs 1:7—"But fools despise wisdom and instruction."

How important is it that we hear? Very important!!!

The Lord Jesus told us on two separate occasions - "**Take heed therefore HOW ye hear...**"(*Luke 8:18*) and "**Take heed WHAT ye hear...**"(*Mark 4:24*).

Throughout the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus is recorded as saying, "**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**"

Our resurrected Lord, when addressing the seven Churches in the Book of the Revelation said repeatedly in Revelation 2 and 3, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.**"

So the question is, **how is our hearing today?** Do we pay close attention to what is being said to us by those who are in spiritual authority over us? Do we **listen with attention and interest?**

II. A WISE MAN WILL INCREASE IN LEARNING!

Proverbs 1:5 – "**A wise man hear...and will increase learning.**"

Proverbs 9:9—"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser..."

A wise man is never "*at ease in Zion.*"(*Amos 6:1*) He is **always growing in grace and increasing in the knowledge of God!** He **readily receives instruction** and, therefore, **adds to his learning, insight, instruction, and teaching-power!**

How about us? Are we further along in our knowledge of the Word, for instance, than we were a year ago?

What do we do with the godly instruction that comes our way?

Do we apply it to our life and make ourself **wise in mind, in word, and in actions?** Or do we let it go "**in one ear and out the other!**"

With all of the instruction that we have received over the years, **are we able to teach others, or are we still having to be taught the first principles over and over again** because we're not grabbing hold of them? We're not to be like the Hebrew Christians addressed in the book of *Hebrews 5:12*—"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

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III. A WISE MAN IS OPEN TO RECEIVING COMMANDMENTS!

Proverbs 10:8—"The wise in heart will receive commandments, but a prating fool shall fall."

The wise person **accepts and lays hold to God's precepts from His Word!**

He understands that **his life is not his own** and that **he is to live not unto himself, but rather unto Him that died for him!**

How about us? Let's think about how we respond when God gives us a command? Is our attitude like that of Mary - *"...be it unto me according to thy Word..." (Luke 1:38)* or are we like the citizens in the Parable of the Nobleman - *"We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19:14)* Are we more like Paul who said, *"Lord what wilt thou have me to do" (Acts 9:6)* or are we more like Pharaoh who said *"Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice...?" (Exodus 5:2)*

Our **actions** determine whether or not we are truly **a wise person or just a wise guy!**

IV. A WISE MAN STORES UP KNOWLEDGE!

Proverbs 10:14—"Wise men lay up knowledge..."

A truly wise man hides wisdom and understanding from God's Word in his heart and mind. He is *"swift to hear"* and *"slow to speak" (James 1:19)* reserving his words for the right time, place, and audience.

How about us? Are we **storing up God's Word in our heart** for God to then **release it through us at the right time and in the right place to the right people?**

Matthew 12:35—"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

What kind of treasures are we storing up?

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V. A WISE MAN HAS DISCERNMENT!

Proverbs 16:21—"The wise in heart shall be called prudent..."
prudent = means *understanding*

Those who are wise, learned and intelligent will be recognized for their discernment, insight, and understanding in the matters of life! These are the ones with Wisdom from God!

How about us? Do we have our *"senses exercised to discern both good and evil"*? (*Hebrews 5:14*) Or are we still a babe on *milk (Hebrews 5:13)* controlled by emotions, whims, and fancies?

OR worse, are we *"tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Ephesians 4:14)?*

VI. A WISE MAN RECEIVES CORRECTION IN A RIGHT SPIRIT!

Proverbs 9:8 says, *"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."*

In other words, if you reprove and correct a wise man, he will have affection for you, truly love you, and consider you as his friend.

How about us? Are we like this Wise Man? How do we react to the correction of the brethren?

David welcomed reproof from the brethren. In fact, he considered it as something desirable - *"a kindness"* and an *"excellent oil"*!
Psalms 141:5—"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil..."

Is this how we feel when someone comes along and corrects us?

Do we love those whom God sends to sharpen us as iron?
Proverbs 27:17 "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

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Or are we like the scorner who hates those who reprove him?
Proverbs 9:8 "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."

Proverbs 12:15 says, "...he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

VII. A WISE MAN IS REMEMBERED FOR HIS WORDS!

Proverbs 15:7 says, "*The lips of the wise disperse knowledge...*"

A wise man is always scattering or spreading out wisdom and understanding wherever he goes.

Further, *Proverbs 15:2* tells us, "*The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright...*" In other words, his knowledge is well placed, spoken at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way to the right people.

As this knowledge spreads forth from their mouth, it brings forth two results in their life: First it preserves them! *Proverbs 14:3*—"*...The lips of the wise shall preserve them*". "*Preserve*" means it "*guards, protects, and keeps*" the wise man!

Second, it also serves as a medicine, cure, or remedy for the recipients needing wholeness and restoration!

Proverbs 12:18—"...the tongue of the wise is health"

How about us? Do our lips "*feed many*" with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding from God's Word? *Proverbs 10:21* *The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.*

Do we have the "*tongue of the learned*" where we speak a "*word in season*" to those who are weary? *Isaiah 50:4* "*The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*"

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Do our words protect us against every tongue that might rise against us in judgment ? *Isaiah 54:17*—"*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*"

Are our words medicine for those who are ailing in some way?

VIII. A WISE MAN FEARS AND DEPARTS FROM EVIL!

Proverbs 14:16 tells us, "*A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil...*"

This man lives under the holy restraint of the fear of the Lord.

Because of this, he avoids the "*path of the wicked*"; he does not travel on it; he turns from it and passes away from it!

Proverbs 4:15 "*Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*"

How about our lives? Do we fear God enough in our life to depart from evil? *Proverbs 16:6* *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

Are we walking on the "*highway of the upright*"

Proverbs 16:17 *The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.*

Are we abstaining from even the appearance of evil!

1 Thessalonians 5:22 "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*"

IX. A WISE MAN IS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS!

Proverbs 13:20 says, "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*"

The wise man leaves a marked impression on ALL. He provokes those about him to love and to good works!

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Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:"

He walks in the way of good men and keeps the paths of the righteous and influences others to do likewise. *Proverbs 2:20—"That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous."*

How about us? Are we a companion of all those who fear God and obey His commands? *Psalms 119:63 "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."*

What kind of company do we keep? Are we influencing others for Christ or are others influencing us for the world, the flesh, and the devil?

Someone once said, *"Show me his company, and I'll tell you the man."*

Another said, *"Let me know the company he keeps, and I shall easily guess his moral character."*

X. A WISE MAN WINS SOULS!

Proverbs 11:30 tells us, **"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: and he that winneth souls is wise."**

His life and measure of influence reaches far beyond the four walls of the Church building. He is a fruit-bearing tree that helps others find the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

Proverbs 24:5 says, **"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength."**

Because of his knowledge of the Word, he is alert, brave, courageous, determined, and solid in his faith, as he goes forth into the world as an able witness for the Lord!

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How about us? Are we **"strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"**? (*Ephesians 6:10*)

Are we **"mighty in the Scriptures"** like Apollos? (*Acts 18:24*)

Is our speech the way that Paul said it should be in: *Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."*

Can we "give an answer" the way that Peter said we should in: *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Do others just see US, or can they sense Jesus in us? *Galatians 2:20—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"*

CONCLUSION

The Apostle James asked the very pertinent question, **"WHO IS A WISE MAN AND ENDUED WITH KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOU?"** (*James 3:13*)

We have examined 10 basic traits from the Scriptures which depict those that are **WISE!**

Using these characteristics as a criteria of judgment, would the LORD consider us **WISE** or do we need to improve in one or more areas?

May we all go the Lord and ask for His enabling grace to be that **"WISE MAN"** that the Apostle James referred to in Chapter 3 of his book.

May the Lord Jesus take the areas of our weaknesses and help us turn them into areas that will bring forth glory for Him!