

Jealousy and Envy

James 3:13-17

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Historical Context- James is one of the earliest New Testament Books written. It was written to Jewish Christians who had begun to come under persecution for their faith and were not holding true to what they believed. The primary purpose of the book was a focus on practical action for the believer as he commanded each believer to pursue a life of holiness through proper conduct.

James 3:13—Show and Tell

- James starts off with a rhetorical question
 - **Wise-** pertaining to understanding that results in wise attitudes and conduct, wise
 - wise in that the wisdom is divine in nature and origin
 - **Understanding-** pertaining to being knowledgeable in a way that makes one effectual in the exercise of such knowledge, expert, learned, understanding
 - A wise person is a doer of the word. A foolish person knows what to do and does not do it (James 1:22-24)
- Those who are wise show it by:
 - Good Behavior
 - **Good-** pertaining to being in accordance at a high level with the purpose of something or someone, good, useful

- of moral quality (opp. αἰσχρός IAndrosIsis, Kyme 32) good, noble, praiseworthy, contributing to salvation etc.
 - **Behavior-** conduct expressed according to certain principles way of life, conduct, behavior
 - Our conduct or behavior maintains the standards of God
- o Deeds in the gentleness of wisdom
 - **Deeds-** that which displays itself in activity of any kind, deed, action
 - of the deeds of humans, exhibiting a consistent moral character
 - **Gentleness-** the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness in the older favorable sense
- o The actions that we do are based on God's word and are done with humility
- o Our faith should be evident by our works
 - We practice righteousness (1 John 3:7)
 - Faith without works is dead (Js.2:17)
 - You know a tree by its fruit (Lk. 6:44)
 - We love in deed and truth (1 John 4:18)

James 3:14—Jealousy and Selfish Ambition Lie against the Truth

- James starts off verse 14 with the conjunction “but”. He is comparing good behavior and deeds done in gentleness, to bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.
- **Bitter-** pertaining to being bitter in feeling or attitude, bitter, embittered, harsh
- **Jealousy-** intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, jealousy, envy

- **Heart-** as the center and source of physical life
 - as center and source of the whole inner life, w. its thinking, feeling, and volition
 - God commands us not to envy sinners (proverbs 23:17)
 - When we are jealous of others, we are really comparing ourselves to them and what they have. In doing this, we covet their success and belongings. By doing so, we show a lack of faith in God and what He is able to do for us.
- When we are jealous and selfish, we lie against the truth
 - **Arrogant-** to boast at the expense of another, boast against, exult over τινός someone or something
 - **Jesus Christ is the Truth**
 - Jesus says He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
 - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17)
 - The Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance all that Jesus said (John 14:26)
 - The Holy Spirit speaks only on what He hears from Jesus (John 16:13)
 - The moment we boast or show our jealousy and selfish ambition, we lie against Jesus who is the truth
 - We practice lawlessness when we are jealous (1 John 3:4)
 - We can't love God and hate our brother (1 John 4:20)

James 3:15-16—Demonic Wisdom & Disorder

- There are two types of Wisdom. James begins his comparison of wisdom from above and earthly wisdom
 - **Earthly**- pertaining to what is characteristic of the earth as opposed to heavenly, earthly
 - Earthly wisdom equals human philosophy
 - **Natural**- lit. pert. to the life of the natural world and whatever belongs to it, in contrast to the realm of experience whose central characteristic is πνεῦμα, natural, unspiritual, worldly
 - an unspiritual pers., one who merely functions bodily, without being touched by the Spirit of God
 - **Demonic**-originating from the lower spirit-world, infernal, demonic
 - This wisdom originates from evil in spiritual places (Eph 6:12)

- Where these things exist, you will find disorder and evil because God is not there
 - God shows his structure and order in Genesis chapter 1
 - God wants all things done with decency and order (1 Cor. 14:40)
 - God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33)

James 3:17—Wisdom from Above

- James here starts to list the characteristics of wisdom from above
 - Its pure first
 - **Pure**- holy, sincere, undefiled

- Before it is anything else, God's wisdom will always be pure and sincere.
This can sometimes cause division if people are not standing with Christ
(Matthew 10:34-36)
- After being pure, then it is;
 - **Peaceable**- pert. to being conducive to a harmonious relationship,

peaceable, peaceful
 - **Gentle**- not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, yielding,

gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant (not legalistic)
 - **Reasonable**- compliant, obedient
 - **Full of Mercy and Good Fruits**
 - **Unwavering**- pert. to not being uncertain, unwavering
 - **Hypocrisy**- pert. to being without pretense, genuine, sincere, lit. 'without
play-acting

What's the Antidote for Jealousy and Envy

- Remember that God has blessed us all with every blessing and given us all everything we need (Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3)
- Look out for others (Phil. 2:3-4)
- Remember that God will withhold nothing good from us (Psalm 84:11)