

Living God's Way in Today's World

Week 6 – How and Why to be Wise

Scripture: James 3:13-18

Message Mate

- If you are in a community and speaking into the life of another person, you can influence the culture of that community. As a person of influence, ask yourself, "What culture do you want to grow around you?" There are two types of cultures you can grow, one good and the other bad, and the one you grow depends on the type of wisdom you lead with. There are two types of wisdom, earthly and heavenly.
- The person of influence with earthly wisdom is self-oriented, seeing others as their rivals rather than brothers and sisters in Christ. Their bitter envy and selfish-ambition flows from their hearts, to affect what they think, say and do. Their perspective may be clouded by sin that forms the basis of default responses, without them realising it, or by denying the truth of that sin. King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, yet his significant sin severely affected his leadership. Earthly wisdom can be unspiritual (meaning not of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13) or demonic (Acts 8:9,10)). When a leader is driven by their own agenda, knowing and boasting about it, or unknowing because they are denying the truth, it has social and spiritual consequences that will ultimately lead to disorder and fracturing in their community.
- Heavenly wisdom is associated with the Holy Spirit (Gen 41:38,39, Exod 31:2,3) and is available to all who ask God for it (James 1:5). It is pure, meaning it is peace-loving, considerate of others, willing to submit to others provided it doesn't cause you to sin, full of mercy (loving your neighbour as yourself) and revealing good fruit. It does not cause divisions or factions and is not hypocritical, rather it is authentic and trustworthy. Godly leaders show heavenly wisdom by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom (Jam 2:13). This leads to a community united with love for one another, that promotes listening and authenticity, is teachable, and filled with trust for the good of the community. The social and spiritual consequences of heavenly wisdom is a community of peace and righteousness.
- If you want to grow in righteousness and a healthy God-centred culture, then ask Jesus to purify you and reveal the areas of known sin, as well as areas where truth is denied. Surrender this sin to Jesus and ask for forgiveness. Invite the Holy Spirit to give you heavenly wisdom and be true peace-makers who sow in peace so that we will reap a harvest of righteousness.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Discuss your experience of having a wise boss, instructor or teacher that demonstrates what James 3:13 reveals about a wise teacher, "Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom?"

2. Bitter envy and selfish ambition can lead to passionate leadership but is self-oriented. Are there areas of your life where your inner motives may be for more for your own success or achievements, rather than for the good of the Kingdom of God or community you are part of? Alternatively, are you influencing others with humility from God's perspective?
3. King Solomon was the wisest man, yet he denied sin in his life until it led to his downfall. Discuss the challenge of how wisdom can be clouded by sin and how to ensure that wisdom remains pure.
4. Discuss the statement, "What you grow will flow from whether you are driven by overt or hidden sin that leads to earthly wisdom, or whether you allow God to purify you so that you lead from heavenly wisdom."
5. Read James 3:17 and the list of 7 characteristics of heavenly wisdom. Look at the Message mates for more details and discuss which one of these you would want to grow in.
6. Read James 3:18 and discuss how you can sow in peace to reap a harvest of righteousness.

Pray –

Read the following quote from the message and pray for those you have influence over and the culture you are creating in your community.

"What culture do you want to grow around you?" There are two types of cultures you can grow, one good and the other bad, and the one you grow depends on the type of wisdom you lead with. There are two types of wisdom, earthly and heavenly.

Do you need wisdom? Pray through James 1:5.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5 NIV)