



SERIES: (FEBRUARY – MARCH) FAITH IN REAL LIFE

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Saturday, 03/12/2022

Scripture: James 3:16-18

TITLE: Whose Wisdom Do You Lean On?

Does the Bible teach karma? This is a question I threw at my junior high students not too long ago. I said if they could find a Biblical passage that teaches karma, I'd give them candy. So naturally, they all got on Google and searched for verses in the Bible that teach karma. The idea of karma is that you will receive in life what you give to others. If you do good, good things will happen to you, and if you do bad, bad things will happen to you. Several students came to me believing they'd found a Biblical passage that teaches karma. In today's passage, we will focus on one of the verses that came up many times. So let's take a closer look.

In James 3:16-18 (ESV), James says,

"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

For some background, the book of James is all about living out your faith. It's a book all about practical application; this is what it's supposed to look like to follow Jesus in word and deed! Just before this passage, James has been explaining how powerful and dangerous the human tongue can be because words are powerful! Sadly, we usually use our words to hurt people and spread evil. Also, James broke down the importance of wisdom. There are two types of wisdom. God's wisdom and the world's wisdom.

James 3:16-18 expands on this idea of wisdom. Verse 16 refers to the wisdom of this world, identifying that it leads to jealousy and selfish ambition. And where does that lead? Disorder! Vile practices! Another way to say that is, worldly wisdom spreads pride and anger! James then compares the product of worldly wisdom to what God's wisdom produces.

Verse 17 lists out the characteristics of people shaped by God's wisdom. As you read these, think about the heart of Jesus: "Pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." That is who Jesus is. Those who follow Him and walk in His wisdom become like Him in every way.

Now, think about our culture for a minute. Would we describe ourselves this way? Are we a people of peace? Gentle and open to reason? Always full of mercy, impartial and sincere? I think we know the answer. Our culture shaped by the wisdom of this world is angry, divisive, aggressive, prideful, and angry. We live in a world that wants to assert our own opinions before

we even listen to the thoughts of others. This is convicting to me. I realize that way too often; I lean on my wisdom or the wisdom of the world.

Lastly, we read that "[and a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.](#)" This is the passage many students tried to use against me to defend karma. But is that what it teaches? To sow is to plant seeds. This passage tells us that if we live a life in God's wisdom and continue to plant seeds throughout our life, the peace that comes from His Word, we will have a harvest of righteousness! That means we begin to live a life consistent with God's design for us. We live a life it is honoring to Him, and that produces Godly character and justice in all our interactions in relationships. So no, I don't think this is karma. This is saying that those who trust in the Gospel will have their hearts and minds shaped by the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of man, and it will result in a righteous life.

Now, will we take this wisdom from God and walk in it? We must be discerning and seek out what is the wisdom of God He's given us in his word. No wisdom of this world can truly produce righteousness. Only the truth of God can do that!