

Worldly Wisdom vs. Divine Wisdom

by Chuck Smith

The sermon contrasts worldly wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, with divine wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy and good fruits.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: James 3:13

Topics: "Wisdom", "Character Transformation"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the stark contrast between worldly wisdom and divine wisdom, as outlined in James 3:13-18. He explains that worldly wisdom is earthly, sensual, and devilish, leading to confusion and strife, while divine wisdom is pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy. Smith warns against the folly of relying on human understanding and urges believers to seek the wisdom that comes from God, which shapes their character and leads to righteousness. He encourages self-reflection on whether one is living by earthly or godly wisdom and the importance of allowing God to transform one's life. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for those seeking to embrace divine wisdom.

Transcript

This morning we'd like to draw your attention to the third chapter of James beginning with verse 13 where James declares, who is a wise man in do with knowledge among you let him show out of a good manner of life his works with meekness of wisdom but if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts glory not and lie not against the truth for this wisdom doesn't descend from above it is earthly it is sensual it is devilish for where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work but the wisdom that is from above is first pure then peaceable gentle easy to be entreated full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace so James here is going to be contrasting between earthly wisdom

and divine wisdom the wisdom that is of the world and the wisdom that is of God the characteristics of worldly wisdom is first of all that it is earthly it thinks only in the terms of the temporal advantage and it ignores eternal consequences it only is asking what will this do for me right now it doesn't look down the road and view the permanent damage that can come to my life if i continue in this particular practice it doesn't consider the long-term effects the dependency that it is creating and the permanent damage that it is doing it never asks if i continue on this road where is it leading me what will the end be it does not take the eternal omniscient god into consideration as the prophet isaiah wrote in 29 14 therefore god said

behold i will proceed to do a marvelous work among

the people and a wonder for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish woe to them that seek to hide their counsel from the lord and do their works in the dark and they think who can see us and who knows us they are like the potter's clay for they deny that god made them for they say he has no understanding david wrote reason it out you fools when will you think it through and be wise he that created your ear do you think that god can't hear he that created your eye do you think that god can't see paul tells us in romans that because they knew god they did not glorify him as god but neither were they thankful they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened and professing themselves to be wise they actually became fools because they worshiped and served the

creature rather than the creator who is blessed forevermore and they changed the glory of an incorruptible god and made it like unto an image made like corruptible man to birds four-footed beast and creeping things it's interesting to me today that so many men do not seek to relate themselves to god but they seek to relate themselves to the animal kingdom they don't realize that man has fallen from the image of god the bible tells us that when god created man he created man in his own image and he knows in his own likeness but rather than seeking to relate to god and to be restored to the image of god man seeks to relate himself to the animal kingdom and so he looks at the chimpanzee and he says looks a little bit like me and acts a lot like me maybe i have evolved from the chimp maybe i

am in higher order of evolution but related to the animal kingdom and on down the line within the animal kingdom that i am the product of blind chance over billions of years and we seek to believe that we have become the product of fortuitous occurrences of accidental circumstances through billions of years that i am related more to the primates and professing themselves to be wise paul said they become fools do you know how they postulate your ability to see billions of years ago as the worm was emerging out of the primordial ooze and it was exposed to the light rays of the sun a freckle formed on the upper part of this little worm and through billions of years this freckle developed nerves and formed into an eye and of course at the same time there evolved a brain so that the brain

could understand what the eye was seeing and as the little worm was wiggling on the rocks to try and propel itself it scratched itself it became a callus ultimately grew into legs over billions of years of time with little feet and that little worm became a salamander and you were on your way through the goo on through the zoo until it finally became you that you are the product of blind chance random chance through billions of years and then they try to pass it off as science evolution is a religion not a science believed only by fools who do not want to acknowledge the existence of god as david said the fool has said in his heart there is no god it takes more faith to believe it than to believe that in the beginning god created the heavens and the earth and god created man and place him

on this planet earth so james says of the earthly wisdom that it is sensual it appeals to our senses have you ever heard enjoy yourself it's later than you think or eat drink and be married because tomorrow you'll die the prophet isaiah wrote you have trusted in your wickedness you have said no one sees me and your wisdom and your knowledge you have perverted as you say in your heart i am self-existent and there is no one else beside me therefore he said evil shall come upon you you will not know from whence it has come mischief will befall you and you'll not be able to escape it and you shall be destroyed suddenly the wisdom of the earth earthy sensual and it is also devilish paul wrote but i fear less by any means as the serpent beguiled eve through his subtlety so your minds will be

corrupted from the simplicity that is in christ again writing to the corinthians 11 13 he said false apostles have come to you but they are deceitful workers as they transform themselves to the apostles of christ and no marvel for satan transforms himself into an angel of light therefore it's no wonder if his ministers seek to transform themselves as ministers of righteousness whose end shall be according to their works the wisdom of the world will come to nothing as paul wrote to the corinthians albeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect yet not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world that comes to nothing the wisdom of this world is foolishness with god according to paul for it is written he takes the wise in their own craftiness not just foolishness to god but

the wisdom of the world is just plain foolish if you look at it carefully and as paul said professing themselves to be wise they became fools now in contrast we have the wisdom that comes from god james here in verse 17 chapter 3 but the wisdom that is from above is first of all pure then peaceable gentle easy to be entreated full of mercy and good fruits and without partiality and without hypocrisy the wisdom that is from above solomon wrote in proverbs 2 6 for the lord gives wisdom and out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding and this wisdom that comes from the lord is first of all pure as david said in psalm 12 6 the words of the lord are pure words like silver that's been refined in the furnace in psalm 19 david said the commandment of the lord is pure enlightening the eyes

i've noticed a trend lately here in america that some of the young ministers across the country have started use vulgarity and filthy words in their sermons and i for the life of me cannot understand how a person professing to be a minister of god who is pure would use impure language from the pulpit i suppose they are looking for some kind of a shock value i dare say if i use some profanity you would all be shocked and you'd you know and it would have a shock value but i question as a servant of god as a representative of god who is absolutely pure i question the use of profanity not only from the pulpit just in my everyday life the wisdom that comes from god is pure secondly it is peaceable one of the names of jesus is he is the prince of peace as he was ready to leave his disciples he

said peace i give unto you not as the world gives goodbye unto you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid paul speaks of the peace of christ that passes human understanding the wisdom that comes from god it has a peaceful effect upon you it causes you to realize that god is in control and that all of your excitement or all of your energy that you might expend in trying to work out a situation is really not necessary god is going to take care of things and the peace of god which passes understanding just keeps your heart and your mind in the lord in hebrews 12 14 we're told follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man will see the lord and then the wisdom that comes from god is also gentle it's not harsh it's not abrasive in describing the fruit of the

spirit paul is saying that it is love and joy and peace and and gentleness in galatians he describes that kind of peace that we have from god and then the peace that comes from god is easy to be in treated that means you're not obstinate stubborn and when you have taken a position you don't hold to it even though it may be proven to be wrong but you cannot be persuaded to change your position you're not ready to yield to the truth when it is presented to you you're prone to say please don't confuse me with the facts my mind is made up and and the truth or doesn't really mean that much to you because you cannot be easily entreated but then this peace that comes from god brings mercy and good fruit now mercy is pity for the man who is suffering even if his suffering is his own fault so many

times when a person is going through a problem he said well he deserves it that nut did such crazy things you know he deserves what it's what's coming to him and and that isn't mercy mercy has sympathy it has

pity for that man who is suffering even though his suffering may be caused by what he has done we're prone to say well he brought it on himself but jesus said blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy it is said that when napoleon bonaparte was in a victory parade on his horse riding through the streets of paris that from the crowd that was watching a young girl bolted out of the crowd and came running up to his horse crying to napoleon mercy sire mercy mercy for my father and napoleon said and who is your father and as she named her father napoleon answered your father is

a traitor to france he deserves to die she responded sir i didn't say justice i said mercy mercy is not getting what you deserve justice is getting what you deserve but this is mercy with good works it is not only just not getting what you deserve but it is being blessed even though you're not worthy or deserving of it good fruit mercy and good fruit when someone has done a wrong to me and they come and they ask forgiveness and i say oh of course i forgive you no problem that's mercy but then if i say come let me take you out to lunch i'd like to just spend some time with you that's good fruit and wisdom that is from god it isn't just merciful but it also is manifesting good fruit jesus told us in luke 6 36 be ye therefore merciful even as your father is merciful and that is the kind of

mercy that god has for us not just forgiving us but blessing us the wisdom that comes from god is also without partiality back in chapter 2 of james he said my brethren do not have respect of persons for if one comes into your church and he's wearing a gold ring he's dressed in expensive clothes and another one comes in wearing rags and you respect the one with the jewelry and the fancy clothes and you give him the best seat in the house but you say to the poor man stand over there in the corner he said you're guilty of showing partiality hasn't god chosen the poor of the world rich in faith as the heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those that love him the wisdom that comes from god doesn't show partiality because often we only show partiality to gain something for ourselves we

read that god is no respecter of persons when we stand before god we all stand on the same level the wisdom that comes from god is without hypocrisy now the word hypocrisy comes from the greek word hypocrite the greek word hypocrites is the word for actor it means you're just putting on an act it isn't genuine you're pretending to be something that you're not this is the wisdom that is from above now i can live and choose to live by the wisdom of the world the wisdom that is earthly that is sensual and that is devilish but as james tells us the effect of this will bring bitter envying and strife in your life or i can choose to live by the wisdom of god the wisdom that brings purity peace gentleness the wisdom that is easily entreated and full of mercy and good fruit without partiality and

without hypocrisy the wisdom by which i choose to live will develop the character of my life and that is why it is so important that we choose to live by that wisdom which comes from god and i'd like you to just really think over in your mind today am i living by the worldly wisdom is that what is forming my character is that which marks my life or am i living by the wisdom of god and that wonderful character is being formed in me by the spirit of god because i am living by the wisdom that comes from god let's pray father we thank you for the wisdom that you give to us and we ask lord that we might live by that wisdom we choose lord not to follow the folly of this world the wisdom that comes to nothing the wisdom that would deny even your existence would exalt man above you but lord we

want to live by that wisdom that will create the character and nature of god in us that we might be like you lord in all things in jesus name we pray amen shall we stand the pastors are down here at the front to minister to you and to pray for you as you take a honest evaluation of your life as honest as you can we deceive ourselves and but yet maybe ask the lord like david uh search me oh god know my heart try me

know my thoughts see if there be some wicked way in me and then you lead me in your ways and as you ask god to just reveal the truth about you to yourself are you living by earthly wisdom or by godly wisdom are you conforming to the world and the things of the world or are you being conformed unto the things of god you're walking down a path continuing on that path where will it

lead you what will be the end result where will you end up and it may be that you don't like the thought of where this path is leading you you'd like to change you can't make that change yourself it's not within our power to do so but he can make that change for us if we will just but consent to it if we will just but ask i can be changed i can be delivered i can be set free i can become a new person i i can be free from the bondage of corruption that yes i took that path and it is destroying me i am getting what i deserve but i can also get if i so desire the mercy of god a changed life and a freedom from those things that are binding me and destroying me and so i would encourage you to take that honest evaluation or even better ask the lord to search you and to reveal your heart and

then turn your life over to him and say lord i want to follow after godly wisdom make me pure give me your peace cause me to be gentle lord and loving and kind and merciful make me like you lord make me like you the lord bless you and keep thee the lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee the lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace

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