

# The Seven Pillars of Wisdom

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon highlights the seven pillars of wisdom, essential characteristics of the true church, as listed in James 3:17, and emphasizes the importance of purity, peaceableness, consideration, willingness to yield, fulness of mercy, steadfastness, and freedom from hypocrisy.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 9:6, Proverbs 13:10, Ecclesiastes 4:13, Matthew 5:8, Luke 10:5, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 5:21, James 3:17

**Topics:** "Spiritual Wisdom", "Church Discipline"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the clear contrast between the Bride and the Harlot as depicted in Proverbs chapter 9. The Bride invites the foolish to turn from sin and learn the fear of the Lord, while the Harlot leads many to spiritual death. The true church, symbolized by the Bride of Christ, is built on seven pillars of wisdom listed in James 3:17, including purity, peaceableness, consideration, willingness to yield, mercy, steadfastness, and freedom from hypocrisy.

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## Transcript

In Proverbs chapter 9, we see the Bride and the Harlot clearly contrasted. In the first 12 verses of that chapter, the Bride invites all the foolish to turn from their foolish ways and to quit their sinful company (v.6) and to learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom (v.10). In the last 6 verses of that chapter, we read of the call of the Harlot. Many respond to the harlot's call and end up in spiritual death (v.18).

The seven pillars of wisdom are listed in James 3:17, and the true church is built on these pillars. By these characteristics, we can identify the Bride of Christ anywhere:

### .1. Purity

The first and most important pillar in the true church is purity. This is not a hollow pillar of a merely external purity. No. It is solid through and through. It is purity of the heart, and it grows from the seed of the fear of God deep within the heart. It is not by clever brains but by pure hearts that the true church of Christ is built. We cannot build the church if we don't have spiritual revelation on God and His ways - and only the pure in heart will be allowed to see God in their hearts (Matt.5:8).

### 2. Peaceableness

Righteousness and peace always go together. They are twins. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace (Rom.14:17). True wisdom is never argumentative or quarrelsome. It does not strive. It maintains harmonious relationships with everyone, as far as possible. It is impossible to quarrel with a man who is filled with Divine wisdom, for such a man is a peaceable man. He may be firm and he may be hated by compromisers. But he is always peaceable. Jesus told His disciples that when they travel to preach the gospel, they should stay only in the house of "men of peace" (Luke 10:5-7). We must be men of peace, if we are to build God's house.

### 3. Consideration

The Bride of Christ is always fair to others, gentle, patient, forbearing and courteous. She is never harsh or rough but always considerate of the feelings of others. When the church is supported by this pillar, it becomes easy to bear with one another - even if some are slow of understanding or crude in their manners. The problem, we begin to realise, is not the crudeness of our brother or sister, but the impatience that dwells within us. And so we fight the right enemy - our Self-life - and not our brothers and sisters.

### 4. Willingness to yield

One who cannot receive admonishment and exhortation, or who feels that he has gone beyond that stage, is truly foolish, even if he is an elder or an older man (See Eccl.4:13). In India especially, many people have the heathen idea that "older people are wiser". This may be true in earthly matters but certainly not in spiritual matters. Jesus did not choose any of the older people in the synagogues to be his apostles. He chose young men. Older people in the church often find it difficult to receive exhortation from a younger brother who may be the elder in the church and also far more godly. But that is because of their pride. Those who are willing to receive correction become wise (Prov.13:10). And so where the brothers and sisters in a church are eager to receive exhortation and correction, a truly glorious church will be built. The wise man loves those who exhort him faithfully and will eagerly seek out their company. 'Submit to one another' (Eph.5:21) are the words written on this pillar.

### 5. Fulness of mercy and its good fruits

The Bride of Christ is full of mercy - not just occasionally merciful. She has no problem forgiving anyone, freely and cheerfully from the heart. She does not judge or condemn others, but rather exercises compassion towards them like her Bridegroom. This mercy is not just a mental attitude but finds expression in good fruits that are brought forth in her actions. She does good in all the ways she can to all the people she can at all the times she can.

### 6. Steadfastness

A brother who has Divine wisdom will be free from all crookedness. He will be wholehearted and straightforward, with a single eye, free from doubts and hesitation. He will not be double-minded, but strong in faith in God, and he won't be looking at his own weaknesses, but at the promises of God. Such a brother knows that victory over all conscious sin is possible here and now. He is a dependable person - who can be trusted at all times to keep his word. He is steadfast and unmovable. You cannot make him bend his convictions or to compromise in any matter. He is straight and upright as a rod.

### 7. Freedom from hypocrisy

The Bride has more spiritual content inwardly than others can see in her externally. Her hidden life is better than the opinion that others have of her external life. This is the exact opposite of the 'spiritual adulteress' or the 'Harlot,' whose so-called spirituality is only meant for receiving the honour of men. What she has is actually 'religiosity' and not true spirituality. The bride watches her inner thoughts, motives and attitudes far more than her external words and actions. She longs for God's approval over her inner life and cares nothing at all for man's approval of her external life. By this test, each of us can know whether we are part of the Bride or of the Harlot.

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