



Pointers and questions on the book of
James

Session 6

3:13 – 4:12

Wisdom: earthly and heavenly

Summary

- 3:13-18** Real wisdom is not a matter of intellect, experience or qualifications; it is a matter of living a good and godly life. The worldly-wise, too, demonstrate the nature of their 'wisdom' in moral terms; some of the most intelligent people are also the most ungodly.
- 4:1-3** Conflict is a major part of ungodliness, even among those professing to be Christians. It comes chiefly from wrong priorities and a longing for material things rather than spiritual realities.
- 4:4-5** Flirting with the world and its ways is a kind of spiritual adultery; God wants us to be committed to him and him alone.
- 4:6-10** There is a more-than-sufficient supply of God's grace to help us, but he gives it only to those who humble themselves, submit to him and actively resist the devil.
- 4:11-12** A lack of such humility will show in unkind and judgmental speech, which is a breaking of God's law. By riding roughshod over God's commands this way we are effectively setting ourselves above his law—a serious fault.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Draw up two columns headed *Heavenly wisdom* and *Earthly wisdom* and list the features of the two kinds given in 3:13-18.
2. Look at the completed lists and ask yourself, 'On this basis, how much godly wisdom have I got?'
3. Note every mention of 'humility', 'humble', 'submit' and 'submissive' in the passage. What does it mean to be humble?
4. According to James, who is responsible for humbling and who is responsible for 'lifting up'? (v7-10)
5. Talk about the farming picture in 3:18. Who are the farmers? What do they sow? And what crop comes up?
6. What do verses 4:2-3 teach about prayer?
7. What do you think it means to be 'a friend of the world'? (4:4)
8. Does 4:9 mean that we, as Christians, should be sad and downcast all the time? If not, what *does* it mean?
9. According to 4:7-10, what part do we ourselves have to play in strengthening our relationship with the Lord? Are *you* doing those things?

