

James: A Letter from Jesus' Brother

Jealousy and Selfish Ambition — James 3:13-18

Introduction

Jesus promised that Christ-centered love and unity would bring unbelievers to faith. This is why Satan is constantly seeking to destroy our unity — by sowing seeds of jealousy and selfish ambition. In James 3:13-18 James helps us overcome jealousy and selfish ambition.

How can I tell if I have bitter jealousy or selfish ambition?

Bitter Jealousy: I'm feeling angry that someone has something I want.

Selfish Ambition: I'm seeking my own interests above the interests of others.

Why are these so serious? (vv.14-16)

When I have jealousy and selfish ambition, I am being false to the truth (v.14).

When I have jealousy and selfish ambition, I am embracing wisdom that's earthly, unspiritual, demonic (v.15).

When I have jealousy and selfish ambition, the result will be ugly (v.16).

How can we overcome bitter jealousy and selfish ambition?

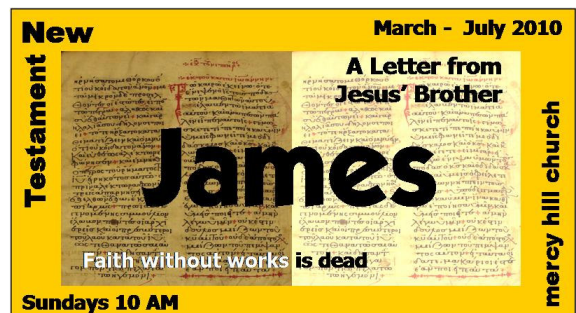
There are two different wisdoms competing for our hearts. If we embrace the earthly, unspiritual, demonic wisdom, then we will be jealous and selfishly ambitious — without love. But if we embrace the wisdom that's from above we will be freed from jealousy and selfish ambition and full of love. So what's the wisdom from above?

The wisdom from above is the message taught by Jesus and all of Scripture: that God will completely fulfill you in Himself, when you come to Him through Jesus (James 1:12; 4:6; Matthew 13:44; John 6:35; I Peter 3:18; Psalm 73:25-26; Jeremiah 2:12-13).

When we are fulfilled in God, we won't feel angry that someone has something we want (because we're already fulfilled in God).

When we are fulfilled in God, we won't seek to accomplish something in order to be fulfilled (because we're already fulfilled in God).

So — when we are fulfilled in God, we will be free from jealousy and selfish ambition, and our relationships will be transformed as described in vv.17-18.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

In what ways are you being tempted with bitter jealousy? With selfish ambition?

James gives three reasons why this is so serious. Which of the three is most meaningful to you? Why?

In the past, how have you tried to overcome jealousy? Selfish ambition?

Does it make sense that the way God enables us to overcome these is by embracing the wisdom that's from above? Why or why not?

Do you agree with this summary of the wisdom that's from above — that God will completely fulfill us in Himself when we come to Him through Jesus? Why or why not?

How would you summarize the wisdom that's from below? (Think of the opposite of the wisdom from above.)

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

