

The Letter of James 3:13 - 18

New American Standard Version (NASB)

1 ¹⁰ from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing.
 2 My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. ¹¹ Does
 3 a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and
 4 bitter *water*? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives,
 5 or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.
 6 ¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him
 7 show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of
 8 wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish
 9 ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie
 10 against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes
 11 down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For
 12 where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder
 13 and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first
 14 pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and
 15 good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the
 16 seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those
 17 who make peace.
 18 ⁴ What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?
 19 Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your
 20 members? ² You lust and do not have; *so* you commit
 21 murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight
 22 and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.
 23 ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong
 24 motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ You
 25 adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the
 26 world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes
 27 to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of
 28 God.

**Read the passage through completely
before looking at these questions.**

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Connect repeated or related words or ideas.
- Underline comparisons or contrasts.
- Mark positive ⁺ and negative [×] qualities.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- What themes do you see that James has mentioned before?
- How is this section related to the previous passage?
- How would you summarize the distinctive characteristics of the counterfeit or artificial “wisdom” James describes?
- How would you summarize the distinctive characteristics of the genuine wisdom James describes?
- What other questions come to mind as you read?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- From this passage, how would you recognize genuine vs. artificial wisdom in yourself?
- How would you recognize it in others?

For additional thought and discussion:

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,
but draw everything from them,
and suffer nothing to remain
hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see

Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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