

ICE BREAKER

When have you seen someone operate from humility and wisdom? How has it changed you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What questions does this message raise for you?
3. How do you sense God speaking to you?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

July 23, 2023

“Humility and Wisdom”

James 3:13-18

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
mycoastal.org

NOTES: Humility and Wisdom (James 3:13-18) Pastor Andy Rock

Speaking to the believers in his day, people who'd been deeply hurt by intense persecution, James wrote this in the previous verses, "*Your tongue can set your life, and others, on fire. Yes, we all stumble and fail to control our tongue. Be careful...your words shape your life and steer your future.*" How do we navigate life when our tongues sometimes cause damage? That's what these next verses are all about.

3:13 *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

James isn't saying that the way forward is having the right answers. He urges us to do good deeds with a humility that comes from wisdom. What does that look like, practically speaking? Let's unpack these two words and then put them together.

Humility is your strength focused, directed, and under control. Humility is a warhorse with a bit in its mouth, powerful yet willing to have the rider be in charge. That's Jesus.

What about wisdom? Wisdom is asking Jesus what to do. Wisdom is slowing down, not rushing decisions or actions, but rather choosing to begin with prayer. So, walking in the humility that comes from wisdom starts by asking Jesus what to do, then following His directions.

When you're starting your day, ask Jesus for wisdom. Submit your day to Jesus and tell Him, "I'm all yours today. Use me as you see fit." If you want to build a beautiful life, involve Jesus, step by step. If we choose not to do this? James shows us what that's like.

3:14 *But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.*

If we're not building with God, the first response in our hearts, even as Christians, is to be frustrated and bitter that we don't have the life we want. "Why do they have it and I don't? Why can't I have what I want?" That's bitter envy. That's when I make my life about me, about my ambition and my gain. That's when we foolishly choose to walk alone.

3:15 *Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.* 16 *For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

The 'wisdom' of me doing it all by myself isn't from God. It's literally animal cunning, which is selfish and totally about me. That's the

definition of demonic. Making something happen all by myself brings disorder, chaos, and craziness. Why?

If you work with me when I'm going it alone, disagreements will come almost instantly. I will hurt you. I will get angry at you. I'll blame you. I'll be bitter. I'll lie about how I feel and what I want. I'll ignore how you feel because I want what I want. I'll try to manipulate you or shut you down.

I'll also make mistakes because I'm rushing. I'm not actually building anything but rather making a mess. At that point, I will have to expend more energy cleaning up my mess before I can build anything.

I hate that I hurt others. But me hating my behavior, without changing my behavior, is pointless. Either I move forward with Jesus, or I don't. I can try and clean up the chaos by myself or I can do it with Jesus. James then ends with this beautiful encouragement:

3:17 *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.* 18 *Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

Purity is choosing to serve another person for their sake, for the best Jesus has for them. When we're listening to Jesus about what to do next, the desire to bless others grows within our hearts. We ask people to tell us what they need, what they think. We treat them with gentleness and kindness. As we listen to them, we become considerate of their needs and grow to appreciate their strengths.

When the roadblocks come, when their free will or the chaos of life messes up our plans, we get to be full of mercy with them, just as Jesus is with us. We get to be impartial with our love, just as Jesus loves us.

We all stumble and fall. We don't get out of the hole on our own. Ask Jesus to help you. Choose to listen to Jesus in the repairing and in the building. Choose the humility that comes from wisdom when you start, and as you work. You will be the kind of person everyone wants to work with, full of love and kindness, and your productivity will soar.

SMALL GROUP GROUND RULES: Tips for great conversation

- Extroverts: Please allow space and time for introverts to speak.
- Introverts: Please speak up when you have something to contribute.
- Everyone: Show respect by listening to one another, knowing that we all can learn from those who have a different perspective.