

An Essay: Who “get’s it?”

Who is wise? Who “get’s it” when it comes to understanding what God is looking for when he directs us to the question of wisdom? Do we understand and accept God’s goals, his priorities for our lives? Do our lives fit a pattern of living that pleases God? Here, specifically, James asks us about our wisdom, and he directs us to examine our wisdom. Do we desire to be wise in the ways of God? Do we want to see what God sees in our lives? So do we understand what God wants to see happening in our lives? Then here is our opportunity. James will show us a way to do these things.

The person who “get’s it.” The person who “get’s it” lives a good life, doing good works of faith in the humility that the wisdom from above produces. Any existence of envy, jealousy, selfish ambition or rivalry indicates the presence of earthly wisdom. The symptoms of earthly wisdom are varied and include arrogance and denial. In our pride we cling to our perception of spirituality and wisdom, our ideas of the good life. Crippled by our pride and denial, we cannot see ourselves as an unspiritual person who has fallen under the demonic influence of earthly wisdom. Our problem possibly is that we have turned away from the mirror and have forgotten what we truly look like. Our faith is an intellectual presence in our lives but not the transforming power of God.

But not me? But you just can’t believe that you are this person that James is describing as caught in the darkness of bitter envy and selfish ambition. You know you are a good person. This just can’t be you. And you are right ... maybe. This is where things can get tricky ... complicated we say nowadays. Because you are a good person. But are you a good person who belongs to God through Jesus Christ or are you confused about your identity and are clinging to a perception outside of the biblical realm of salvation and goodness?

I guess I should say that I am now first speaking to those who have genuinely come to Christ and have received his gift of eternal life. True believers. But these things could indicate that you don’t know God at all. Just as the person James addressed in chapter two had dead faith, some people have dead wisdom. You are the one who has to resolve this before God, answer the questions. You and God and the truth. If you want the truth, James gives us very clear direction. The person who is wise and understanding will display a good life of good works which come from the humility of the wisdom from above.

Simple and decisive.

But you are still struggling possibly. And that isn’t a surprise. The person who keeps wisdom compartmentalized from the good life that God calls them to is the same person who hears God’s word but doesn’t do it. You think you are one person but in actuality are quite another. In reality you don’t remember, and because you don’t remember, you don’t know. And this identity crisis stirs an inner turmoil because deep down hidden beneath your pride and denial you suspect the truth.

The big problem is that in your denial and arrogance you have—as the expression goes —“gotten in over your head.” When we refuse to live the word of truth that we hear, we open ourselves up to a world of disorder and every kind of evil, even the evil that hides who you are, even from yourself. Your problem is exponentially compounded because you already struggle with knowing—deep within yourself—who you are. Jeremiah the prophet spoke of a heart (our innermost being) that is deceitful, desperately wicked and incomprehensible. So add our layers of disobedience, arrogance and self-denial, and we’ve got a mess.

Contrast that with the purity of 100 % pure wisdom from above. “Only God’s pure, freshly squeezed wisdom for me, please.” This good life results from the wisdom from above, not the confusing mix of divine and human. Pure, as in unadulterated by the confusion and schemes of humans. Purity of truth about our lives, our world, God’s expectations, as can only be received by someone who is obedient and humble before God. This person hears God and does the truth. He or she does not separate faith and wisdom from life.

The person who “get’s it” is a peace farmer ... gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good works, impartial and sincere, presenting hope in a world of disorder and desperation, sowing peace amid the confusion and darkness and reaping a harvest of righteousness.