

PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: LIVING FOR JESUS / SERIES: JAMES

BIG TRUTH: PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE

Colossians 3:2; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:7, 14-16

BIBLE VERSE: JAMES 3:13-14

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth."

BIG IDEAS

- Wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, and gentle.
- Wisdom from above is reasonable, merciful, and truthful.
- Wisdom from above is impartial and sincere.

BIBLE PASSAGE: JAMES 3:13-18

TRANSFORM: LIVING FOR JESUS

In High School, the Transform Year is an exploration of what it looks like to have transformed influence as we seek to live for a Kingdom that is greater than our own. First, we recognize that we will never be transformed if we are not Living for Jesus. To do this, we must first know who Jesus is by looking at who He says He is (John 8:58), and then look at what the Bible says about how in Him, we live by faith (James 1:6). Next, we recognize that to have transformed influence means that we must live as disciples in pursuit of Christ and His Kingdom over ourselves and our own kingdoms.

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- God is a God of compassion and mercy.
- We are prone to self-deception.
- If our faith does not have works, it is dead.



Every student should feel...

- Joy, even in trials, because of God's goodness.
- Thankful for every good and perfect gift from the Father.
- Responsible to use their influence for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of James.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Reject and repent of faith without works.



Every student should want...

- To grow in their understanding of biblical faith.
- To practice religion based on what Scripture says, not the world, culture, or our feelings.
- To know and generously show mercy.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK
IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE**BIBLE VERSE: JAMES 3:13-14**

“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.”

True wisdom is from God.

“Who is wise and understanding among you?”

- We are not naturally wise. Wisdom that is true and lasting is from God. It is eternal and perfect. This wisdom comes from the Creator of all things. God is all-knowing and sovereign over all things. He alone holds all wisdom and understanding.
- If we are to have any wisdom, then we must seek Him. Any true wisdom we gain, we gain from Him. We do this by seeking a relationship with Him and desiring to grow in His truth. By knowing Him and His Word, we grow in His wisdom, the only true wisdom.

Wisdom is revealed through meekness.

“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”

- Meekness is enduring mistreatment in a manner that is like Christ. It is willingly tolerating others persecuting you or mistreating you for the sake of God’s glory. James writes that this type of attitude and behavior is an example of true wisdom.
- When a person has this type of characteristic, they reveal that they have an understanding of who God is and who they are in relation to Him. They know that they do not deserve anything in this life, yet God has shown them the greatest mercy and grace ever. Because of this, their conduct reveals that they are willing to suffer and to endure for the sake of Christ.

Wisdom is revealed through humility and righteousness.

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.”

- When we have jealousy and selfish ambition in our hearts, we aren’t humble. Instead, we are puffed up and prideful. These emotions and traits do not reveal that we have wisdom. The wise do not hold onto these emotions. Instead, they reject them and repent of them because they know they do not lead to any good thing.
- When we boast in our own works and refuse to repent of our arrogance and lack of humility, we are being false to the truth of God. We are not living in the righteousness of God. Instead, we are practicing our own kind of righteousness which is false. This leads us further away from God and makes us very unwise.

PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK
IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE**BIG IDEA #1: WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS PURE, PEACEABLE, AND GENTLE.¹****[THIS]**

There are two sources of wisdom in the world. One is from the world and comes from Satan. The other is from above and comes from God. We all follow the wisdom of this world while we are sinners. James teaches in verses 13-18 of chapter three that believers should express wisdom that is different from that of the world's wisdom. Wisdom that is from above originates from a place of holiness because it is from God. This type of wisdom is pure and without ulterior motive. Our conduct or behavior should reveal that we have this type of wisdom. We should not seek our own gain, but pursue the good of others and the glory of God. We should not fill our hearts and minds with the sinful things of this world, but instead, cleanse our minds and purify our hearts so that we can grow in God's truth. Wisdom that is pure seeks the good of others and doesn't act in ways that are self-serving. It is not seeking to build itself up, but instead, seeks to build up others and to do what is best for all.

[THEREFORE]

Wisdom from the world is not pure. What are some examples of this type of wisdom?

Galatians 5:19-21 gives us a list of the works of the flesh. These are the things that our flesh, or sin nature naturally desires and wants. When we follow the wisdom of the world, these are the things that we will see as normal and right. We will view envy and jealousy as right because we believe we are more important than others. We will see vengeance and following our hearts as right and true.

What is an example of conduct or behavior that shows you have pure wisdom?

Galatians 5:22-23 gives us the fruit of the Spirit. These are the things that we will exhibit because of the Spirit living and working inside of us. When our wisdom is from above, we will seek peace over repaying evil for evil. We will not choose hatred over love and we will choose gentleness over harshness.

[THIS]

God's wisdom is peaceable and gentle. To be peaceable doesn't mean that we sacrifice truth for the sake of being tolerant or because it might upset someone. When a person has wisdom from above, he or she is gentle and lives a life that seeks to be at peace with others. This type of peace also seeks to love others as God loves them. When we have this kind of wisdom, our lives are marked by a gentleness to all people, an attitude of peace towards others, and a life that seeks to be holy. This is a struggle for us because we fight against our flesh nature and the wisdom of the world tells us something different. The wisdom of the world tells us to fight back, seek revenge, and to love only those who love us or treat us correctly. The world's wisdom places its stamp of approval on bickering and fighting. God's wisdom seeks to live at peace and to hold to His truth, loving others in gentleness.

[THEREFORE]

What are some ways wisdom from above differs from the world's wisdom?

When you read Galatians 5:19-23 you get a clear idea of the differences between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The wisdom of the world is not pure and does not originate from a holy place. The wisdom of the world is corrupt and seeks the glory of the individual rather than the glory of man. Wisdom from above is from God and seeks His glory.

1. James 3:17: God's wisdom is full of purity, peace, and gentleness because it is from Him.

PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK
IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE**BIG IDEA #2: WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS REASONABLE, MERCIFUL, AND TRUTHFUL.²****[THIS]**

Truth and reason are two words and ideas that the world has hijacked. They have taken them and transformed them to fit whatever the current cultural trends are. Truth and reason are from God because He is the beginning of everything. He is the Creator and He alone is our source of truth. Because He is the source of truth, His wisdom is reasonable. We can't know reason and understand truth without knowing God. The world's wisdom is focused on man and whatever is popular at the time. It defines and redefines truth and reason constantly rendering itself null and void. It shifts and changes with every passing fad and trend. God remains steadfast and constant. According to the world, what was true ten years ago isn't necessarily true today. Wisdom from above is different from this. It is reasonable in that it is quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. It is founded on God's truth and comes from a gentle heart. It does not seek its own good, but places a higher value on the desires and good of others.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen "truth" and "reason" shift with whatever is prominent in culture at the time?

When we turn away from Scripture and use our minds and hearts as the source of reason and truth, we will shift like the wind. Our hearts are deceitful and can't be trusted as Jeremiah 17:9 teaches us. We are to remain steadfast in the truth that is from God and not get caught up in the world's wisdom, which is foolishness.

What does it look like to hold fast to reason and truth from God? Why does this matter?

Holding fast to God's truth keeps us steadfast and immovable as 1 Corinthians 15:58 teaches we should be. When we lack wisdom from above and lack understanding, we aren't reasonable people. When we live selfish lives that are seeking our own gain and glory, we aren't reasonable.

[THIS]

God's wisdom is perfect and treats others perfectly. This type of wisdom extends mercy to others because God has shown mercy to man. When we live out this type of wisdom, we will not malign others, or judge them harshly. We will seek to understand their viewpoint and pursue peace with them. We will seek to show mercy to others because we have been shown mercy. Wisdom that is self-seeking, vindictive, and angry is not from above. It is the way of the world. The world says to return evil for evil. The world demands payment for all wrongs. The world's wisdom says to elevate self and to take the upper-hand over another whenever you can. Wisdom from above says that we have received much mercy and should show much mercy to others. God's wisdom says that we must hold to His truth and live it out daily.

[THEREFORE]

The world's idea of reason and truth do not teach mercy. How is showing mercy towards others a sign of wisdom that is different from the world's?

Galatians 5:19-21 shows us what the works of the flesh are. These works lack mercy. It is not in the world's realm to show mercy to anyone. When we show mercy to others, we exhibit God's wisdom and that we have been transformed by Him. This is a sign of the work He has done in us.

2. James 3:17: God's wisdom is full of reason, mercy, and truth because it originates from Him. He is the source of all reason, mercy, and truth.

PEOPLE OF FAITH WALK
IN WISDOM FROM ABOVE**BIG IDEA #3: WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS IMPARTIAL AND SINCERE.³****[THIS]**

We often think we are wise. We mistake good judgment or good ideas for wisdom, but our wisdom falls short of true wisdom. Wisdom from above is so radically different from the world's wisdom. Wisdom from above is impartial. To be partial is to show preference to someone or something based upon our own judgment or assessment of them. As humans, we are not naturally impartial. On the contrary, we all are guilty of the sin of favoritism. We all are guilty of thinking more highly of some people and mistreating others. We think more highly of ourselves and this leads us to show partiality. When we are faced with imparting justice, we can't ever make a true judgment in our own power. When we use wisdom from above, we can and will act impartially because we will be led by the Spirit. This is possible because God is impartial. His wisdom does not show favoritism. His judgment and assessment is always accurate, fair, and true.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it important to understand that we are not naturally impartial?

Proverbs 28:5 and Isaiah 1:17 help us understand that in our sinfulness we do not naturally know what is just. We are partial and cannot truly judge others. It is important to understand this so that we rely upon God's wisdom to do justice.

[THIS]

Sincerity means to be genuine and free from hypocrisy. Our world is not marked by sincerity. Instead, it is marked by a deceptiveness and desire to lie, or misrepresent things to get ahead. Because of this, the wisdom of the world is marked by this also. God's wisdom is different. It is marked by a sincerity and adherence to the truth. Wisdom from above is marked by a desire to be honest and truthful. It comes from a place of genuineness that is missing in the world. The world does not know how to be sincere. It only knows how to build up self. When we follow the way of the world, we find ourselves feeling lost and unsure of the people we are supposed to trust. Our leaders seem dishonest and do not appear to have our best interest at heart. Yet God always does what is right and good for mankind. When we follow His wisdom, we will live lives marked by this type of behavior. Our interactions with others will be just and true. We will seek justice and we will live honest lives pleasing to the Lord.

[THEREFORE]

How can a lack of sincerity in our world leaders lead to a feeling of chaos in the world?

When those in power and leadership are dishonest it produces a sense of disarray and chaos. When leaders use their power for their own gain and to build themselves up, we are left feeling isolated and alone. 2 Timothy 3:24 and Philippians 2:3-4 helps us understand the attitude of sinful leaders and the way in which God's people are supposed to live.

What are some challenges to living a sincere life?

2 Corinthians 1:12 teaches us that we are to live sincere lives. We are not to be people pleasers. The challenge is when we desire to gain for ourselves or we desire to be well-liked. This will lead us to be insincere. 1 Peter 1:22 also reminds us that we are called to live sincerely with others. This is the way of Christ and should be the way we live, also.

3. James 3:17: God's wisdom does not show partiality and it is not insincere because it comes from Him. God is not partial, nor is He full of empty conceit.