October 30/31, 2010

Heavenly Wisdom

Practically Christian: A Study in the Book of James

James 3:13-18

Pastor Bryan Clark

Yes, I am one of those people that can't stand rattles in my vehicle. Yes, I'm that guy who's always touching everything on the dashboard. Is it this? Is it that? That? Where is that? Yes, I'd be the one who would say to my wife, "Honey, you drive so I can put my head under the dash. I have to figure out what the rattle is." One of the things I loved about my old Toyota is, even though it was old, that thing was rattle-free, except for about a three-month period. I had this rattle I absolutely could not find, to the extent that I actually completely removed the dashboard. No speedometer, no dashboard, it was just metal and it was still rattling. I told Patty, "It's like a rattle from the Twilight Zone; there's nothing there and it's rattling." Well you'll be happy to know, I did eventually figure it out. But whenever there's a rattle like that, of course the logical question is: Where is that coming from? That's a pretty good question, actually. If you've ever struggled in your house with a water leak, you know if it's leaking in the basement, that's usually pretty easy to figure out, but if it's starting to come in through your windows or in through the ceiling, that gets complicated because most of the time, wherever it's coming through isn't where it's leaking. I heard a window salesman say that ninety-five percent of the leaks that come through your windows aren't leaking in your window; they're leaking somewhere else in the house. It goes down pipes and rafters and boards—it just finally comes out your window. So the logical question is always: Where is that coming from? Well that's the question we're going to wrestle with a little bit this morning.

Last week we talked about controlling our tongue. James has talked about a lot of real practical issues in our life and what we need to do this morning is kind of do an assessment. How are things going in my marriage? How are things going with my children? For teenagers, how are things going with my parents? How are things going at work? How are things going with my relationships? How are things going deep inside of me? If you could point to things that really shouldn't be there, things that should be different, things that happen, things that come out of your mouth, behaviors, fears, emotions, anxieties—whatever—one of the questions we want to ask this morning is: Where is that coming from? There's a source and until we get to the source, nothings really going to change. If you notice there's water leaking through your window, you can put towels on the window; you can put a bucket somewhere; you can try and somehow manage that but, until you get to the source, nothing's really going to change. Oftentimes, when things come out of our mouth, when we have certain attitudes, certain behaviors that, in our relationships and our life are destructive, what we're doing is putting towels around it; what we're doing is trying to find a bucket. We're trying to manage the moment, but what we need to ask is: Where is that coming from? That's really the topic we want to talk about today.

If you have a Bible, turn with us to James, Chapter 3. Last week was a pretty hard-hitting text about controlling our tongue—really thinking about what's coming out of our mouths. In verse 11 of chapter 3 James uses a very practical illustration of a fountain—you might think of it in our situation as a well—and asks the question: Can both salt water and fresh water come out of the same fountain—come out of the same well? And of course the answer would be: No. I think if you just take out the divisions and just keep going with the train of thought, that's what gives birth to the

discussion that follows. He's really talking about the *source* and, when you identify the source, then you're going to know what's going to come out of that. If the well is salty, it's going to produce salt water; if the well is fresh, it's going to produce fresh water. So we really need to be asking the question: What's in the well? What is the source of this water?

Verse 13:

Who among you is wise and understanding? (*NASB, James 3:13a)

Now we've picked up through the book of James—it's been a little bit subtle—but there's obviously a problem with the people in charge. James tells us he's writing to the dispersed Jews and it's clear, from reading between the lines, that there's a problem with those who have basically taken charge of the environment. They have identified themselves as the teachers—those people who are the leaders, those people that are in charge—and there are several times James has confronted them with some of their behaviors. The words **...wise and understanding...**are actually very technical Greek words that refer to someone who has put themselves in charge—those who would be considered a rabbi, those considered a teacher, those considered kind of an expert. Especially the word **understanding** has a little air of arrogance to it—those who have decided they're the *best of the best* and now they're going to tell everyone else how to live. So, in essence, James is kind of calling them out. This message is written to those people as well as to the rest of the body and so he's asking the question: Who is it that's determined that they have it all figured out and they're going to tell everyone else how to live?

Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. (Vs. 13b)

This sounds very much like Chapter 2, Verse 18: "...I will show you my faith by my works." In other words, James is saying, "Okay, if that's true, if you're so wise, if you're so understanding, if you really do have this figured out, then let's take a look. Let's look at your behavior. Let's look at how you live your life. Let's look at the gentleness of your wisdom and see if your life really lines up with what you're claiming to be true. The idea of**...good behavior...**is pretty obvious—it's just what we would think of. The**...gentleness of wisdom...**is an interesting Greek word. It basically means *strength that's been brought under control*. It was used to describe a horse that had been broken to a bit. The horse still has power—it's a thousand pounds of muscle—but it's been brought under control. There's sense in which there is strength. There's something deep inside the person who really does understand it, that feels strong. It just seems like there's strength, but it's under control—it's harnessed. This word is often translated *humility*. It was translated that way in chapter one when James was talking about not just being a *hearer* of the Word but being a *doer*. And he said, "Receive the Word in humility"—that's our word—in gentleness, in this sense of teach-ability. That's what he's talking about here. I do find it interesting, and this is a very common theme in the New Testament—we've talked about it many times—that there is a sense in which the New Testament really encourages people to give careful consideration to the voices you're listening to. Every day there are hundreds of voices speaking into our lives and oftentimes we hear them much more than we think we do. We don't give a lot of thought to who is this that's speaking into my life and is this really someone I should be listening to? Throughout the New Testament there's this theme that it's wise to give a good look at the behavior of those that are speaking into your life and ask yourself: Is that really the life I want? You remember when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he said on multiple occasions, "You know how I lived when I was among you"—that was his response; that was his defense—"that when I lived among you, you saw how I lived my life, you could assess that for yourselves." In this day and age, where there is so much technology, it's again

good to remember that one of the biblical values is that your primary shepherd, your primary teacher—those people that are really speaking into your life—should be people that live among you. You should be able to assess: How does this person live? It's very easy to stand on a platform like this and say the right things. The question is: Is that really how this person lives? I've told you before: You should know how I treat my wife. You should know how I've raised my children. You should know how I get along with my neighbors. You should know how I treat the people I work with. If you want to talk to the people that work here, you're welcome to do that. I think that's good for you; I think it's good for me. We live together in a community. There's accountability in that. You're probably as weary as I am of those who claim to be proclaimers of the message of truth who have this dark side to them. Suddenly we discover that they're having affairs; we discover they're hooked on pornography; we discover that they're all messed up, that they're filled with arrogance and they're really hard to work with. You really should know that if you're going to listen to their voice. It doesn't mean the only teacher, but I think your primary teacher should live among you; you should have some sense of: Is that really how this person lives? I think that's a biblical value.

Now that doesn't just apply to preachers like me; it applies to anyone whom God has put in a position of influence—whether you're a Sunday school teacher, whether you're a small group leader, whether a youth group leader. If God has put you in a position of leadership, I think people have the right to say, "Let's check you out. I'd like to know how you treat your spouse. I'd like to know how you treat the people at work. I'd like to know how you get along with your neighbors." And that's, in essence, what James is saying. If these people are claiming that God has put them in a position of influence, then let's check them out. Let's look at their behavior. Let's look at this sense of gentleness of wisdom, this quiet strength that should define their lives.

Verse 14:

> **But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.**

This is the counter to**...good behavior and gentleness of wisdom**. This would be people that are defined by this bitter jealousy. It's an interesting phrase; it's a little bit hard to translate. **Jealousy** is fairly simple. It's a Greek word that means to be *zealous for self,* somebody who's just zealous for themselves—it's all about me; it's about me; it's about my needs; it's about, "Notice me". The **bitter** is actually a reference to the result of that way of thinking. In other words it creates such a competitive climate—where, "What about me?" and "I'm competing with you in order to get somebody's attention," it creates bitterness. We start to have a body count; there are people that get wounded along the way. So the bitterness is what flows out of operating that way. **Selfish ambition** is a Greek words that means *to canvas for votes*; it's a political term. Paul used it in Philippians 1 when he talked about those who preach the gospel for personal gain. He says they're motivated by selfish ambition and what that words means is, they're canvassing for votes. This is about me; this is about notice me; this is about vote for me; this is about me wanting to be in positions of influence; this is about me wanting to tell other people what to do. Right now—this time of year in our country—we really don't have to explain this too far, do we? This is about canvassing for votes and, at the core of that, it's about *me, me, me*. "Notice me; look at me; pay attention to me; vote for me." In essence what he's saying is the counter to what *should be.* It's this life driven by this zeal for self, this canvassing for votes, all the attention on *me, me, me*? Now if your goal is to get attention and my goal is to get attention, then we're going to compete in this thing and it leads to bitterness and it leads to woundedness and it leads to all kinds of problems. He says **...do not be**

arrogant and so lie against the truth. This is a very interesting phrase. As a matter of fact this is said multiple times in the New Testament, just worded a little differently in different passages. Basically what he's saying is this: The message of the gospel is a message of brokenness and humility. If you really understand the gospel of grace, you have to come to grips with the fact that I admit—I acknowledge—I can't do this. I cannot save myself. I need help. So in my brokenness and humility I cry out for a Savior, understanding then that Jesus has done for me what I could not do for myself. Therefore there's no basis for me to be arrogant. Paul makes this point in Ephesians, Chapter 2. He goes so far as to say, "You were dead." Dead people don't do anything—they're dead. "You were dead but Christ made you alive and Christ has made you into a trophy of his grace." But the idea is: Christ has done everything; you have done nothing because you were dead. When you understand that, then you realize there is no basis for spiritual arrogance. I can't claim anything. I, in my brokenness and humility, simply received what Christ has done for me. Therefore the New Testament consistently delivers this message that spiritual arrogance is counter to the gospel of grace. If you are characterized by arrogance, you just don't get it. That's a message that's repeated over and over and over again. What Paul is saying is, "If you live driven by this canvassing for votes, driven by this zeal for self, it's all about *me, me, me* every moment of the day, that you're driven by a sense of arrogance, your lifestyle, your behavior is lying against the message of the gospel." In other words you're saying one thing is true but you're living the polar opposite. Obviously you don't believe what you preach. That's what he's saying. So we're going to ask our question: Where is that coming from? Well he's going to tell us.

> **This wisdom is not that which comes down from above,** [okay, this isn't from God] **but is earthly, natural, demonic.** (Vs. 15)

We're very familiar with this triplet, only we're familiar with it in these words: *the world, the flesh, and the devil.* When he's talking about **earthly**, he's talking about this world. He's talking about the philosophy that defines this world. Now we've talked about this before. God created us to find our significance—to find our value—to find our meaning in life by being rightly related to Him and then life is lived out of that. But when sin entered into the picture, we were cut off from God. Therefore, when we're cut off from God, we have to find our significance, we have to find our value, we have to find our meaning in life some other way. That then becomes what is known as the value system of the world, what the New Testament often refers to as *this world*, in this case that which **is earthly**. It's not that these people are atheists—they're not. God simply plays no practical role in their significance, in their self-esteem, in their value, in finding meaning in life. God's just kind of over here in this religious thing, but at the core is *self*. We talked about, in order then to find significance and value apart from God, I have to do it myself. That becomes about my performance; that becomes about my ability to make myself significant, to give myself value. In essence, at that point, I'm becoming my own god. I've decided now I have to take charge of my own life; I have to make myself significant; I have to give myself value; I have to define meaning in life. That's at the core of this earthly value system. When you understand that, then you begin to realize why it's driven by self, why there is this zeal for self, why there is this canvassing for votes, because every day is driven by my need to make myself significant. The very essence of this system forces me to be selfish to the core because every day is a fight to be somebody; every day is a fight to have significance, a fight to have value, a fight to feel like my life has some sort of a meaning to it. So this becomes that which is **earthly**. That which is**...natural...**we would know it better as that which is *of the flesh*. The word **natural** is a translation of a Greek word that literally means *without the Spirit*—life lived without the Spirit of God. I define the flesh as that which I can do apart from the Spirit of God. It's that which I can do myself. All religion is driven by the flesh. It's driven by this notion: I can do it myself; I can make myself acceptable to God; I can be good enough; I can

give myself significance; I can show you that I have value. All of that's driven by my flesh. You remember in chapter one James told us that all temptation ultimately appeals to *the lust within us*. We define that as the core lust within us is this desire—this lust—to be my own god, to make myself significant, to give myself value, to run my own show. The philosophy of this world is that which seeks to make us significant, to give us value, to give life meaning apart from God. So it's earthly; it's natural; it's without the Spirit of God and, lastly, it's **...demonic**. All you have to do is go back to Genesis, Chapter 3; you can pick up the dialog. The architect of the value system of this world is none other than Satan, himself where he tells us, "*Hey, life would be better with you in charge, with you being your own god, with you running your own show"* so that's what he's talking about. This wisdom that creates within us this need to be so selfish, to canvas for votes, to make every day about me isn't rooted in God's value system; it's rooted in the value system of this world. It's earthly; it's natural; it's demonic. What is the result of that?

Verse 16:

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

Where jealousy and selfish ambition—where life is defined by this driving selfishness within me—**there is disorder**. That's another political term. It means p*olitical unrest*; it means c*haos*; it means this *restlessness*. It's really not too hard to define that term in our current culture. There's a lot of that going around. There's just this sense of restlessness; there's this chaos. We find ourselves wondering: Is it possible that anybody's going to come together to provide any kind of a meaningful solution? Think about this term as it relates to your marriage, as it relates to the relationship with your children, as it relates to what's going on in the marketplace, as it relates to your neighborhood or your extended family or your relationships with the people around you. Does it feel a lot like the political world right now, where there's just a lot of chaos; there's a lot of unrest; there's a lot of kind of working the system but, at the end of the day, it doesn't feel like anything's really orderly, everything's really peaceful? It feels like it's all coming unhinged. This phrase **...every evil thing...**probably better translated *every worthless thing*. Basically it's saying that every single day is lived for the things that really don't matter because every day is driven by this zeal for self. Every day is driven by this canvassing for votes so, while I may think I need to love my neighbor as myself, while I may think I need to live for the things that matter, while I may think I need to go out there and do better, every day that doesn't happen because I'm driven by this need to canvas for votes. It's relentless because what's at stake is my self-esteem. What's at stake is my sense of significance. What is at stake is my sense of worth. So every day I'm driven by self; I'm driven by this selfishness; I'm driven by the need to canvas for votes because it's relentless. I can't let up for one single moment of the day. The nature of the value system of this world requires that, so I live for every worthless thing. I get to the end of my life and I look back and I realize: Basically this whole thing was for nothing because, when I finally get older and start to run out of energy, I can't compete anymore and I'm a forgotten person and you think, "What was it all for? What did I really accomplish?" It raises a pretty good question: Is there an alternative? The answer is: yes.

Verse 17:

But the wisdom from above [heavenly wisdom] **is first pure...**(Vs. 17a)

Now it's really important to get the language here. **First...**meaning not first in the list, but first in priority. This is a Greek word that means *first in terms of rank*. So it's really important to hear what

he's saying—that the wisdom that comes from above begins with this quality of being **...pure.** This is not talking about sexual purity—as good as that is. This is talking about being pure for myself, being unstained by the selfish value system of this world, not being so tainted and stained by my own selfish needs and drives and desires that that defines every day. The basis of this is in understanding that because of what Jesus has done for me on the cross, I can have my sins forgiven. Having my sins forgiven now allows me to be rightly related to God. Now I can go back to Genesis, Chapter 2. Based on that, I find my significance and my value, my worth and my meaning in life by being rightly related to God. That's what God's always intended. Then I live out of that. Every day now is not about trying to find significance, trying to find value, trying to somehow get people to vote for me. It sets me free to live life differently. It sets me free to love my neighbor as myself. It sets me free to actually give myself away. The only possible way you can ever live that way is when you understand that your significance—your value—is rooted in your relationship with God, which sets me free from this daily competition and comparison to find my significance. Once I understand that, it's as if the chains fall off; I am set free. The reality is, this morning, you can criticize me; you can say things about me; you can wound me; but you cannot touch my significance. You have no access to my value. Nothing you do to me can change the fact that my significance and my value are rooted in my relationship to God and that's off-limits to everyone. And it never goes up and it never goes down because it's based on the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Once I understand that, I don't have to be insecure; I don't have to live out of my insecurity. Every day doesn't have to be about me and my needs and are you voting for me and do I have value today? So that's why he says the very first thing is to be **...pure**, is to be unstained by the value system of this world, to operate in a completely different way. The rest of these qualities kind of flow out of that.

...then peaceable...*peace-giving*. This is someone whose sense about them is about peace. It's not about conflict; it's not about fighting; it's not about always having disagreements. There's something about these people that seems peaceful. It seems like they're at rest with themselves.

...gentle...is a word that some people define as *sweet reasonableness*. It just is this idea that this is someone who's reasonable, who's fair, who's really wanting to do the right thing. You don't have this sense that this is always going to be a fight, it's always going to be a conflict. You never know when they're going to lash out. It would be just the opposite. The word

...reasonable...is basically talking about someone who is willing to surrender, somebody who's willing to yield, somebody who's willing to give in. Again, oftentimes the reason we lock up is because of our selfishness, because of our insecurities, because we're canvassing for votes: I can't afford to back down or somebody won't vote for me because, when I back down, what I'm backing down is my self-esteem; I'm backing down my sense of value; I have to win this thing. When we are set free from that, we enter into life in a completely different frame of mind. This isn't about winning; this isn't about competing; this is really being set free to care about other people and to listen to other people and to be willing to surrender and to yield and to enter into this from a completely different frame of mind.

...full of mercy and good fruits. **Full of mercy**, *controlled by mercy,* is what that means, that we are characterized by mercy and grace. Full of **good fruits** would be things like kindness and love and compassion and things like that.

...unwaving, without hypocrisy. This **unwavering** carries the idea of just *being steady*. There's a sense in which you are the same day in and day out. It's not that one day you're nice and the next day you're crabby and one day you're willing to get along and the next day it feels like a fight. You know those of us that like to hang around the horse world, understand there's a huge difference between a horse where, every time that you bring it in and saddle it up, is a horse that's gentle and wants to cooperate and is easy to ride versus one who, one day likes to get along and the

next day, everything feels like a fight. It just becomes very unsafe; it becomes very unpredictable. Well that's kind of the idea he's talking about. **Unwavering...** means that we're the type of people that just are steady and there's a sense about us that seems like it's at rest and it's peaceful. The word**...hypocrisy...**is a really interesting Greek word. It means literally *to wear a mask*. It was taken out of the Greek theater. They carried the idea that, when you were in a Greek play, you would wear a mask and so hypocrisy was wearing a mask and pretending to be someone you really aren't—fulfilling a role. So the idea of hypocrisy is the idea that I'm wearing a mask—that I pretend. I pretend to be *this person* one day and *this person* the next day, but there's no real authenticity. You get the sense this person's putting on a show and you're never quite sure day in and day out what the show's going to be. If I was going to take all the characteristics in verse 17—maybe bring them together—I would say it describes a person that is safe, a person that *is* safe, a person that just *feels* safe. There is this strength within them that leads to this sense of gentleness. You feel they're strong, but they're gentle. They're kind; they're compassionate; they're good; they're about peace; they're about getting along; they're about genuinely loving you and caring about you and listening to you. You don't have this sense day in and day out that they're going to be one thing one day and one thing another. Everybody wants that in a relationship. They want a relationship with someone who's safe and James is saying the source for that is when our wisdom comes from God—heavenly wisdom.

Verse 18:

> **And the seed whose fruit is righteousness...**[in other words the seed that produces righteousness—that's what everybody wants. How is that sown?]**...is sown in peace by those who make peace.**

What James is saying here—we're going all the way back to the beginning of this text—he's saying that those people who are speaking into your life, that are sowing this seed—if this is a seed that's going to produce righteousness—it will be**...sown in peace by those who make peace**. In other words he's asking them to revisit the influencers who have taken charge, who are creating disorder, who are creating partiality, who are creating this political unrest and really asking, "Do you really think that's going to produce in you what you really want produced in you?"

This text really comes back to asking the question: Where is that coming from? Look at your marriage; look at your relationship with your kids; look at the relationship with your extended family; look at your relationships in the marketplace, your relationships with your neighbors, your relationships with your friends, and ask yourself: Are they defined by this sense of quiet strength? Would those people say, "Yes, when I think about you, I think about someone who's safe, someone who seems like they have this inner strength, someone who's about kindness and compassion and peace and mercy and grace, that I feel safe around you. I never feel like I'm going to experience your wrath. I never feel like you're going to lash out at me. You're the one place I can go, I feel like you're a sense of refuge." If that's true, then your wisdom is coming from God. You've sourced yourself in that which produces such behavior. Your well is producing fresh water because your well is tapped into that which is fresh. If you find yourself struggling with what's coming out of your mouth, struggling in your marriage, struggling with your children, struggling in your relationships at work, struggling with what's going on in the inside, the question you need to be asking is: Where is that coming from? If all you're trying to do is somehow work on the behavior, that's like putting the towel around the window where it's leaking. You're just trying to manage that but you're never really going to accomplish anything until you get to the source. So each one of us needs to kind of assess our own lives and ask ourselves the question: Where is that coming from?

Who am I allowing to speak into my life? Who am I listening to? It's amazing to me how vulnerable all of us are to the voices of the culture, when oftentimes those voices are coming from people whose lives are a mess. People whose lives are a mess seem to feel the need to tell everybody else how to live and oftentimes we're listening to them. Those voices bombard us at work; they bombard us over the media; they bombard us in so many ways and we need to be asking the question: Well let's look at that person; let's look at that person's marriage; let's look at that person's family; let's look at that person's life. Is that really the person I want to be listening to? When we look at behaviors that are chaotic, they create disorder; they're creating disharmony; they're breaking down my relationships; everything feels like it's coming unraveled; we need to be asking the question: Where is this coming from and what will it take to learn to think differently? It's unreasonable to think if every time I go to the water fountain, it's saltwater that, if I keep going enough times, it's eventually going to be fresh water. The well is filled with saltwater; that's all you're going to get. If that's what's coming out, you need to change fountains. You need find a different well. You need to find a well that is filled with fresh water. In this text it's saying you need to learn to think differently. You need to buy into a different philosophy. You need to find your wisdom from a heavenly source rather than an earthly source. The next time something comes out of your mouth, the next time there's a behavior that you find unacceptable or destructive, maybe you'll ask the question: Where did that just come from and what do I need to change in order to live my life in a way that reflects heavenly wisdom?

Our Father, we're thankful, this morning, that You love us and, because You love us, You tell us the truth. Lord, the voices in our culture bombard us with that which is earthly and natural and demonic. Lord, it's easy just to buy in and then wonder why our relationships and our lives are so messed up. Lord, help us to understand what it means to draw from the heavenly well, to completely change our thinking, to reorient our lives according to a different value system. Lord, I pray that as we drink from this fresh water well, there might be clear evidence in our lives that it is well with our souls, that there's a quiet strength that will be attractive to those in our world that desperately need to hear what you have to say. Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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Practically Christian: A Study in the Book of James

James 3:12-18

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Opening Discussion

1. Can you think of a time when you struggled to find the source to something that was bothering you? Water leak? Oil leak? Rumor? Fear? Illness? Was it possible to solve the issue without identifying the source? Why or why not?

2. If you got bad advice from a financial planner, mechanic, business partner, doctor, counselor, etc… would you keep going back? Why or why not? Then why do we get stuck in behavior patterns that are flowing out of a wisdom source that just doesn't work?

3. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being highest level of satisfaction) how would you rate your life these days in regard to your: (feel free to keep this private so you can be completely honest)

    a. Personal life
    b. Work life
    c. Family
    d. Marriage
    e. Relationships

Bible Study

1. Review James 3:11, 12. What is the point? This sets the groundwork for the discussion to follow.

2. Read James 3:13-18. From what you've studied so far in this letter, what are the main issues James is addressing in the recipients of this letter? Do you see a pattern emerging among those who have promoted themselves into positions of leadership?

3. The terms "wise" and "understanding" both have technical meaning that would indicate James is calling out those who have promoted themselves as leaders. What practical advice does he offer in 3:13 that correlate with our modern saying, "talk is cheap?" (Compare with 1:19-26 and 2:14-18). How might we apply this to those who offer us council on how to live? What are the practical ramifications of this advice?

4. The phrase "gentleness of wisdom" refers to strength that is brought under control like a horse that is broke to ride. Describe this person. What would be some of his or her characteristics?

5. What is the result of wisdom that is earthly (worldly), natural (fleshly), and demonic (devil)? Define "bitter jealousy" and "selfish ambition." Describe how this worldly wisdom might manifest itself in your marriage, family, work, church, relationships, etc…

6. Think back to how you answered the Opening Discussion question #3. Is there evidence in those environments that you are operating out of a wisdom that is sourced in that which is earthly, natural and demonic?

7. What are the characteristics of heavenly wisdom? What would this look like in practical terms in those key environments you've been discussing?

Application

1. Are you happy with your life today? Does your life bear the fruit of heavenly wisdom or earthly wisdom?

2. If you see the fruit of heavenly wisdom, how do you make sure you maintain that source for your wisdom? If you see fruit of earthly wisdom, how do you change that?

3. Who do you allow to speak most strongly into your life and do these people bear the fruit of righteousness themselves?

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