

Who Is a Wise Man?

#0030

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 8, 1979

I invite you to turn to James, the 13th chapter and the 3rd verse. I'm so glad to be here tonight. I know that somebody is going to get something worth driving 100 miles to hear. Somebody's going to get something here tonight that'll make next week different from last week. It could be you—you'll listen and see. And you who already know the secret, you pray that God will reveal His secret to someone who needs it so much. The text:

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" James 3:13.

The question is, "Who is a wise man?" "Who is an educated man?" "Who is a learned man?" Well, a man who's been to school a certain number of years. The more years, the better. All those things have their place, but this is not what James is discussing. He says that the answer lies in the demonstration of the life.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation..."
James 3:13.

That word "conversation" in the days when the King James translation was made, meant more than mere speech; it includes the total way of life. So he is saying, let him show in his *lifestyle*, his life pattern, what he says, what he reads, the way he eats and drinks and dresses, the way he conducts himself with others, his attitude, whether he's happy or not, whether he's healthy or not, whether he's in harmony with God and others or not, let him show in *all* these areas of life whether he really knows the answers or not.

Demonstration is much more than profession or reputation.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" James 3:13.

Humility is an appropriate attitude for the one who is truly educated. Bombastic claims, pride, self-exaltation, all these things show that a man is not educated. Not educated. *True* education leads a person to be humble. But humility does not mean that a man says, "I can't do anything, I don't amount to anything, I am nobody." No. No. Two of the most beautiful examples of humility that we have in the Bible are Joseph and Daniel.

I love to think of Joseph coming in there before Pharaoh, called from the dungeon to interpret the dreams. Pharaoh says, "I've heard of you that you can interpret dreams. My wise men haven't been able to do it."

What does Joseph say?

"And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me"
Genesis 41:16.

But he doesn't stop there:

"God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" Genesis
41:16.

There it is, all wrapped up in one sentence. It's not in me, Pharaoh, but I've got it. It didn't originate in my brain, but I'm the errand boy that brings you the answer. *God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And He did. He did. And the slave boy became the prime minister of Egypt, engaging in one of the greatest food conservation programs in history. He saved the life of a nation.

Then there is Daniel. He stands before the King Nebuchadnezzar, again, to interpret a dream. Again the king says, "I have heard of you. Can you do this?" Daniel says, "This has not been revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but the great GOD has made known to you, King Nebuchadnezzar, this secret. I happened to be the agent that God is using." So humility and confidence go together. One is the complement, or supplement, of the other in God's plan of true education.

As I've been meditating on this text, I've thought of three relationships involved in this experience. One is: can I get along with others? What kind of a team worker am I? How do I live in my family with my wife, with my children, with my brothers and sisters and the other members of my family? How do I get along in the church? Am I a *team* worker? Can I gear in with brothers and sisters in the family of God? If I'm in an institution, how do I get geared in there? What is my success as a team worker?

But there's a closer question than that: how do I get along with *myself*? May I tell you, friends, unless you can live with yourself, you can't live successfully with anybody else. There are those who blame problems on other people. They keep moving around, hoping they'll find some people they can get along with. But as I heard one person put it, "Everywhere I go, there I am and spoil everything."

So the truly educated man knows how to live with himself. But that leads us to a still more important aspect of the matter. What is my relationship to God? This is the central thing, the fundamental thing—unless I know God, I cannot understand myself. And unless I know God and understand myself, I can't get along with other people. That's the answer, and it's in that order.

"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let

not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that
glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth
Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness,
judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these
things I delight, saith the LORD” Jeremiah 9:23–24.

God picks out three things that the people on this planet boast about and rejoice in. He says, “Don’t let that be your security. Don’t let that be the thing which elates you and thrills you.” What are those three things? Wisdom, might or power, and glory and riches.

It’s an interesting thing that the man that was reputed to be the wisest king that ever lived made the biggest fool of himself. He was also probably one of the riches, if not the richest of all earth’s billionaires, King Solomon, but he failed.

It’s also interesting that Samson, one of the strongest men, perhaps *the* strongest man mentioned in the Bible. Just think, he could take the city gates, take the whole city gate arrangement, pluck it out of its foundations and carry it up on a mountain and leave it there. People thought they had him inside that city, and in the morning, they were going to get him. In the morning, they saw their gates way up on the mountain. Samson was quite a playboy, wasn’t he?

He was strong in muscles, but not in character. So it takes more than being a giant physically. It takes more than the wisdom of Solomon and the strength of Samson, or the riches of Solomon.

What are we encouraged to think about and rejoice in? Friends, this is something everybody can have, not a few strong men that win the Olympic awards, not a few wise men that get the Nobel prize, but everyone can have this glorious experience. What is it? To understand and know God.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the
only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”
John 17:3.

And interestingly enough, if we start there, it works out from that central core, that nucleus, and we become acquainted with ourselves as taught by God, and we learn how to deal with other people.

I was interested in this statement in the book *Medical Ministry*, page 80. This says that the first duty of every student is to know himself. To know himself.

“No one is to measure out what he supposes his fellow
student is capable of doing... Each has an individuality
that no one can handle as successfully as himself”
Medical Ministry, page 80.

Now I’ve read that before, but I looked at it again this week, and I thought, “Is that really true?” It must be. But look at it; if you could have the best psychiatrist, psychologist, or psycho-analyst and have nothing to do but just supervise your

program, and run your life, wouldn't that be an advantage? No. He can't do it as well as *you* can.

Other people may make suggestions to you at times. Don't take all of them, but don't refuse all of them either. But listen to this inspired statement:

"Each has an individuality that no one can handle as successfully as himself" *Ibid.*

Well, you say, "I've tried, and I've made a mess of it."

Yes. You tried to do it without God. You have made a mess of it. But the answer is not to substitute somebody else's individuality without God for *your* individuality without God. That will make a worse mess of it. "Without Me," Jesus says, "Ye can do nothing." John 15:5. That's not very much, is it?

"Each has an individuality that no one can handle as successfully as himself" *Ibid.*

Some dear people here tonight are trying to learn to eat all over again. Some are trying to learn to live in other areas, other phases of life. I hope we're all trying to improve. My point is this friends: if you could find a place that would regiment you and somebody who is so much wiser than you could tell you exactly what to do every hour of the day and night, you might have a better program than you have now, but you wouldn't have a better life.

God has given you a mind different from anybody else's, and that mind was meant to work with that body you have, each to act upon the other. God has made you a special creation, and if you will look first to Him, get oriented with *Him*, then with that settled, your first duty is to know yourself.

"No one can submerge his identity in another's. He must know himself and give himself a favorable chance to come forth with an unbroken constitution, with a clear mind, with well-balanced nerves, and good digestion. With these, he will be fitted to do the work he has qualified himself to do" *Ibid.*

The whole page is wonderful. I'll stop with that. So our first quest is to know God and then to know ourselves, and then third, to integrate with others and get along with others. Can you get along with others? If you've really learned to get along with God and yourself, you are pretty close to getting along with others, but there are still some things that need to be practiced.

What method do you use to integrate with others?

Several years ago there was a naturalist who spent a number of years in the Rocky mountains. He was a great observer of life. He had the patience for it. He had a particular rock that he would get on up there in the mountains that

commanded a view of a trail where various animals came along. He would sit there on that rock by the hour and watch for animals to come along.

He saw the different wild animals, the deer, the bear; even the grizzly bear would come along. He noticed there was one animal that never got out of the path for anybody. It was a skunk. He was quite amused one day to watch a big grizzly bear coming along, and from where he sat, he could see that there was a skunk approaching from the opposite direction. You know that big old grizzly bear when he got close to the skunk he moved out of the trail and gave the skunk the right-of-way. [Laughter]

Now that's one way to integrate with other people, isn't it? It's one way to be successful in accomplishing your mission in life. I wouldn't recommend it, though. I must tell you the sequel of that. One day this same naturalist saw the skunk coming, and from the other direction, a porcupine was coming. The porcupine, too, had not been in the habit of moving over.

Can you imagine what happened? [Laughter] And every skunk that has made other animals move out of the way eventually meets his porcupine and vice versa. When that encounter was over, the porcupine smelled the skunk, and the skunk had some souvenirs from the porcupine to carry with him for a while.

Let's turn to Romans in the 12th chapter. Oh friends, there are some things that I want to get done. I want very much to get done, but I don't want to borrow either the skunk's or the porcupine's methods to get them done. What do you say? Even if they're good things, even if they're important things. Jesus says, "I have sent you forth as lambs among wolves." The only way that'll work is for God to work miracles.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably
with all men" Romans 12:18.

Quite an assignment, isn't it? God knows it's a big assignment, and He makes some limitations. He says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in, live peaceably with all men." We were speaking of Joseph. Joseph tried to live peaceably with his brothers, but they were bad boys. The only way to live peaceably with them was to be bad with them, and Joseph wouldn't do it. So in a spirit of revenge, they were about to kill him when they had him where they could do that, and instead they decided to sell him as a slave. So that chapter of Joseph's life ends with Joseph not making a very good success of living peaceably with his family.

Then he got down to Egypt, and he entered into the service of a slave in the home of Potiphar. He got along all right with Potiphar, and step-by-step, he was advanced until he had charge over everything in Potiphar's home and business. A successful slave assistant—one of the king's officers.

But Joseph was not successful in living peaceably with one member of that family. You remember that. Potiphar's wife, her formula for living peaceably with that young man, included breaking the law of God, and Joseph would have none of it.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” Romans 12:18.

But there are times, my friends, when a failure to live in peace is evidence of a man or woman doing the will of God. And so the next place we see Joseph is in prison, in the dungeon. There he is. What for? For doing right.

For doing right, he was sold into slavery by his brothers. For doing right, he was put in the dungeon by his master. But even there, he goes about trying to live at peace. He takes an interest in the other prisoners, and through that spirit of loving interest in others, a chain of providence is forged, which eventually leads him to the throne of Egypt. As he interprets dreams down there for the prisoners, his reputation finally comes to the ear of Pharaoh and he gets the privilege of telling the king his dream.

Oh my friends, the man of God is living, not for reputation, he’s living to please his Lord. His first concern is to know God, his second to live with himself and a good conscience, and third to reach out and try to help as many others as possible, but never to compromise truth or give up righteousness for the sake of peace.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” *Ibid.*

So this evening, in these few moments of meditation, let us examine ourselves. How are we getting along in our education? How much progress have we made in these three areas? How are we getting along in teamwork? How are we getting along with the members of our family? Our Sabbath school, our church? If we’re in an institution, how are we getting along there?

Are there problems that we could resolve through more love, more prayer, more Christian diplomacy? Back of this, how are we getting along living with ourselves? Are there frustrations, restlessness, guilt, other problems? Dear ones, thank God, no matter how impossible it may be to live peacefully with all men, we can live peacefully with God and ourselves. This is something we have control over.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”
1 John 1:9.

The burden of a guilty conscience need never remain with us. We can bring that load to Jesus.

Our Father, we think it’s wonderful that Thou hast opened the door of Thy sanctuary in Heaven, and sent out the word, “Come, all ye weary and heavy laden. Come with your burdens, your sorrows, your problems. Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” We believe this promise. We believe it means us, and we come in that wonderful name of Jesus.

Our Lord, we do not bring Thee any merits of our own. We're not good, but Thou art good. Thou hast invited us to use that wonderful name of Jesus. And so we bring Thee our needs in His righteousness, we bring Thee our needs in Thine own promises, we bring Thee our needs in Thine infinite fullness.

Oh, we thank Thee that Thou hast said, "Call unto Me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." So we're calling tonight, we're coming here at Thine altar. And all through this congregation, our weary hearts, take the load we pray.

Bring us into a good relationship with Thee and thus with ourselves and with others. Take from us those skunk-like qualities that make it difficult for other people to live with us. Take from us those porcupine quills that wound and grieve others, we pray. Give us the lamb-like meekness of Jesus, the gentleness and love of our blessed Redeemer. Give us a love that seeks to make it easier for other people to live with us, to work with us, to share with us in the home, in the institution, in the church, in the community.

Oh, my Father, just now work Thy miracle of grace in our hearts and do for us exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ask or think. And give us souls. Some of us are here interceding for lost ones, wandering ones. Give us these souls for whom Jesus died.

We thank Thee, in His wonderful name, amen.

[Sister Helen Frazee gives a nature talk.]

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