

New Revised Standard Version	Expanded Bible	English Standard Version
<p><sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.</p> <p><sup>15</sup>Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.</p> <p><sup>16</sup>For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.</p> <p><sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.</p> <p><sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.</p> <p><sup>4:1</sup>Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?</p> <p><sup>2</sup>You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.</p>	<p><sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy [envy] and are selfish [have selfish ambition] in your hearts, do not brag [boast]. Your bragging [boasting] is a lie that hides [denies; <i>lit.</i>, against] the truth [<i>or</i> Don't cover up the truth with bragging or lying].</p> <p><sup>15</sup>That kind of “wisdom” does not come from God [from heaven; <i>lit.</i>, down from above] but from the world [is earthly]. It is not spiritual [natural; human life apart from God] it is from the devil [demonic].</p> <p><sup>16</sup>Where jealousy [envy] and selfishness [selfish ambition] are, there will be confusion [chaos; disorder] and every kind of evil [evil thing/evil practice].</p> <p><sup>7</sup>But the wisdom that comes from God [<i>lit.</i>, above] is first of all pure, then peaceful [peace-loving], gentle [patient; considerate], and easy to please [willing to yield; open to reason]. This wisdom is always ready to help those who are troubled and to do good for others [<i>lit.</i>, full of mercy and good fruits]. It is always fair [impartial] and honest [sincere; unhypocritical].</p> <p><sup>18</sup>People who work for peace in a peaceful way plant a good crop of right living [<i>or</i> Peacemakers who sow with peace will harvest a crop of justice/righteousness].</p> <p><sup>4:1</sup>Do you know where your fights [conflicts; wars] and arguments [disputes; quarrels; battles] come from? They come from the selfish desires [cravings] that war within you [<i>lit.</i>, in your members].</p> <p><sup>2</sup>You want [desire] things, but you do not [cannot] have them. So you are ready to kill [<i>lit.</i>, murder] and are jealous [envious] of other people, but you still cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight [wage war]. You do not get what you want, because you do not ask God.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Or when you ask, you do not receive because the reason you ask is wrong [you ask with the wrong motives; <i>lit.</i>, you ask badly/wrongly]. You want things so you can use [<i>lit.</i>, spend] them for your own pleasures.</p>	<p><sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.</p> <p><sup>15</sup>This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.</p> <p><sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.</p> <p><sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.</p> <p><sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.</p> <p><sup>4:1</sup>What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?</p> <p><sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.</p>

**James 3:14-4:3****What can you do to foster “wisdom from above?” Do the works of your life show gentleness born of wisdom?**

1. How do you define (a) wisdom? (b) understanding? (c) envy? (d) selfish ambition? (e) partiality? (f) partiality? (g) to covet?
2. Before the “but”: verse 3:13 says, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.” In this verse, how does the writer answer this opening question?
3. Verse 14: The interlinear reads “If yet boiling bitter ye are having, and strife in the heart of you, no, ye are down-boasting, and ye are falsifying down the truth.” (*punctuation added*) How does this verse relate to the question, “Who is wise and understanding among you?”
4. Verse 15: What type wisdom is the writer referring to in this verse? How does verse 15 clarify, or otherwise relate to, verse 14?
5. Verse 16: What are the foundations of the type of wisdom described in verse 15? What is the result of this type of wisdom?
6. James is writing to “the twelve tribes scattered abroad” (*lit., diaspora*, verse 1:1). Given the language and tone of the letter, it is commonly believed he is writing to followers of the Way who were, for the most part, what we identify as Jewish Christians but who probably self-identified as Jews. Many also believe the author is the James character who gave the closing argument for carrying the gospel to the gentiles at the Council of Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 15. Given that the letter does not address this issue, many place the writing before the date of that council, around 49 or 50 AD. For this broad audience, and given the young nature of the Way, do you think there might have been a variety of leaders claiming wisdom and understanding whom James is addressing? If so, why might he first answer the question in verse 13 with talking about the wisdom that “does not come down from above” (verse 15) instead of the “wisdom from above” (verse 17)?
7. Verse 17: What are the characteristics of the wisdom from above? What are ways in which this wisdom might be demonstrated? How do the activities born of this wisdom from above contrast with the activities born of the wisdom not from above? Can you think of examples of these contrasting types of wisdom?
8. Verse 18: Recall verse 13 which admonishes the reader to “show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.” How does this phrasing mirror verse 18’s “harvest of righteousness sown in peace”?
9. Who are those who make peace? What type of wisdom and understanding do they practice?
10. Verse 4:1: How does this verse introduce a contrast to verse 18 that mirrors the preceding verses 3:14-16 and verses 3:17-18?
11. Verses 4:1-3: What are some of the cause-and-effect relationships the author identifies?
12. Considering these cause-and-effect relationships in both literal and figurative contexts, how have you seen them played out in the life you live?
13. Are there times when you have been the “cause” in these examples, either literally or figuratively? What might James suggest as a way to change your role in these situations?
14. Considering the passage as a whole, what type of wisdom do you pursue? How can you live a life born of wisdom from above?