



The Book of James Lesson 8 4th Q 2014 The Humility of Heavenly Wisdom

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “In many...” What is it that drives people to be entitled? Is it not fear and a failure to love, or another way to say it, fear and selfishness?

People have fear of not being recognized, fear of not getting one’s own and an inability to celebrate and rejoice in the successes of another?

This is the “survival of the fittest” drive or motive, which is an infection to God’s creation. This motive contaminates and destroys relationships, peace, joy, happiness and ultimately life.

Do we see this mentality in society in general?

- Entitled to benefits not earned, position not qualified for, respect not deserved?
- Not taking responsibility for one’s own shortcomings, it’s someone else’s fault?
- And if it is someone else’s fault, then where does one look for the solution? To someone else – so people don’t look to see how they can learn, better themselves, overcome, but instead seek to punish the other or get compensation from another.
- How does this play over into theology?
 - It isn’t fair not to punish sin
 - We can’t do anything to overcome sin, so we claim the legal payment of Jesus for sins past present and future, and keep on sinning until Jesus comes.
 - While it isn’t our fault that we are born in the condition with which we were born, it is our fault if we refuse to partake the Remedy provided freely to us.

But is humility the same as passiveness, as failing to stand up for oneself? Does humility mean one allows other to abuse, control, dominate them? Does humility mean being intimidated, backing down, giving in, surrendering to the more aggressive?

Was Christ humble? Did He give in to the demands of others? Did He do what others wanted Him to do? Did He change His methods, purposes, goals, agenda, or ministry?

- Did He stop teaching the truth about God?
- Did He stop healing on Sabbath?
- Did He stop associating with publicans and prostitutes?
- Did He stop speaking with women and Samaritans?

But did He go out seeking to antagonize His opposition? No, He sought to heal, restore, reveal truth, dispel lies, reconcile, build bridges, disentangle confusion, restore love, destroy selfishness.



Can our actions, be misunderstood and misinterpreted by others?

Were Christ's actions misunderstood or misrepresented?

Christ was not trained as a theologian. He didn't have a seminary degree and what was the result? Some of those with a degree were unable to consider what He taught objectively, but discounted it because He had no degree.

It was the pride, the arrogance, the inability of the theologians to humble themselves and consider they could be taught something by a carpenter that prevented them from accepting the truth Jesus revealed and taught.

Did the twelve Apostles have seminary training? And what was the result? Did the religious leaders, those with professional theological degrees have difficulty accepting what they taught?

Can this be a problem for us today?

How should we deal with this? By being humble, meaning we present the truth in love and leave people free. But we don't back down and give in on points of truth just because someone who disagrees is in a position of church leadership or has a seminary degree. We leave them free to hold to their belief. We love them, but we continue presenting the truth, praying for better enlightenment for ourselves as well as others.

The same type of pride contributes to the factions in Christianity. How many people won't learn from someone not of their own denomination?

The truth stands on its own; if it is true, it is true, does it matter who says it. For instance, the devils at one point acknowledged Jesus as the Son of the most high God – were they wrong? Should we reject Jesus because a demon said He was God's Son? No – but should we believe it because a demon said it? No, we believe it because it is true!

Why should we believe Jesus is the Son of God?

- Because of the evidence revealed in Scripture, in the life of Christ, in our own personal experience with Him, and how the law of love in nature harmonizes perfectly with the life Christ lived.

Where do we draw the line between believing because someone said it and believing because we have thought it through for ourselves and examined the evidence for ourselves?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Some commentators..." What do you understand Bible wisdom to be?



Is it not understanding and living in harmony with God's methods, design and purpose?

Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. Lk 17:33

Does this sound wise? Does it make sense from the world's point of view? Why is this unwise in the world, but ultimately wise?

From the world's point of view there is no God, there is no afterlife, there is only here and now. Further, from the world's point of view no one watches out for you except you. This is your life and you better do all you can to protect it. Once it's gone its gone. So, to lose your life you lose, but saving your life, at any cost, is winning – you are the fittest because you have survived.

But such thinking is based on falsehood, based on the lie that there is no God, and on the lie that survival of the fittest is adaptive.

When one realizes God's design for life, one realizes that life only exists in giving, in surrender to unity with our Creator, in loving God and others more than self. Jesus said:

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Jn 12:24

This is designed right into nature. Thus Jesus surrenders His life in order to give life to us.

Any other examples in nature?

Read second paragraph, "Interestingly, the only place..." Do we look at the nation that lived 2000 years ago, and who rigidly kept the rules given by Moses as wise and understanding?

- Was it wise and understanding to reject Jesus?
- What about today? Are there people who keep the rules, eat only the right foods, worship on the right day, etc. who are not wise?
- What about those who today in the Middle East keep these rules of Moses, and especially want to keep the eye for an eye rule, do we find them wise?
- Or was Nelson Mandela wiser when he set up forgiveness tribunals, in which everyone who admitted their crimes during that period were legally pardoned? Which is wiser?
- Now am I suggesting the wisdom of God is not wise? Absolutely not! I am pointing out how one can read the Scripture, and misunderstand it such that they carry out God's directives foolishly, thus losing the wisdom intended.

What is the basic problem with the law as kept by Israel ancient and modern and many Christians today? They have accepted the lie that God's law is imposed rules we must to which we must adhere.



The wisdom comes when we recognize God's law as design law, protocols for life, the law of love in function.

Here is a description of foolish law keeping contrasted with wise law keeping:

- A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}
- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

What makes law keeping foolish? When it is viewed as a system of rules, imposed that we must keep.

What makes law keeping wise? When it is understood as a principle, as a design protocol upon which life is built and then becomes internalized as a principle of action that motivates are choices and behavior.

What motivates people to be one of those who work hard to keep the law?

- It is rooted in believing lies about God – which results in inability to trust Him
- Without trust one will not surrender self, will not open their heart to God and thus one works to prove themselves, to earn their keep
- This results in intolerance, judgmentalism, desire to force others to ones way – a failure to love
- This results in destruction

Here is a quote from a book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, **and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}



MONDAY

The top of the lesson states, “Read James 3:15,16. What is his description of worldly wisdom? What are the common ways we see this ‘wisdom’ manifested in the world, or even the church?”

James 3:13-16 my paraphrase:

James 3:13 Who of you is wise enough to understand God’s methods and principles? Then show it by living in harmony with God’s design for life, a life of love in action, giving in humility to bless and uplift others. 14 But to cherish self-centered, arrogant, mean-spirited, jealous motives in the heart misrepresents God and defames the truth. 15 Such principles do not originate in God nor come from heaven, but are profane and destructive, and originate in Satan. 16 For selfishness, envy and all violations of God’s law of love, break his design for life and cause chaos, disease, suffering and everything evil.

So what are ways the wisdom of the world is commonly manifested in the world and in the church?

In the world:

- Vengeance – hunting down to kill those who do us wrong
- Coercion – sanctions to force people to do what we want
- Violence designed to injure, hurt, exploit, dominate or take advantage of another
- Pleasure seeking for pleasure seeking – live for today for tomorrow we die
- Racism, sexism, bigotry, prejudice – valuing some humans less than other humans
- Exploitation of God’s creation for selfishness
- Killing for pleasure and sport (hunting)
- Sexual perversity marketed as sexual diversity
- Idolatry
- Seeking to get ahead, highest office, most recognition, biggest paycheck...
- Other examples?

In the church:

- Sexism, bigotry, prejudice
 - Restriction of leadership in the church to men
 - Restriction of leadership in the church to seminary trained individuals (Jesus chose His Apostles from a wide background, most of whom were not trained theologians)
 - Denominationalism – arrogance that we are the saved because we belong to a certain denomination and others are lost because they don’t belong to our denomination
- Coercion
 - Sanctions in the church – coercion to conform rather than leaving free to think and explore new ideas honestly and humbly



- Teaching that certain rituals are required for salvation or exaltation and then holding those rites hostage to paying tithe, which one must demonstrate by providing income tax records
- Teaching that the church holds the keys to your salvation and one must participate in church rituals in order to be saved, or belong to a certain organization etc.
- Teaching God's kingdom runs like human governments, legal models of atonement
- Idolatry
 - Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}
- Seeking the biggest church, paycheck, highest office
- Others?

Read last paragraph, "While James..." What enables a person to do this? What enables a person to not fight to get ahead?

A personal experience and trust in God, such that our focus is on fulfilling God's purpose in our lives and trusting God with outcomes.

We don't have to "make it turn out" a certain way, we have to choose in governance of self to do what we know is right for us to do in harmony with God's design, purposes and will.

TUESDAY

Read James 4:1-3 my paraphrase:

James 4:1 Why is there so much hostility, fighting, and arguments among you? Because the survival-of-the-fittest instinct controls you; 2 if you want something, but don't get it, you are willing to kill. You are selfish, coveting what you cannot have, constantly fighting, trying to get for yourselves. You do not obtain, because you do not seek God. 3 And when you finally do ask God, because your motives are selfish, because you focus only on self-gratification, you don't get what your asking because God doesn't use his power to supply you with means to further damage yourselves.

Our minds are out of balance from God's original design. We have two antagonistic motives – our higher cortex, in connection with God desires to live in peace, love, truth, harmony. Our limbic system is dominated by fear and selfishness and seeks to protect self even at the expense of others.



Which is most healthy?

An interesting study was done recently examining **Hedonistic vs. Eudaimonic State of Wellbeing**

- 80 individuals were assessed
 - Hedonistic: Material or bodily pleasure (food sex)
 - Eudaimonic: deeper meaning, purpose, altruism
- Both scored same on measures of affect (in other words both groups would have reported they were equally happy and had equally good moods)
- But WBC gene expression markedly different
 - Eudaimonic: Downregulated inflammatory genes, upregulated infection fighting genes
 - Hedonistic: Upregulated inflammatory genes, down regulated infection fighting genes.
PNAS · vol. 110 no. 33; Barbara L. Fredrickson, 13684 –13689, doi:10.1073/pnas.1305419110

Only in harmony with God’s design is there life, health and true happiness!

This is design law, it is not an imposed rule. God doesn’t send angels from heaven to change the gene expression in our bodies based on our choices. But God did create life to operate in harmony with His design and only in unity and harmony with Him is there life:

Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21

Why?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The next verse, James 4:5...” What is the message of James 4:4-6?

Here is my paraphrase:

James 4:4 You disloyal and unfaithful people, don’t you realize that embracing the me-first, survival-of-the-fittest principle of this world is warring against God? Anyone who allies him or herself with this selfish world chooses to be an enemy of our God of love. 5 Don’t you get it? The Scripture is clear, God longs intensely for you and gives his Spirit to live in you 6 to graciously heal you. That is why the Scripture says: “God opposes selfishness, arrogance and pride, but heals the selfless.”

When we understand God’s law is the law of love upon which life is built, and that sin is deviation from that design based on fear and selfishness, then we can read passages like this and understand what the author is trying to say. However, when we have a false view of God’s law, thinking God’s law is like human law, rules imposed and requires God to enforce, then passages like this become hard to understand.



The bottom pink section asks, “Look at yourself. What in you makes you worthy of salvation?” I don’t like the word selection here or this question – it suggests, based on the word “worthy” that we don’t have worth. But we do have worth – we are God’s workmanship, created by God in Adam to reveal Him and recreated/healed in Christ to reveal Him.

I have many patients who struggle with low self worth, thinking they are unworthy of salvation, too sinful, too dirty, too defiled, too ugly for God to save, and questions like this only reinforce a false idea.

Each of us has worth as God’s creation and this is demonstrated in Christ’s sacrifice for us.

So what in me makes me worthy of salvation?

- The handiwork of God – the life given me by God
- The purpose of God in the creation of humanity
- God’s purpose for me now as a redeemed child of His
- God’s love for me!

Perhaps this question would have been better worded, “What can I do or bring that originates with me that earns the right for me to be saved?” Then the answer is nothing.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Submit yourselves....” My paraphrase of James 4:7-10:

James 4:7 Surrender yourselves to God and his treatment. Tell the devil NO, and you will escape him. 8 Move close to God and God will come close to you. You selfish people stop choosing to indulge your desires. Stop going back and forth between love and selfishness, purify your hearts with love. 9 Stop playing around and get real. Let your hearts break, cry over your terminal condition; admit you are sick, stop pretending all is well. 10 Then go humbly to the Lord and he will heal and restore you.

What obstacles prevent us from surrendering ourselves to God?

- Misunderstanding God, or not truly knowing Him
- Distrusting God
- Misunderstanding the problem of sin, the plan of salvation, God’s solution
- Believing in a false remedy, that doing the right ritual, going to church on the right day, eating the right foods will result in our salvation

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “There are many...” Read and discuss questions 2, 3

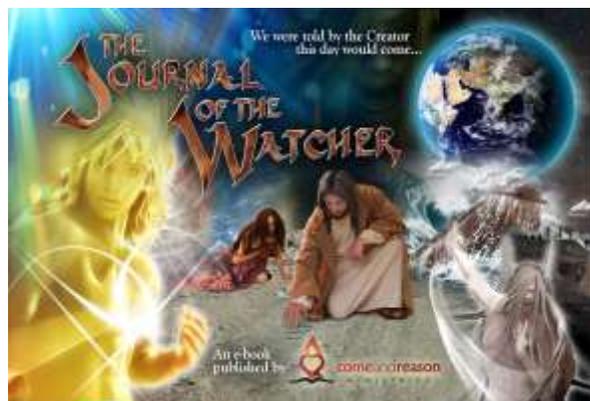


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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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