

## **'FAITH THAT REALLY WORKS'** ***(Biblical Faith - Audio & Visual Belief)*** **Studies in James**

### **'Don't Drink the Water'**

If you know what's good for you you'll listen to and follow that advice just to be on the safe side. In some countries that don't have strict health requirements for clean water systems, you could make yourself ill, get hospitalized, even end up dead from consumption of unclean water. Sometimes sewage lines leak or break letting contaminated water endanger nearby waterlines provoking the emergency warning, '*Don't drink the water*'. If infected fluids get inside of you, you will be nauseated, your body may be damaged and before long you will be uncontrollably emitting a lot of very nasty contents that will repulse you and everyone around you. The solution? Keep water lines for drinking and cooking clean, safe and far away from all sewage lines and all unsanitary surfaces.

Solomon wrote: ***"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life"*** (Proverbs 4:23). Hearts of true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must be guarded against the contaminating pollutants of the many unclean influences around us. The secular world, our own sinful flesh, and the schemes of Satan all conspire to seep wickedness into the flow of spiritual living water from God. Streams of pure spiritual grace from God flow to the hearts of believers through the tributaries of Scripture, prayer, Spirit-fullness, wholesome Christian fellowship, and worship. But if there is a crack or break in one's spiritual connection with the Lord, the unclean tributaries of sinfulness are quick to leak their moral sewage and contaminate our hearts, our relationships, and our ministries for the Lord. And until breached tributaries to our soul are stopped, purged, and restricted, our spiritual infrastructure will continue to breakdown and emit an impure and unpleasant mix of polluted good and pure evil from our lives.

James' warning to the troubled Christians of the early church was this – your belief system is very inconsistent with your behavior, especially that flow of nastiness spewing from your lips. The spiritual spring of their hearts was contaminated – at times they tried to be good with a spiritual flow from God and at other times they gushed out spiritual poison of the flesh (**James 3:9-12**). The mixed message of any Christian is always labeled '*Hypocrite! Don't swallow anything this person says or does*'; spiritual weakness, moral sickness, and possible terminal disease may result'. Until the one with the potty mouth or sloppy lifestyle repents and gets right with God, you are wise to pay attention to the warning of Scripture, ***"...don't even eat with such a person..."*** (1 Corinthians 5:11-13).

**James 3:13-4:10** is God's plan for cleaning up the 'sin spill' of contaminated Christianity –

- 1) Shut off the flow of all unbiblical, secular wisdom to your mind and heart (**3:13-16**);
- 2) Turn on the flow of purifying spiritual wisdom of God to purge your heart (**3:17-18**);
- 3) Stay disconnected and separate from all contaminated worldly people who have chosen to live disobediently (**4:1-6**);
- 4) Issue forth continually a purity of lifestyle and a closeness to the Lord through '*resistance*', '*repentance*' and '*revival*' (**4:7-10**).

Other Christians and those seeking the Lord are thirsty for the refreshing living water of God (**John 4:10**). And the spiritual living waters (**John 7:37-39**) will only flow from God through human conduits that are kept clean and holy, so God can say, ***"...let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him (or her) take the water of life freely"*** (Revelation 22:17).

## **The Heart of the Matter** (*The Problem of Spiritual Audio/Visual Dysfunction*)

### **Audio/Visual Heart Condition Signs** (*Comparing Healthy & Unhealthy Hearts*)

James 3:13-14

*“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts do not boast and lie against the truth.”*

List the ‘audio-visual’ differences between wise and unwise people:

Discuss the difference in ‘motive’ between wise and unwise people:

### **Diagnosing An Unhealthy Heart** (*A steady diet of worldliness, ego-bisity & rebelliousness*)

James 3:15-16

*“This wisdom (v 14) does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”*

Specifically identify the sources of ungodly wisdom: *the world, the senses, the dark side.*  
(How do these avenues of information cause ‘bitterness, envy, selfishness, boasting and lying?’)

What is the key warning sign in v. 16 that your heart, mind and soul are becoming polluted with input that is not biblically wise? (following ‘confusion’ what is sure to follow?)

In a Christian how do the pollutants of worldly wisdom interact with his or her spiritual thinking?

### **Diagnosing A Healthy, Holy Heart** (*A steady diet of heavenliness, others-liness & submissiveness*)

James 3:17-18

*“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace”.*

Discuss the obvious priority order of how God’s wisdom must be attained (*1<sup>st</sup>, then ...*).  
What will be the result if this order is not followed? What if ‘steps’ are omitted or skipped?  
(For example, if there is a problem what if ‘purity’ is bypassed and ‘peace’ is attempted first?)

Discuss the spiritual wisdom of God, how each ‘step’ when obeyed produces the next virtue.

Discuss how ‘righteousness’ (practical holiness of lifestyle and choices) is directly related to pursuing biblical wisdom. Where can “wisdom from above” be found today?

What if a believer tries to mix a little wisdom from below with ‘wisdom from above’? (*vs 11-12*)