

“How to Relate Wisely to Others”

Text: James 3:13-18

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

Rev. Chris Geline

Jesus and Paying Taxes to Caesar!

- Jesus gives us an example of **relating wisely to others**.
- Today, James will show us how.

Read James 3:13-18

PRAY!

We continue our series on “Building Better Relationships”. This morning we’re going to look at “How to Relate Wisely to Other People”.

- Every day you encounter people who are difficult to live with.
- We need to learn how to deal with other people without conflict.

The Living Bible translation of James 3:18 is the key verse, *“And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.”*

- What you sow you reap.
- In every relationship, every day, you are sowing seeds. Seeds of anger, seeds of trust, seeds of conflict or seeds of peace.

How do you plant seeds of peace in your relationships? How do you have peaceful relationships? By being wise with people.

- Have you ever noticed how uncommon common sense is? People do not relate to each other.
- Sometimes we do the exact opposite of what we need to do towards people. We act foolishly towards them and it causes all kinds of conflict.
- Wisdom is a lifestyle; a way you relate to people. And when I’m unwise toward people, it causes problems.

In this passage, James defines real wisdom. He shows how it differs from our normal reactions. Then he details how it operates. He says in verse 17, *“Wisdom is pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

- He mentions six things and says that’s what wisdom is all about.

I. IF I’M WISE, I WON’T COMPROMISE MY INTEGRITY.

A. That’s the bottom line. First of all wisdom that comes from heaven is **pure**. That means uncorrupted, authentic. He’s talking here about integrity.

1. If I’m wise I’m not going to lie to you, I’m not going to cheat you, I’m not going to trick you, I’m not going to take advantage of you. I’m not going to deliberately mislead you.

- B. Why is pure listed first? All relationships are built on trust. If you lie to people all the time, nobody's going to trust you so you'll have not relationships.
- C. Dr. Leonard Keeler was the guy who invented the lie detector. After interviewing 25,000 people on the lie detector machine, he came to this conclusion about the human race: People lie. As a result that's why we have bad relationships. If I'm wise I will not compromise my integrity.
 1. Proverbs 10:9, "*Whoever walks in integrity walks securely.*" They're not afraid of being found out.

II. IF I'M WISE, I WON'T ANTAGONIZE YOUR ANGER.

- A. Wise people work at maintaining harmony. They are **peace loving**. They're not always looking for a fight. Some people love to be argumentative. It's their nature. They love to be argumentative. I heard about one guy who was so argumentative that he would only eat food that disagreed with him. Wisdom is peace loving.
- B. Proverbs 20:3, "*Any fool can start arguments. The wise thing is to stay out of them.*" We saw that with Jesus and Paying Taxes to Caesar.
- C. Any one who has been married more than two years knows the hot buttons of your mate. You know what will make them angry and you are not given to avoiding those things. When you get in a good argument and you need to pull out the arsenal, you know what will make them blow up. You know what buttons to push and you're not above using them at any time. The Bible says that is dumb! When you know what makes another person angry and you use it anyway that's dumb! If I'm wise, I'm peace loving and I will not antagonize your anger.

III. I WON'T MINIMIZE YOUR FEELINGS.

- A. **Considerate** means mindful of the feelings of others. One of the mistakes we make all the time is this logic that says, "If you feel a certain way and I don't feel that way, then your feelings are invalid." Because I don't feel that way. (And everybody knows that I'm the world's example of logic.)
- B. Feelings are neither right nor wrong, they're simply feelings. Husbands, if your wife feels a certain way, accept it. It doesn't mean it's right or wrong. Wives, if your husband feels that way, accept it. Feelings are feelings. And being considerate means I don't minimize your feelings.
 1. You're sitting next to someone. You say, "It's hot in here." They say, "No, it's cold in here." You're both right. You just have different body temperatures. It's a feeling, how you perceive it. "I'm so depressed" ... "You shouldn't be depressed; it's illogical for you to be depressed. Don't be!" That's real helpful. That's what I call not being considerate! The Bible says if I'm wise I don't minimize your feelings.
- C. Proverbs 15:4, "*Kind words bring life, but cruel words crush your spirit.*" Our typical reaction to feelings is we belittle them. "It's no big deal... You shouldn't feel that way ... If only you had an ounce of brain you wouldn't feel that way." That's not being considerate.

IV. IF I'M WISE, I WON'T CRITICIZE YOUR SUGGESTIONS.

- A. James says in vs. 17 the fourth thing he says that wisdom is, is **submissive**. Submission is a poor translation of the Greek word used here. It's not the word for submission in the Scripture. The word means "easy to be entreated." It means not stubborn, but reasonable. The Revised Standard Version says, "*It's open to reason.*" The Living Bible says, "*It allows discussion*". If I'm wise I will not criticize your suggestions.
- B. Wise people can learn from anybody. They're not defensive. They're teachable. They're open. It's unwise people who are not teachable. That's why they're unwise. They're afraid to learn, afraid to listen to suggestions.
- C. If I'm wise, I'm reasonable. Can your kids reason with you? Wives, can your husband reason with you? Husband, can your wife reason with you? Are you a reasonable person? Are you open to discussion? Or are you a closed person.
- D. Most of us are so sensitive to criticism and to suggestions, that we never learn anything. Proverbs 12:15, "*The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.*" If you never change your mind, it just says that you're not growing.

V. IF I'M WISE, I WON'T EMPHASIZE YOUR MISTAKES.

- A. "*Wisdom is full of mercy.*"
 - 1. Do you jump on every fault or blunder? Every time somebody stumbles in your house, do you say, "Smooth mover, klutzo!" Or if they stumble over their words, do you start laughing at it? Do you get a real thrill out of watching people flub? Do you ever let that kind of stuff go or do you always bring up the past? Do you ever just gloss over a mistake or do you continually bring up the past as leverage?
- B. Jesus says that's dumb! If I'm wise I won't emphasize your mistakes. Wisdom is full of mercy. Proverbs 17:9, "*Love forgets mistakes, nagging about them parts the best of friends.*"
- C. What is mercy? Mercy is giving people what they need not what they deserve. That's the way God is toward you. God is a merciful God. God doesn't give you what you deserve. If God gave us what we deserve, none of us would be here today. None of us would even be alive. God gives you what you need not what you deserve, because He is a merciful God. God wants us to be that way to others. That's the wise way to act. Treat people with mercy. You don't emphasize their mistakes and their faults and their failures. When somebody stumbles, you don't judge them, you encourage them.
 - 1. James 2:12, "*Mercy triumphs over judgment.*" You treat people with respect and with mercy.

VI. IF I'M WISE, I WONT DISGUISE MY WEAKNESSES.

- A. I won't disguise my own weaknesses. In relationships to others, I won't try to play the phony and fake it and do these kinds of things. "*Wisdom is impartial and sincere.*" The two words in Greek – *adiakritos* and

- anypokritos*, we get the word “hypocrite”. Hypocrites wear a mask, they’re pretenders, fakers. They aren’t genuine, real.
- B. The point here is that wise people don’t try to fake it. They’re not phonies. They’re open, they’re sincere, real genuine, authentic – warts and all, what you see is what you get! They’re not trying to hide their big secret sin or fault. They let people know where they’re growing and where they’re struggling.
- C. This alone would improve relationships so much. Would you agree there is a lot of phoniness in relationships in our world? In the typical office, in dating, in single bars and even sometimes in churches there can be so much phoniness going on.
1. 20 years in Los Angeles
- D. The Bible says it’s dumb to pretend that you’re perfect. Proverbs 28:13, *“You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins.”* People appreciate honesty. When you’re open and honest it makes other people open and honest. They level with you because you’re not trying to be anything that you’re not. You’re just there!

God’s Word gives us six specific ways to relate wisely towards others. May God help you to plant these six seeds of peace in your relationships this Christmas season.

PRAYER

Father, thank you that Your Word gives us wisdom. We need to be wise in our relationships with others. Help us this week, for we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.