The Meekness of Wisdom
James 3:13

Introduction:
A. James deals with overly ambitious, self-seeking, would be teachers in chapter 3.
   1. He is not discouraging qualified teachers in the church (cf. Heb. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:2)
   2. They were like kids all wanting to be pitcher or quarterback in sandlot games.
   3. James reminds these self-seeking teachers of three facts.
      a. Teachers have greater responsibilities – more too it than “limelight.” (v. 1)
      b. The ease of offending with the tongue (vv. 2-12)
      c. The wise need to be governed by the “meekness of wisdom” (v. 13; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1)
B. James then contrasts two sources of wisdom – beneath and above.

Discussion:
I. The Wisdom from Beneath (vv. 14-16)
   A. Characterized by “bitter envying” (of another’s good fortune, ability, position, etc).
   B. Characterized by “strife” or “self-seeking” (NKJ), or “selfish ambition” (NIV) or “faction” (ASV)
      1. Such prevents us from being of “one mind” (Phil. 2:1-4)
      2. Such is not the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5ff)
   C. Characterized by the earthly, sensual and devilish (v. 15)
   D. Produces confusion and every evil work (v. 16)
   E. The would be teachers who thought of themselves as wise were being governed by this wisdom.

II. The Wisdom from Above (vv. 17-18)
   A. Makes purity the top priority - “first pure”
      1. Moral, doctrinal and practical purity of the church comes first.
      2. No room of yielding here – not even for the sake of peace (Gal. 2:5; 1 Cor. 5:7)
   B. Makes peace next in order after purity is insured (Rom. 12:18; 14:19)
      1. Peace requires gentleness (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24; Gal. 6:1)
      2. Peace requires “easy to be entreated” or “willing to yield” (See NKJV)
      3. Peace requires fullness of mercy (Jas. 2:13; Matt. 5:7; 23:23)
         a. Willing to give a benefit of a doubt.
         b. Willing to make allowances, grant exceptions and consider extenuating circumstances.
         c. Even in sinful matters exercise longsuffering and forbearance (Rev. 2:21 asv)
   C. Makes our lives be full of good fruits.
      1. Without partiality (cf. Acts 10:34,35; Gal. 3:28)
      2. Without hypocrisy – “what you see is what you get”
   D. Makes us peacemakers rather than peace breakers (v. 18; cf. Matt. 5:9).

Conclusion:
A. There is only one thing more important than peace - purity.
B. Was no room to compromise as to the need for teachers – room to compromise as to who teaches.