

THE ABSENCE OF WISDOM

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

James 3:16

The context of James 3:13-18 primarily has to do with the subject of wisdom. The Holy Spirit is helping us to distinguish between true and false wisdom. Where envy and strife is, there is no wisdom, but rather “confusion.” Confusion could be considered the opposite of true wisdom, or THE ABSENCE OF WISDOM. There can be no wisdom and peace where there is confusion, and confusion exists where there is jealousy and contention.

When most of us think of the kinds of things that would hinder a church or withhold God’s blessings from the Body of Christ, we would think of things like immorality, dishonesty, rebellion, drunkenness, or the like. These things are definitely harmful, but attitudes such as envy or strife can be serious problems as well. Confusion describes a state of disorder and instability. We know that this is not God’s way. He does things decently and in order. Not only is there confusion, but also “every evil work.” Where there is strife and envy, the result will be compounded mischief. One sin begets another. In such an atmosphere, wisdom can hardly be found. When a spirit of envy and strife prevails in a church, you cannot expect to make any progress in spiritual things. We should never be misled. Where this kind of conflict exists, it should never be wrongly interpreted as wisdom. Churches need wisdom and direction from God. We need the wisdom that comes down from above. For that wisdom to be found, we must be willing to rid our hearts of the strife that stands in the way of God’s blessing and guidance for our ministries. When we need or are

seeking wisdom for some situation in our lives, we need peace, not confusion and
turmoil.

What causes confusion? Our verse tells us that one place it comes from is envy and strife. If confusion is the fruit, envy and strife are the root. Where there is contention and jealousy, there can be no peace. When our hearts are not right with God and with others, when turmoil exists in our spirit, the manifestation will be confusion rather than peace. When we are willing to clear our hearts of the unrest, envy, strife, and anxiousness that are there, and surrender our wills to Him, we can expect to be led in
the way of true wisdom.