

Episode: James Series No. 05

Narrator: Barnabas

Primary Scriptures: James 1:5-8, 17-18; 3:13-18; 4:5-10; 5:7-20

Story Summary: Verses with content about wisdom

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 50 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: James 1:17; 3:13, 3:17-18; 4:7; 5:8, 12, 13-15

Barnabas was well known for being an encourager. He very likely was just as well known for being wise, sent to take care of Paul after his conversion, becoming Paul's tutor and sounding board for more than a decade. When there was a problem in the early church, he was likely called on for his advice and influence.

Barnabas was unwise in two events. Not necessarily sinful, but unwise and costly. The first was when Peter and he stopped eating with the Gentiles in Antioch,¹ an action he came to recognize as a mistake. The other instance happened at the advent of the Second Missionary Journey, when Barnabas wanted to take Mark but Paul refused because of Mark's previous abandonment of the First Missionary Journey. Barnabas and Paul had a sharp, harsh disagreement which caused them to part ways. It would have been to everyone's benefit to have had an amicable parting.

There is no doubt that Barnabas had a high regard for wisdom. You can imagine the number of hours he and the other church leaders spent trying to find the wisest solutions to the church's problems and opportunities, as well as the hours spent in prayer asking for wisdom from God.

James wrote that wise people should demonstrate their wisdom by doing good deeds with a spirit of humility. He said that selfish ambition and envy are evil practices and not to boast about them. James could have been thinking about Barnabas when he wrote those things. Barnabas is introduced in *Acts* when he generously sold land to support the local church and humbly gave all of the money to the apostles.

Think of all the other wise people James got to be around and learn from. Joseph and Mary. Jesus. All the apostles. The people in his church. An unending number of people to teach him about wisdom and its benefits.

¹ Galatians 2:13

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the source of wisdom? How do you get it?
 2. How can you demonstrate that you are wise and have understanding?
 3. Is there anything wise about being envious and having selfish ambition?
 4. What are some characteristics of heavenly wisdom?
 5. How does God deal with proud people? How does he deal with humble people?
 6. Name one aspect of how we should relate to God and to Satan.
 7. Is it wise to go to extremes to avoid suffering? Is that wise?
 8. Describe one reason why Job was wise.
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1. It is a gift of God. You get it by asking him for it. 2. By humbly doing good deeds 3. No, it is unspiritual and demonic. Do not boast about it. It causes disorder. 4. It is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, merciful, impartial, sincere. 5. He opposes the proud. He shows favor to the humble, and lifts them up. 6. We should submit to God, and we should resist Satan. 7. When suffering comes, it is wise to be patient and persevere through it. 8. Even though he could not understand the reason why he suffered, he continued to have trust in God.

Application Questions:

1. What are some ways you can gain knowledge? What about wisdom? What's the difference between the two?
2. How do you handle your own envy and selfish ambition?
3. Would your friends describe you as humble? If not, does that mean they think you are a proud person?
4. How can you oppose Satan when it comes to the digital distractions of our modern age?
5. What type of suffering do you go to extreme lengths to avoid?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. How can you oppose Satan when it comes to the digital distractions of our modern age?
2. When it comes to the people who are popular at your school, are they more typically proud or humble? Do you tend to admire proud people or humble people?
3. Can you think of any celebrities who are humble?
4. Is being wise important to you?
5. Compared to the past, knowledge is now almost infinitely available to us through the internet. Does that cheapen the importance of wisdom, or does it make wisdom much more valuable?