

33. We now return to our study of James 3 where we left off with verse 16. Before we do, let's review the expanded translations of James 14 and 15:

James 3:14 But if you have bitter envy [ζῆλος (zēlos)] and selfish pursuit of one's personal self-interests in your *kardía*'s stream of consciousness, do not arrogantly boast and lie against the truth.

v. 15 This category of wisdom is not that which finds its origin in heaven, but is common to cosmos diabolicus, human viewpoint, human good, and evil, and doctrines of demons. (ext)

34. Our exegesis left off with verse 16:

James 3:16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. (NASB)

1. This verse opens with a comment about envy which we first observed in:
James 3:14 But if you have bitter envy [ζῆλος (zēlos)] and selfish pursuit of one's personal self-interests in your *kardía*'s stream of consciousness, do not arrogantly boast and lie against the truth. (EXT)
2. Verse 16 opens with the phrase, "For where," and is the illative use of the particle **γάρ (gár)** which introduces a reason why this believer is envious. The answer is because he is out of fellowship and therefore functioning outside the divine dynasphere.
3. Spending time in the cosmic systems destroyed his spiritual advance causing him to retrogress into the sin of envy, first mentioned in verse 14.
4. The particle **gár**, "for," is followed by the adverb, **ὅπου (hópon)**: "in what place." This identifies the believer's soul as the place where the following mental attitude sins exist beginning with the subject, **ζῆλος (zēlos)**: "envy."
5. In both verses 14 and 16, the NASB and NET Bibles translate ζῆλος into English with "jealousy," the KJV with "envying," and the NIV with "envy." The words, "jealousy" and "envy," are considered synonyms in English dictionaries, but there is a significant difference between the two words' definitions and meanings.
6. As we studied in verse 14, jealousy and envy have different objects. The jealous person is hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage. Therefore, his jealousy is directed toward the other person's asset upon which there is an assumed legitimate claim.

7. The envious person does not even want to have the person's asset, nor could he enjoy it if he did, but finds it unbearable that person does so.
8. Therefore, jealousy is directed toward another person's asset which he wishes to acquire, while envy is directed toward the individual. In the latter case, he wishes to destroy the person's happiness by removing the object of his affection.
9. In verse 16, ζῆλος pops up again and is followed by the words "selfish ambition," which refers to the verb's subject, ἐριθεία (*eritheía*): "scheming and intrigue."

Principle: In verse 16, **ζῆλος (zēlos)**: "envy," is a masculine noun linked by the conjunction, **γάρ (gár)**: "and," followed by the feminine noun, **ἐριθεία (eritheía)**: "scheming and intrigue."

Principle: The masculine, mental-attitude sin of envy is responded to by the feminine mental-attitude sins of "scheming and intrigue." Envy is the catalyst while scheming and intrigue do its bidding.

10. This is followed by the word "exist," the adverb, **ἐκεῖ (ekeí)**: "exists in that place." Where this envying exists then what follows becomes overt. First of all, "disorder," the noun, **ἀκαταστασία (akatasastasia)**: "instability, tumult, and uncertainty because of opposition to established authority."
11. In context, the established authority is the Word of God which these believers have abandoned, causing a vacuum that sucks in all sorts of cosmic concepts.

Principle: Envy is a mental-attitude sin possessed collectively by many. For example, those who are in authority are the targets of this envy. The envious do not desire the person's asset, that would be jealousy. What they envy is his position of authority and make every effort to either remove him from power or rob him of his authority.

Principle: This is where envy combines with scheming and intrigue to foment rebellion. Such a scenario played out in Absalom's envious assault on David's authority as king of Israel followed by his intrigue with the citizens of Israel.

12. Whenever the biblically established systems of order are abandoned, into the resultant vacuum rush all sorts of ideas, each associated in some way with the doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).
13. Whatever these ideas happen to be are summarized next with the phrase, "every evil thing." The word evil is the adjective **φαῦλος (pháulos)**: "evil, wicked, corrupt, depraved."
14. The final word is "thing," but the Greek noun is **πρᾶγμα (phrágma)**: "a deed or an act."

15. When several cycles of discipline are collectively unleashed upon a Church-Age client nation's population, and they do not result in a wakeup call to get back to establishment and, hopefully, doctrinal thinking, then more "evil things" are certain to follow. Whatever the deeds and acts happen to be, they vary with the historical circumstance.

James 3:16 For where envy and scheming and intrigue exists, in that place there is instability and opposition to established authority and every evil deed or action. (EXT)

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. (NASB)

1. Verse 16 concludes James' diatribe. Beginning with verse 17, he switches from his scathing denunciations of his congregation's behavior patterns which were expressed with unbridled and harmful sins of the tongue.
2. He begins his shift away from condemnation of cosmic behavior patterns over to the Source of conviviality among believers with the adversative conjunction of contrast, **δέ (dé)**: "But."
3. The contrast transposes the reader away from human-viewpoint, human-good, and evil rationales, presented previously over to the biblical inventory of wisdom, the noun, **σοφία (sophía)**. The following context amplifies and summarizes the various expressions of **wisdom**.
4. This use of wisdom refers to those attributes that express the divine resource of absolute truth. Wisdom is the thinking of God that is accumulated in the soul of the positive believer. It is retained and facilitated as a path of least resistance and applied to the circumstances of life.
5. The source of this wisdom is clarified next by the adverb, **ἄνωθεν (ánōthen)**: "from above." With this opening phrase, the subject changes from decision-making associated with the cosmic lifestyle of the loser believer over to one whose inventory of doctrinal ideas depicts the soul's inventory of wisdom, i.e., **divine viewpoint**.
6. What follows is a vocabulary that is indicative of a believer who possesses wisdom which is introduced by the present active indicative of the verb, **εἰμί (eimi)**: "**keeps on being.**" "But the wisdom from above keeps on being."
7. This is followed by the adverb, **πρῶτον (prōton)**: "**first.**" James indicates what leads off such a listing is the word, **ἀγνός (hagnós)**. It means pure, free from impurities, perfect, holy."

8. The only thing that is pure, **unalloyed**, unadulterated, and flawless is the Word of God. Its purity is the *summum bonum* which in Latin is the term for supreme good.
9. First of all, the Word of God is established as the resource of wisdom. What it **produces** follows beginning with the adverb of time and order, **ἐπειτα** (*épeita*): “**then**.” It is followed by categories of wisdom that are in stark contrast to the vicious comments James denounced earlier in the chapter.
10. To highlight each of the six honorable virtues that follows, we shall present them independently in a list of James’s “pure mental attitudes and applications.”
 1. The **first** in the list is the predicate adjectives is, **εἰρηνικός** (*eirēnikós*): “**peaceful**.” It refers to being copacetic with a harmonious relationship and may be defined as “**inner tranquility of the soul**.”

**James 3:17 is in line with LXX [Septuagint]
usage: Wisdom is first of all pure (*hagnós*: not stained, because it comes from God), very “peaceful (*eirēnikós*),” that is, judging from verse 16, opposed to disorder and intrigues.¹**

A soul with inner peace maintains a relaxed mental attitude. Incoming flack is managed on an increasingly efficient basis by the inculcation of divine viewpoint.

This principle is articulated by Solomon in Proverbs 23:7, “As a person thinks in his soul, so is he.”

The power of divine viewpoint and its application is aggrandized by the consistent inculcation of the Word of God which enables the believer to apply biblical truth to life and circumstances.

Hebrews 4:12 The Word of God is alive and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (NKJV)

The spiritual ability to think is in stark contradistinction to things common in *cosmos diabolicus*. It functions on thoughts, decisions, and actions that maintain a peaceful soul in a cosmic environment.

¹ Ceslas Spicq, “εἰρηνικός” in *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:437.

2. The second category of pure wisdom is the adjective, ἐπιεικής (*epieikēs*) which is translated in the NASB, NET, and KJV with the word, “gentle,” while the NIV opts for “considerate.” Further research expounds on these two to a much broader degree.

For those in positions of superiority, [the noun] *epieikeia* is an easy-going quality that moderates the inflexible severity of wrath,² a fairness that corrects anything that might be odious or unjust in the strict application of the letter of the law.

Hellenistic *epieikeia* emphasizes first of all moderation and just measure or, as we say today, “equilibrium.” This is why in Greece *anēr epieikēs* has always meant “honest man” or “virtuous man.” It is also the quality of those who share in the wisdom from on high (James 3:17).

The person characterized by *epieikeia* is reasonable, a respecter of social norms. Sometimes the emphasis is on exactitude, loyalty, and fidelity in the accomplishment of a task; much more often on mildness; hence its connection with goodness, peace, (James 3:17), and mildness-lenienty. So it becomes apparent that Hellenistic *epieikeia* is first and foremost a virtue of the heart—open, conciliatory, and trusting toward one’s neighbor. Not only is it opposed to wickedness and to violence, but being thoroughly mild and kind, it can be persuaded, and bends and even resigns itself when wronged.

Finally, New Testament *epieikeia* is not only moderation and measure, but goodness, courtesy, generosity. Furthermore, it suggests a certain amiability, good grace.³

I’ve underlined several words that seem to size up the character trait expressed by *epieikēs*, but the one that seems best is found in the context of natural law: “**equitable**: dealing fairly and equally with all concerned” (MWCD, 11th edition).

² “*epieikeia*: Séneca defines *clémentia* [Latin] as “mildness demonstrated by a superior to an inferior.”

³ Spicq, “ἐπιείκεια, ἐπιεικής, in *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2:35–38.