

28. Dan G. McCartney provides this insight to the word **ἐπιστήμων (epistēmōn)**:

James resumes the concern with those who would be teachers (3:1) and connects it with the practical demonstration of wisdom by good works. The paragraph also links the issues of speech and wisdom with the discussion of faith in James 2: those who deem themselves wise and understanding (i.e., have the potential to be a teacher) must show their works by good behavior. The works are the same kind of works as were instrumental in the justification of Rahab and Abraham: works of faith.

Hence, although James says literally that the wise and understanding must show the works in humble wisdom by means of good behavior, the context makes it clear that the works are instrumental in showing faith, so here works are the key to showing what kind of wisdom one has. Good behavior points to the kind of works that point to humble wisdom.¹

29. Conclusion: academic understanding cannot effectively be applied. The concept is understood, but not considered as a working object for application.
30. The unbeliever can perform what he considers to be a “good work” and by doing so, he wrongly assumes he wins a point with God. Yet, no matter what he does as an unbeliever, he gains no approval whatsoever from God.
31. Principle: With regard to salvation, there is absolutely no “work” an unbeliever can perform to acquire salvation. Salvation is acquired by the unbeliever placing his personal faith in the working object of Jesus Christ.
32. Post salvation, the believer must grow in grace in order to acquire guidance and understanding about how to make good decisions based on the working object of the Word of God.
33. The “works” of a believer may be characterized in two ways: (1) human good and (2) divine good.
34. Human good occurs when a believer performs a work that, in his view, is biblically sound. Possibly so, but if he does so out of fellowship, i.e., not current on rebound, then the deed is done outside the bubble.

¹ Dan G. McCartney, *James* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 198.

35. Human good occurs when a believer does something he assumes will result in winning God's approval and resultant blessing to him personally.
36. All believers have access to divine power. But disclosure of this power is found only in Scripture. Failure to consult the only immutable resource of absolute truth results in the believer remaining spiritually handicapped due to self-imposed ignorance.

Galatians 4:16 Have I become your enemy because I keep on telling you the truth [**present active participle of ἀληθεύω (alētheúō)**]?

37. The Galatians have been taught the truth by Paul but have later strayed and been misled by false teachers. The usual strategy of false teachers is to assure their audiences they were previously led astray by "false teachers."
38. Paul calls out the false teachers later in his Letter to the Galatians with this rebuttal to the false doctrine taught by the Judaizers:

Galatians 5:7 Recently, you were running well [**growing in grace by submission to Holy Spirit's teachings**]; who hindered [**constative aorist active indicative of ἀνακόπτω (anakóptō)**]: **to restrain or impel**] you from obeying the truth [**ἀλήθεια (alētheia)**]?

39. This spiritual interference remains constant throughout the Church Age. There remain proponents of legalism who insist that one must (1) do good works to be saved, (2) believe in Jesus and then do good works to be saved, or (3) follow the writings of a specific individual, apart from those certified by the Bible, and be saved by a program of works.
40. The constative aorist of ἀνακόπτω (anakóptō) refers to the false teachers who are urging Galatians to continue doing something:

"... to act and do it now!" Although the aorist is here transgressing onto the present tense's turf, it adds a certain flavor. It is as if the author says, "Make this your top priority." As such, the aorist is often used to command an action that has been going on.²

41. The verb, anakóptō, is actually a term used in sports and specifically to a race. It means, "To drive back, hinder. It is an Olympic expression related to a race, meaning to come across the course in such a manner as to jostle and throw a participant out of the way."³

² Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 720.

³ Zodhiates, "ἀνακόπτω," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 152.



42. There are quite a number of “Christian” organizations that presently exist that practice Operation *Anakóptō*. Their doctrines of salvation vary but are common in the sense that works are involved in salvation. This is not salvation by faith alone but salvation by works.

43. Here is a summary of Operation *Anakóptō* taking place in Galatia:

The legalizers were trying to lock the Galatians up under law so that they might be separated from Christ and serve their teachers. For the present, the legalizers are courting the Galatians. But the Galatians must take note.

When once they are courted and thereby estranged from both Paul and Christ, then the roles will be reversed and the Galatians will find that they must court the legalizers. Failure to maintain Christian liberty always leads to ecclesiastical as well as other forms of bondage.⁴

44. The tragedy that has emerged in our nation is the drift away from serious Bible study, amplified by poor scholarship and, most egregiously, the distortion of the gospel of salvation. As a result, many who assume themselves Christians and others who are authentic believers are being driven off course from grace.

45. Therefore, James introduces James 3:13 by asking a very pertinent question, “Who among you is wise?” The word “wisdom” is the Greek noun, σοφός (*sophós*), and the Hebrew noun, חֵכְמָה (*chokmah*).

46. These two words emphasize knowledge acquired by serious study of Scripture so that their wisdom is based on the immutable principles of the Word of God, not human viewpoint.

47. From this foundation is the accumulation of “understanding,” the adjective, ἐπιστήμων (*epistēmōn*): “to know thoroughly, to have great expertise in a subject.”

48. Let’s describe these two words this way: (1) “wisdom” has to do with your accumulation of the thinking of God in your stream of consciousness from consistent spiritual growth” while (2) “understanding” refers to the ability of an expert knowing how to draw from that inventory in order to make consistently good decisions from that position of strength. Facilitated wisdom enables understanding to apply.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, “Galatians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans–Galatians*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebeline (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 10:480.



49. James is appealing not only to his congregation but also to those who have declared they have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher.
50. What James wants to know is, “Who, among all y’all, has acquired both wisdom and understanding as an expert in Bible doctrine or has he instead been driven off course from truth?”
51. Those believers up in Galatia were certainly driven off course by those Judaizers’ propaganda. The next idea James presents is in essence, “Let’s see”:

James 3:13

Who among you possesses biblical wisdom and advanced understanding of doctrine? (EXT)? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. (NASB)

1. The only way a person can fulfill the latter command is to provide a positive response to the verb “show,” the aorist active imperative of **δείκνυμι (deíknumi)**: “exhibit, demonstrate, display, to see.”
2. Proof positive of what a person has learned and retained in his soul is made evident by application. To illustrate the difference between a believer who has drifted away from application of resident doctrine in his soul compared to those who have acquired wisdom and spiritual expertise resulting in divine good production, James desires each to recall his four rhetorical questions in verses 11 and 12:

James 3:11

(1) Does a spring supply to a fountain both fresh [γλυκύς (*glukús*): “sweet” (KJV) i.e., “potable”] and bitter water?

v. 12

(2) Is it possible for a fig tree to produce the fruit of an olive tree, my fellow believers, or (3) a grape vine the fruit of a fig tree? (4) Neither can a saltwater spring produce fresh water. (EXT)

3. None of these is possible to do. Nature is absolute. A spring produces potable water. A fig tree produces figs. A grape vine produces grapes. A saltwater spring cannot produce fresh water.
4. “Nature” is defined as:

Nature. The inherent characteristic or basic constitution of a person: essence. Humankind’s original or natural condition. The genetically controlled qualities of an organism.⁵

⁵ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2014), s.v. “nature.”



5. In James's examples of dichotomy among plants, we get this analysis from the *Encyclopedia Britannica's* classification of fruits:

Drüpe: single-seeded; olive. Flowers contain both male and female parts, which are capable of developing into the olive fruits.

Berry: several seeds: grape. The tree [vine] is self-fertilized containing male and female flowers.

Sycōnium: multi; Fig. Fig fruits are borne singly or in pairs in axils [between leaves and branches] of leaves of the present season. Flowers are stāmināte (male) or pístillāte (female).⁶

6. What we are able to deduce from this is that these trees are able to independently grow their produce through pollination. This is done the only way reproduction is possible: male stamens and female pistils.
7. The olive, grape, and fig are fruits that reproduce themselves, but their stamens and pistils cannot fertilize other species. No fig stāmen can fertilize an olive pistil. No grape stāmen can fertilize a fig pistil.
8. Botany has discovered what the Bible confirms. Whether Homo sapiens, or animal, or bird, or reptile, or fish species, none can exist without male and female collaboration.
9. Among the four genera among the "living creatures," the various species contained in each are not able to cohabit outside their genus. The same is true among the plant kingdom.
10. There is the principle of self-pollination:

Fertilization of an egg cell may take place by self-pollination, when the sperm cell derives from pollen produced by the same flower or by another flower on the same plant; or by cross-pollination, when the sperm comes from the pollen of a different plant. Cross-pollination, producing seeds that contain the hereditary traits of two parent plants, tends to result in a species that is sturdier and more adaptable to environmental changes.⁷

11. In cross-pollination, the resultant plant becomes a new species, but remains as a part of the Genera of the two trees, but of a new or different species.

⁶ "olive," "grape," "fig," in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (2010), s.vv. 8:917; 5:428; 4:770.

⁷ Ibid., "pollination," 9:568.



12. James also throws a curve with his comment on a grape vine producing the fruit of a fig tree. Grape vines can become quite large, but they are not trees.
13. Throughout the taxonomy of the “living creatures” and of the human race, all taxonomic Families are structured as male and female. The fig and olive trees nor the grape vine will ever produce stamens and pistils that suddenly transpose from one category to another.
14. For some to propose that humans can somehow transpose themselves from male to female of the species is something that nature contradicts, and James inquires with regard to logic and common sense.
15. What is needed among the hoi polloi is truth that is presented as absolute and can be obtained up to the level of “wisdom and advanced understanding.” This is accomplished by the verb “to show,” the aorist active imperative of **δείκνυμι** (*deiknumi*): “exhibit, demonstrate, display, to cause to see.”
16. James’s imperative mood solicits a response from those who read his Letter. Is there anyone among you who “possesses biblical wisdom and advanced understanding of doctrine?”
17. If there is such a person, “Let him demonstrate.” To emphasize the imperative mood, the best translation is, “Demonstrate!” The editing of this phrase emphasizes the command to produce divine good from resident doctrine.
18. Verses 11 and 12 give examples of incongruous behavior patterns that nature simply cannot produce. When a believer’s soul is in reversionism, it reverts back to his pre-salvation lifestyle when the sin nature ruled his life.
19. Although he did make some advance in his spiritual life, distractor factors caused him to become disinterested in Bible study resulting in negative volition’s response to demon influence from the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics.
20. This process causes a dichotomy within the soul. Some doctrinal concepts are retained, yet clarity of thought has been so repressed recall cannot organize them clearly.
21. Because such a person lives outside the bubble, he has constant psychological battles because of a confused soul. This is why James states this in:

James 3:9 By means of the tongue we praise the Lord, and our Father; and by means of this tongue we keep on execrating mankind, having come into being according to the similitude of God;

v. 10 words that regularly proceed from the very same mouth comes praises toward God, but also execrations toward believers. Fellow believers, these things should not occur in this manner. (EXT)

