

## Introduction

- *Very briefly...*
  - Context of encouraging practical Christian living
  - Tongue was one area where we need to obey, to translate into action what we believe
  - Here are a number of other areas, perhaps only loosely linked together but revolving round that same hub:
    - **submission, in practical action, to God's will**
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## Wisdom (3:13-18)

- *Owl image*
  - What's the difference between someone who is wise and someone who is clever?
  - What's your image of a wise person?
    - picture we probably first bring to mind is of someone who has insights, who understands, who chooses well, perhaps well-placed in society because their ability to choose well has helped them be promoted
  - For James, wisdom isn't about **thoughts**, its about **action!**
    - and its about the attitudes that under-pin those actions
  - **Someone is wise** when they love peace so much they go and apologise for their mistake, their selfishness, their thoughtlessness
  - **Someone is wise** when they see fault in someone else, but act gently & mercifully, seeking to see the best in the other person, looking for ways to support and encourage them in their situation: considerate
  - **Someone is wise** when an something comes up that would be of considerable advantage to them comes up - **a promotion, an offer of friendship, a windfall** - but they don't immediately jump at it, seeking to see whether it would be of equal value to those around them, family, friends, colleagues
  - That kind of wisdom will lead to peace
    - that kind of wisdom demonstrates humility
    - that kind of wisdom will bear a harvest of righteousness
  - **Lord, help me be wise like that!**
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## Friendship (4:1-6)

- **At school, what kinds of things cause fights in the playground?**
  - is it any different when people leave school - at work or elsewhere?
- Maybe, at first glance, we don't recognise ourselves here:
  - I haven't seen any brawls amongst the congregation since I came to Fintry, or murders!
- But do we put things we want above our relationships with God and with others?
  - do we kill off trust and intimacy by putting space to be by ourselves, or our own pleasures, before other people?
  - do we want things our way - round halls or activities or summer focus week or food or even services...?
- James goes on to point out that putting our own desires:
  - for entertainment, for wealth, to rest, for pleasure...
  - before other people, leading to fights and quarrels
- All of that is committing adultery with the world, being unfaithful to God! (**cf evening services!**)

- humility - puts own desires to one side

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### Submission (4:7-10)

- *Submitting to God is not something he forces us into...*
  - Heart, turning point of passage
  - Submission to God:
    - admitting his ways of doing things are better
  - Grieve over sin:
    - its serious
    - *so serious Jesus died in your place!!*
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### Slander (4:11-12)

- *Chinese whispers?*
    - "Colin has a beautiful, shiny bald head!"
  - Particular words against another person
  - Great temptation to talk about other people:
    - go to a conference, meet up with people, ask after each other...
    - imagine that you have concerns about someone, about how they are getting on with God, what they are preaching, some relationships or decisions that they have taken
    - terribly, terribly easy to pass judgement, with word or look or gesture, to put a seed of doubt about that other person's standing into the mind of whoever is listening to us
    - or to talk about someone else's character...
  - James says when we do that we are usurping God's place, making ourselves Judge! *don't do it!*
    - rather, consciously seek to build up and praise - without flattering - our brothers and sisters
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### The Future (4:13-17)

- What's the furthest out date you have in your diary?
  - CofS meetings out to March 2014...
  - Peter school trip to the USA in October 2014...
  - Dundee Council have school term dates out to Friday July 3rd 2015!
- How do we plan?
  - I like to put dates in the diary... term, Focus Week, meetings, holidays...
- All of that, in itself, is not a problem.
- James is probing at the *attitude we take to the future:*
  - do we think of it as our life, or as God's life?
  - James is not advocating mere tokenism!!
  - *adding the words "if it is the Lord's will"...*
- Its the attitude that lies behind that - *which may well spill over into our words, but which is certainly not limited to them!*
  - and that attitude is to be one of *humility*
  - our time is a gift from God, to be used for his glory

### Conclusion

- My way? God's way?
  - incredibly powerful driving attitude of our society

- personal choice is paramount
  - *"its their own choice, isn't it?"*
  - what our priorities are, our choices, our ambitions...
  - what our friendships are, both those that we spend time and the way that we treat them
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- Sin is still serious:
    - mortally wounded, defeated, but dangerous!