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A Wisdom Checklist

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven
is first of all
pure and full of quiet gentleness.
Then it is peace-loving and courteous.
It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others;
it is full of mercy and good deeds.
It is wholehearted
and straightforward and sincere.*
James 3:17 TLB

Details matter! Sadly, I often find it's all too easy to miss important details.

When I edit a manuscript, I have made it a habit to always create a Writer's Checklist to make certain I don't miss things. I especially want to catch inconsistencies like capping all the pronouns for God. I know most publishing houses do not, but it's my preference that I'm free to follow when I indie publish.

The Bible provides a checklist for Christians. "Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians?" the apostle Paul challenges us. "Do you pass the test? Do you feel Christ's presence and power more and more within you? Or are you just pretending to be Christians when you aren't at all?" (2 Cor. 13:5 TLB).

Wow. That's convicting! I need to examine my heart to make certain my faith is genuine and growing. I also need to evaluate the words I speak and write using the Wisdom Checklist in James 3:17.

Wisdom Checklist			
	Yes	No	Sometimes
Heavenly source			
Pure			
Quiet gentleness			
Peace-loving			
Courteous			
Allows discussion			
Willing to yield			
Full of mercy			
Good deeds			
Wholehearted			
Straightforward			
Sincere			

Heavenly source – It’s critical that I “know what his Word says and means” (2 Tim. 2:15 TLB). I must seek the life-changing wisdom that is found in God’s Word. As my friend Sue Cameron asks in her powerful poem, “Words”:

*To whose voice do I listen?
And in whose voice do I speak?*⁸

Pure – What about my heart motives? Do I seek to impress people with how much I know, or is my focus on making Jesus known?

Quiet gentleness – As a young mother, I often became exasperated when my children did not listen. Raising my voice didn’t help.

Peace-loving – Yes, I have strong convictions about many issues, but are my words divisive or healing? Chuck Missler frequently said, “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, agape.”

Courteous – Sarcastic words will win no one.

Allows discussion – This means I need to learn to *listen*—to really hear and seek to understand where someone is coming from. I can’t tune them out while I mentally rehearse my next point.

⁸ From *Write His Answer—A Bible Study for Christian Writers*, 58. © 1993 by Sue Cameron.

Willing to yield – Do I try to control the conversation and “hog the stage”? Being willing to yield is part of allowing discussion. I do not, however, think this means I should ever compromise what I believe. Sometimes I need to say, “We’ll have to agree to disagree, but I still love you.”

Full of mercy – Do I judge or love the people I’m writing or speaking to?

Good deeds – Am I walking my talk?

Wholehearted – Am I committed passionately to what I profess to believe?

Straightforward – Am I guilty of pussyfooting around God’s truth for fear of rejection, fear of being “canceled”?

Sincere – Do my words and my life communicate this? Genuine, honest, heartfelt, authentic—these are just a few words that describe what it means to be sincere.

It’s a serious and awesome responsibility to communicate God’s wisdom in a world that is growing hostile to biblical truth. By Your Spirit, Lord, please enable me to do what I cannot do in my strength and wisdom.

Call to Action

*See then that you walk circumspectly,
not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time,
because the days are evil.
Therefore do not be unwise,
but understand what the will of the Lord is.
Ephesians 5:15–17 NKJV*

- Dedicate quality time to evaluate your faith according to the Wisdom Checklist.
 - ✓ Where are you right now?
 - ✓ Where do you want to be according to what the Bible says?
 - ✓ What one step can you take to change?

- Send an email, card, or handwritten letter to someone who needs encouragement. Share a Scripture. Tell them you're praying for them. If possible, offer to help in a practical and specific way.