

Totality vs. Partiality

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

In this verse, we have listed seven traits of the wisdom that is from above—the kind I want to have. The sixth trait is my emphasis for the moment—“*without partiality.*”

To take a partial view is to favor a particular aspect at the exclusion of the whole. This, as we know, often leads to an unfair bias and a prejudiced feeling. It can be done either ignorantly or willfully. Either way, it is faulty due to its incompleteness. The total picture (all) is missed and often misjudged because the partial (part) is paraded.

This happens when a text is taken out of context. Abuse of Scripture happens when it is not rightly divided. The whole gives interpretation to the part.

This happens when the mind magnifies the duration of the trial, and the heart fails to see the lifetime of blessings that truly marked the journey.

The bigger picture includes the merging of various aspects into the greater whole. It is where the detail is not lost; rather, it becomes in itself less noticeable, so something more may increase and be seen or known. Some things can only be truly valued and appreciated when you consider the whole.

“Science treats the world as an object, something you could put to the test, pull apart and find out what it’s made of. And, of course, that’s a very interesting thing to do, and you learn some important things that way. But we know that there are whole realms of human experience where first of all testing has to give way to trusting. That’s true in human relationships. If I’m always setting little traps to see if you’re my friend, I’ll destroy the possibility of friendship between us. And also where we have to treat things in their wholeness, in their totality. I mean, a beautiful painting, a chemist could take that beautiful painting, could analyze every scrap of paint on the canvas, tell you what its chemical composition was, would incidentally destroy the painting by doing that, but would have missed the point of the painting, because that’s something you can only encounter in its totality. So we need complementary ways of looking at the world.” —John Polkinghorne

The apostle Paul knew that men must guard themselves against favoritism and personal prejudice and preferences.

1 Tim. 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

1Tim. 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

1 Tim. 5:21 I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

1 Tim. 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

RWT