

## Life Planning

*James 4:13-17*

### Introduction

1. We are a people who plan.
  2. Life is too full of important matters to just wake up each day and “wing it.”
  3. There is an innumerable amount of matters which we are concerned with, and for which we spend time planning. (Education, Career, Spouse, Family, Finances, etc.)
  4. A Christian’s “Life Planning” is drastically different than that of a worldly person.
  5. James addressed some “don’ts” concerning “Life Planning” – **James 4:13-17**
- I. Text – **James 4:13-17**
    - A. Context (James) – the Christian’s planning has much to do with God’s word.
      - a. Chapter 1 (Doers of the word) – trials necessary for faith’s growth but needed wisdom to grow in faith through trials. Wisdom is given through God’s word – swift to hear, receive w/ meekness, be a doer.
      - b. Chapter 2 (Faith working with works) – “the faith” – the word we are to hear and do – must not be held with partiality. Must do God’s entire word without withholding it from others. Such saving faith is complete with works – i.e. it hears God’s word and acts on it in obedience.
      - c. Chapter 3 (Heavenly wisdom) – A warning for teachers. The danger of the tongue. Wisdom from the earth and from above is contrasted – teachers that possess the worldly wisdom will cause great damage. Christians are to pursue wisdom from above, which some of the readers were not doing at the time.
      - d. Chapter 4 (Repent from worldliness) – Products of worldly wisdom. Strife among each other, not peace. Enmity with God. Evil judgment. Worldly life planning.
      - e. Various topics, but on general consistent theme – we should be looking to please God in all we do, and that is only accomplished by ALWAYS looking to His word for spiritual guidance of our faith.
    - B. Presumption (**vv. 13-15**)
      - a. Planning is not the problem (**v. 13**):
        - i. Paul planned – **Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 16:5-7**
        - ii. Jesus understood the necessity of planning, and encouraged people to consider plans in following Him – **Luke 14:28-30** (Counting the cost)
        - iii. We often make plans. We couldn’t do much if we didn’t make plans.
      - b. Presuming to have tomorrow is the problem (**v. 14**):
        - i. This verse gives the background and mindset to the words of v. 13.
          1. These people were making plans and acting in ways which were indicative of a people taking tomorrow for granted.
        - ii. (**v. 14**) – tomorrow is not known, our lives are fleeting.

1. **Proverbs 27:1** – we don't know what will happen tomorrow, so we ought not carry ourselves as though we do.
  2. **Psalm 90:9-10** – Our days are short.
  3. **Psalm 39:4-6** – we should learn to number our days and know how short our lives are.
- c. James' instruction in avoiding presumptuous living **(v. 15)**:
- i. Similar sayings of Paul – **Acts 18:21; 1 Corinthians 4:19; 16:7**
  - ii. Not a mindless utterance we are to make before each plan.
  - iii. It is a mindset and attitude in planning we possess:
    1. God is in control – **Acts 5:33-39** – Gamaliel concerning Peter and John's preaching. (He understood God is in control.)
    2. I am willingly under God's control – **Psalm 119:105, 133**
  - iv. The presumptuous think they are in control, thus, are self-willed – **2 Peter 2:10** – the Christian is the exact opposite.
- C. Boasting **(v. 16)**
- a. Presumptuousness is a form of arrogant boasting.
  - b. The person who lives their life by taking tomorrow for granted, and then leaving God out of his plans boasts in his actions and is extremely arrogant.
  - c. Arrogance – *alazoneia* – braggadocio, i.e. (by implication) self-confidence.
    - i. "The Greek word which he uses to describe this sin is *alazoneia* which finds its origin in the characteristic of a wandering quack (not unlike the medicine man during the frontier days in America) who offered cures which were not really cures at all. Thus, he boasted that he could perform feats which he was really unable to do. (Daniel H. King Sr., Truth Commentary on James, Page 396).
    - ii. "(2) an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights, (3) an impious and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthy things" (Strong)
  - d. Parable of rich fool – **Luke 12:16-21** – He arrogantly trusted in his own abilities to provide for his future, but when his future was taken away, he realized he truly had no power at all. One must trust in God for the future.
  - e. The person who carries on each day thinking he will have tomorrow, thus, leaves God out of his plans is no different than the rich man.
- D. Negligence (Omission) **(v. 17)**
- a. Trusting in the continuation of your life to the next day, and not being concerned with involving God in your every plan leads to a failure to do God's will.
  - b. **Colossians 3:17** – all we do should be with the Lord's authority – not simply permission to do, but submission to positive commands.

- c. Practically – **Ephesians 5:15-17** – this is manifested in one always look for opportunities to do God’s will in his life and knowing God’s will in order to see those opportunities.
- d. Why do some take actions and make decisions only for that to keep them from doing something they know God requires of them? They are acting in this way. (Like attending worship faithfully.)

## II. Applications

### A. The Center of All Planning Should be God

- a. What do we plan for that is important? – Family, spouse, finances, education, work, etc.
- b. How can we plan effectively? – not worldly wisdom, nor our own abilities.
- c. Recognize and understand the preeminence of Christ – **Colossians 1:15-18** – it is all Christ/God centered.
  - i. Is He preeminent in your life?
- d. Seek the things of God first – **Matthew 6:33**

### B. The Postponing of Spiritual Dedication is Presumptuous and Arrogant

- a. Felix postponed – **Acts 24:24-25, 27** – waited for a more “convenient time” than never came.
  - i. Worst case scenario of postponing getting right with God and being faithful – death or judgment comes.
  - ii. Best case scenario is not really good at all – live to see another day, but your heart is further from God since you’ve put off obedience to His will.
- b. We must not take tomorrow for granted!
  - i. Some postpone thinking they can “have some more fun” before putting things aside and following Christ – you don’t know how long you have, and you don’t know the power of sin!
  - ii. Some postpone thinking they can straighten some things up in their life before they truly dedicate themselves – cannot straighten up your life without Him!
- c. Today is the day of salvation! – **2 Corinthians 6:1-2**

## Conclusion

1. It is okay that we make plans in our lives. It is actually prudent to do so.
2. However, we must be God-focused in our planning.
3. He is in control, and we are to yield our lives to Him.
4. A life that is not planned around God is vain – **Ecclesiastes 12:8, 13-14**