

Life Planning

James 4:13-17

Introduction

1. Planning is an integral part of life. Everyone makes plans, and everyone needs to make plans.
 2. Ultimately, even those who avoid planning are planning by default. The difference is in the intentional influence we can have on our lives.
 3. However, many misconstrue the nature of planning. Planning is not actually a form of control. Planning is not a form of knowing.
 4. For the Christian, planning is to be a form of faith and devotion to God, with corresponding trust in His care for us.
 5. James addressed a perverted form of worldly planning which we are tempted with even today – **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) – **1:5, 22-25** – appeal to God for wisdom and guidance with the intent to submit and apply.
 - b. Chapter 2 (Faith which works) – **2:1, 8-9, 14, 24** – not applying God’s word with partiality, but fulfilling it entirely by an obedient faith.
 - c. Chapter 3 (Heavenly wisdom) – **3:2, 13-18** – maturity through a heart shaped by God’s wisdom, wisdom through submission to heavenly wisdom.
 - d. Chapter 4 (Repent from worldliness) – **4:1, 4, 6, 11-12** – in-fighting due to worldly wisdom, fondness of world, call to humility in repentance, evil judging through worldly wisdom.
 - e. **Wisdom shapes our lives for the better or worse. Seeking God’s wisdom must be followed with application which enriches our lives but valuing and applying the world’s wisdom causes great problems.**
 - f. **4:13-17** – another application of the dangers and sins which come from worldly wisdom.
 - 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 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 planning in ways 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. **Psalms 90:9-10** – Our days are short.
 3. **Psalms 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 commanded formulaic statement.
 - iii. It is a mindset and attitude in planning:
 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 – **1 Samuel 26:8-11**
 - 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. (STRONG)
 - i. "(1) empty, braggart talk, (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" (THAYER)
 - ii. "claiming in word or action to be more important or remarkable than is true arrogance, pretension" (ANLEX)
 - 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.
 - 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 tomorrow, and your own control, often leads to God's will being placed on the backburner.
 - 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** – life should be lived with knowledge of God's will, and realizing opportunity to perform it, as well as opportunity for evil, and the intent to avoid it.

- 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” that 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.