

James 4:13-17 – Boasting About Tomorrow

James addresses the issue of leaving God out of our plans. These business men in their pride did not want to acknowledge that God had any part in their plans for the future. It takes careful planning to make a business work, as these business men were doing, but we must not take it for granted that there will be a "tomorrow" or a "next year" unless God permits it to happen. If God is going to be at the center of our life, then He needs to be in the center of our plans also.

How will you react if God steps in and rearranges your plans? Plan ahead... but hold loosely to those plans.

Read James 4:13-17

The topic of humility is carried over from previous chapters. Describe humility; what does James 4:6 say about the humble?

Look up: Romans 12:3

Is it possible to make "plans" a false idol? What causes us to elevate our plans? Look up: Matthew 6:32-34? What else could be called a false idol in verse 13?

Notice the things that these people were claiming to have control over: time, purpose, place, goals, reward.

For a believer to leave God out of his plans is an arrogant display of self-sufficiency, and a declaration of independence from God. Look up: Proverbs 27:1

The question "What is your life", in v.14 is a large question. Take some time to formulate an answer. What/Why/Who/ Where/ When/... is your life? Do you honestly give God credit for every aspect?

Hosea combined the images of morning mist, disappearing dew, swirling chaff and escaping smoke to portray how easily the people who trust in idols will be blown away (Hosea 13:3).

Psalms 1:4, the wicked are "like chaff that the wind blows away," in contrast to the righteous, who stand firmly planted.

Isaiah described people who oppose God as being blown away like chaff before the wind (17:13).

The biblical concept is that human life is utterly dependent on God and completely incapable of standing before God's judgment. Look up: Job 14:5

James is leading his reader into a life of grace-reliance.

Is James suggesting in verse 15 that we should merely sprinkle our speech with words and we'll be blessed... like "Allakhazam"? Look up: Matthew 6:5,6

Verse 15 clearly affirms the validity of planning. We are to work diligently to bring glory to God, provide for our family, and even make time for recreation. It must however all be done with the attitude of Colossians 3:15-17.

Why is the sin of self-sufficiency such a serious matter? Look up: Job 42:2-3, Matthew 16:23

The sin James is exposing in verse 16 is not only a sin of omission (neglecting to recognize God's rule over their affairs); it is a sin of commission in that they even boast about their self-sufficiency. Such boasting, is therefore especially evil.

What adjectives would you use to describe someone who felt that they, instead of God controlled life's events?

Look up: Proverbs 26:12

Notice how verse 17 begins: "Anyone then...". How do verses 13-16 correlate with the statement made in v.17?

James is saying: "Do not merely say that you want to know God's will or that you recognize your dependence on his will; look carefully at what God has already said about his will, and do that... humbly."

Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit calling you to take action on something and yet you debate with yourself, or you find excuses not to comply? Share one of those convicting moments. Look up James 2:5-17

This chapter ends with James once again carrying over the issues of faith into the realm of active obedience. (1:22; 2:17; 3:13)