

Planning the *Right Way*

11.8.09

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— *14* yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. *15* Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” *16* As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. *17* So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. James 4:13-17 ESV

“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.” James is likely speaking to Christian business men who may think they have made a good plan to tell them that it is actually a bad plan.

3 Reasons Why:

1. They have left out the most important part of the plan—God (v.13)
 - a. They think they have things under control but they are neglecting the One who ultimately controls everything.
 - b. “*The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*” Prov. 16:9
2. They don’t know what tomorrow will bring (v.14)
 - a. They think they have unlimited knowledge about the future, but they don’t even know about tomorrow.
3. Our lives are only a vapor (v.14).
 - a. We don’t just have a limited amount of knowledge, we have limited amount of life.

Our plans are only good if they include God and a humble assessment of our limited knowledge and nature.

Do my plans reflect this today? Do my plans leave enough room for the sovereign intervention of the Sovereign God? If not, why is this the case and what needs to change?

Putting Feet On It:

1. Confess and repent of your PRIDE.
 - a. Study the holiness of God. Read good books on humility.
 - b. Pray for humility. Get accountability in this area.

“*Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*” Not intended to be a platitude for our lips but a principle for our lives. To plan without God in mind is arrogant, evil boasting.

Putting Feet On It:

1. Immerse yourself in the Bible

- a. Start with “Sovereignty Scriptures.”
 - i. “*Our God is in the heavens. He does all that He pleases.*” Ps. 115:3
 - ii. “*The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is from the Lord.*” Pr. 16:33
2. Study the Heroes.
 - a. OT : Joseph, Daniel, David, etc. Acts : Church made plans, but it is obvious their plans followed God’s plans.
 - b. Jesus: “*My food is to do the will of the One who sent me.*” Jn. 4:34

“*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*”
Directly linked to this passage though it can stand alone as well. “If you don’t do what I am saying, you are sinning.”

The Gospel is our only hope for planning the right way with realistic optimism.

Works Consulted: *Expositor’s Commentary, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Commentary on James, The Bible Exposition Commentary, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, A Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments, New Bible Commentary, The Outline Bible, Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary, Wilmington’s Bible Handbook, Word Pictures of the New Testament*