

James 4:13-17

JAM 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

JAM 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

JAM 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that."

JAM 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

JAM 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Planning Without God

JAM 4:13 Come now [5:1], you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business [trade] and make a profit [that is money by trading]."

1. "Come now you rich" (Jas. 5:1) – NIV has "Now listen" - Gr. has "Come now."
2. They were ignoring the fact that life is brief and uncertain..

Merchants May Have Reasoned Like This

1. We have goods.	4. We have all the time we need.
2. We have the right locations to sell goods.	5. We know how to trade and make a profit.
3. We have customers and how to attract more.	6. We know the rules and laws that govern us.

1. Here are some merchants who are planning tomorrow without thought of God.
2. **The Bible warns against this arrogant attitude.** (Prov. 27:1; Lk. 12:16-21).
3. We must not be presumptuous about today or tomorrow or about time period.
4. It is not wrong to plan if we recognize our human frailty and plan with God's will in mind.
5. Only a foolish man does not plan or prepare. "Be you ready" or "Be on the alert." (Matt. 24:42-44; 25:13).

Caution:

1. This scripture does not mean we are to go around, gloomy, saying, "This may be my last day."
2. Christians are to be happy. (Psa.144:15; Phil. 3:1; 4:4).
3. The words "Come now" are a warning against being presumptuous.

"A Vapor"

JAM 4:14 Yet you do not know [nothing about, the least thing about] **what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor** [a puff of smoke, a mist] **that appears for a little while and then vanishes away** [into thin air, into nothing].

1. “A vapor” - Gr. “atmis” [at mis] - vapor, mist, smoke, an exhalation.
 - a. See Acts 2:19 “vapor of smoke” - NASB – Gr. “atmida kapnou” - “vapor of smoke”
 - b. “mist” - TCNT, NEB
 - c. Job describes life as “a few days.” (Job 14:1).
2. **Life is uncertain and short.** (Psa. 39:4,5; 90:10,12; Job. 14:1,2; 1 Pet. 1:24).
3. Life is a gift of God, and should be used to His glory. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Eccles. 12 :13; Matt. 5:16).
 - a. This is true of the young. (Eccles. 12:1). See 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2: 22.
 - b. This is true of the old. - there is no time for retirement from God’s service. (Lk. 9:62; Rev. 2:10).
4. **Every day the Christian should seek to honor and glorify God.**
5. We are not to fret about being a “vapor”[this is unchangeable], but are to seek first God’s kingdom and take care of today. (Matt. 6:33, 34).
6. Once the time of being a “vapor” has ended bliss begins for those in Christ in “Abraham’s bosom” [Paradise]. (Lk. 16:22; 23:43).

“If The Lord Wills”

JAM 4:15 Instead [of being arrogant], **you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that [thing]."**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not intended to be an expression repeated over and over. See Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19; 16:7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must always seek God’s will. (Jn. 4:34).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an attitude. (Prov. 3:6). <p>PRO 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must seek God’s will as we plan and execute the work of the church.

1. Paul often made plans in regard to his travels. (Acts 15:36; 18:20-21; 1 Cor. 16:5-9).
 - a. Paul planned the second missionary journey. (Acts 15:36).
 - a. “God willing” (Acts 18:21).
 - b. “If the Lord permits” (1 Cor. 16:7).
2. Making plans is wise

School and College	Work - Farming, construction, etc.	Vacation , retirement
Marriage and Family	Rainy Day	To go to heaven.

3. There is a wise and a foolish way to plan.

a. The wise way is to learn the will of God that has been revealed to us. (Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9; Rom. 12:2).

EPH 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.	COL 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,	ROM 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is , that which is good and acceptable and perfect. NIV “be able to test and approve what God’s will is.”
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b. The foolish way is to ignore God’s revealed will and to do what we want to do. (Prov. 14:12).

c. **Our plans should always be completely subject to the will of God.**

d. We may not always know God’s will in matters neither right or wrong, but we must not refuse to recognize and submit to what has been revealed.

JAM 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance [pride, presumption]; all such boasting [pride] is evil.

- “poneros” [pon ay ros’] means “evil, wicked.”

1. We must not plan without God at the heart of our plans.

2. We must not think that we are the architect of our fortunes.

3. It is in God, as His offspring, that all our decisions should be made. (Acts 17:28).

Knowing Is Not Enough

JAM 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows the right [good] thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

- Lit. “to the one knowing therefore good to do” - kalos’ - good, right

- “hamarti’a” [ha mar tee’ a] means “sin” - not a mere short-coming. See Rom. 6:23.

1. James is not encouraging ignorance - **ignorance is not bliss.**

a. We must preach the gospel to all, and salvation comes to those who obey the gospel. (Jn. 8:32; Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21).

b. See John 6:45; Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:2; 3:18; See Psa. 1, 119.

2. He has contended and is contending the following.

a. Faith alone is not enough. (Jas. 2:14-26).	d. God expects us to keep learning all our lives and use the knowledge we acquire.
b. Neither is knowledge alone enough. See Jas. 2:19; Matt. 7:21.	e. This affirmation should really get our attention.
c. Good intentions are not good enough. (Jas. 2:15, 16).	f. It should excite us and stir us to action. (1 Cor. 15:58).

3. Knowledge brings greater accountability.

LUK 12:47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes,

LUK 12:48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

- a. These verses clearly set forth that greater knowledge brings greater responsibility.
- b. This should motivate us to use the knowledge we have to do the will of God and bring glory to His name.
- c. These verses seem to imply that there may be degrees of punishment in hell, but we must not assume that this means anything good.
- d. The worse degree of punishment is still "eternal." (Matt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:8,9)..
- e. Nothing good is ever said about "hell."
- f. It is more horrible than we can ever imagine.

4. We do not know everything, but we know a lot about what we should do.

5. None of us will be able to say to the Lord in the judgment, "Lord, I was ignorant of these things. I did not know You expected these things."

a. Help needy (Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 2:14-17).	f. Show kindness and love (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:14).
b. Restore and bear burdens (Gal. 6:1,2).	g. Live by God's moral laws. (Gal. 5:19-21).
c. Encourage (Heb. 3:13).	h. Seek to honor and glorify God. (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 10:31, 32).
d. Pray for our needs and for others (Matt. 7:7; 1 Sam. 12:23)	i. How to be saved. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).
e. Teach others (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15).	j. We stand in need of salvation and must act to be saved. (Rom. 3:23; Acts 2:40).

5. This list could go on and on of what we know to do.

6. Most of us know far more than we are doing.

- a. We will not be able to plea ignorance at the judgment.
- b. God will hold us accountable for what we know, **and we know a lot**. See Jas. 1:22.
- c. The sin of omission will condemn multitudes of Christians, and bring heartaches, loneliness, misery and even damnation to others.
- d. Jesus said, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." (Jn. 13:17). See Jas. 1:22.
- e. We are to bear fruit. (Lk. 13:6-9).

LUK 13:6 And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any.

LUK 13:7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'

LUK 13:8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;

LUK 13:9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.' "

- f. The one talented servant was condemned because he knew he should invest the talent entrusted to him by his master, but he buried the talent. (Matt. 25:14-30). He was not an embezzler nor did he squander the money in riotous living, but he did not use what had been entrusted to him.

7. Let us grow in knowledge of God and His word and do what we know.

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