

New Year questions James 4:13-17

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¹²Look here, you people who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.”

¹⁴How do you know what will happen tomorrow? For your life is like the morning fog – it’s here a little while, then it’s gone.

¹⁵What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶Otherwise you will be boasting about your own plans and all such boasting is evil.

¹⁷Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

Read verse 12:

1. Why is this foolish?

Read verses 13-16

Note v13-16 *It is good to make plans, but they will disappoint us if we leave God out of them. There is no point in making plans as though God does not exist, because the future is in his hands.*

2. Think about the plans that you have for your life, how would you react if God were to step in and rearrange those plans?

Plan ahead but ask for God’s guidance, seek his will, he will never disappoint you.

Read verse 17

Note v17 *We tend to think that doing wrong is sin. But, James tells us that sin is also not doing right. (sins of commission and omission) If God has directed you to do something... do it. You will experience a renewed and refreshed vitality to your Christian faith.*

3. What are some things that God would ask us to do?

4. What does this verse (17) have to do with planning the future?

5. Do you sometimes brag, boast and make plans for your life and work, yet give no thought about God? Give examples.

6. When are you most tempted to boast and what might you be trying to gain?

7. What are the warning signs that indicate you are leaving God out of the picture?

8. How is it possible to plan and set specific goals so that God is pleased, honored and glorified?

9. Next time you talk about your plans for the future with other people, how can you avoid boasting and leaving God out? How can you use this to be a good witness?

10. How is Jesus’s Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Luke 22:42-44**) a model for submissive, believing prayer about the future?

11. When can praying “if it is your will” indicate an unbelieving or weak attitude? What is the relationship between boldness and submission in your prayers?

12. James teaches the general principle that whoever knows what to do and doesn’t do it sins. Sin of omission needs to be forgiven as much as sins of commission. In what areas of your life are you failing to do what you should?