



If the Lord Jesus were to return today, what condition would He find us in? What would we be doing that matters for eternity, and what would we be doing that is a waste of time? Today we discover the difference it makes when we live like Jesus is returning.

If the Lord Jesus were to return today, what condition would He find us in?

- What would we be doing that matters for eternity, and what would we be doing that is a waste of time?
- Would Jesus be pleased with how we treat each other?
- Would Jesus find us dependent on Him, or self reliant?
- Would Jesus find us HUMBLE or needing TO BE HUMBLLED?
- Would Jesus find us **AWAITING HIS ARRIVAL** or acting like He's never returning?

If we are AWAITING HIS ARRIVAL, it should make a difference in

- how we treat our brothers/sisters
- how we plan our schedules & run our businesses.
- how we spend our money

➔ *Jacob (AKA James) wants to remind his audience that OUR brothers/sisters, OUR schedules, OUR businesses, OUR money - is just ON LOAN to us.*

☀️ ***"Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."***

By the end of your life, Jesus will return OR you will die.

BIG QUESTION: Am I living like He's returning?

If we are living like He's returning, it should make a difference in how we treat each other.

James 4:11-12 (NET) ¹¹ **Do not speak against one another**, brothers and sisters. He who speaks against a fellow believer or judges a fellow believer speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law **but its judge**.¹² But there is only one who is lawgiver and judge—the one who is able to save and destroy. On the other hand, who are you to judge your neighbor?

This doesn't mean that believers are never to judge one another since Jesus and Paul said we should (Matt. 18:15-20, 1 Cor. 5:11-13). Jacob (AKA James) is NOT disagreeing with them. Instead, judgment here is referring to those who are quick to **speak against one another**. As brothers and sisters, we should want to encourage instead of discourage, to build up instead of tear down, to honor one another and not dishonor each other.

CATCH the CONTEXT

Jacob had earlier reminded the believers:

- No partiality (NOT to treat rich folks better than poor folks), to love your neighbor as yourself, show mercy to one another (2:1-13)
- Use words to bless instead of using them to curse people made in the image of God (3:1-12)

To speak against or judge **the law**, in context, is about speaking against **the royal law** mentioned in 2:8-9.

James 2:8 (NET) But if you fulfill **the royal law** as expressed in this scripture, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**," you are doing well.

Those who judge and bypass this **royal law** and **speak against one another** (v.11), are saying they know better than God's law. Somehow they think that God's law doesn't apply to them, and have **judged the law** and **Lawgiver** as lacking.

James 4:11b-12 (NET) But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law **but its judge**.
¹² But **there is only ONE who is lawgiver and judge**—the ONE who is able to save and destroy. On the other hand, who are you to judge your neighbor?

As mentioned previously, James is not saying we should never judge. In fact, he is telling those who are speaking against each other, that they are **WRONG!** *If it's WRONG to say someone is WRONG...then Jacob/James needs to quit doing it!* Jacob is focusing on condemning a critical spirit where we judge one another without mercy.

If we are known for **JUDGING** our brothers & sisters rather than **LOVING** them, we should be warned that **there is a day coming when ONE will determine the fate of all**.

According to Jesus, believers ARE to judge each other, yet WITH mercy and WITHOUT hypocrisy (Matt. 7:1-6). But a critical & hypocritical attitude is divisive and defies the law of Love.

Am I living like He's returning?

If we aren't, it will be seen in how we plan our schedules & run our businesses.

James 4:13-17 (NET) ¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that town and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." ¹⁴ You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life like? For you are a puff of smoke that appears for a short time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ You ought to say instead, "**If the Lord is willing, then we will live and do this or that.**" ¹⁶ But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.
¹⁷ So **whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it is guilty of sin.**

What **is good** in this context? What **is good** is to lean on the Lord's will as we plan, instead of being "prayerless, prideful, and pretentious".¹

To leave the Lord's will out of our agenda is SIN.

In your planning, ask yourself this question...

Am I living like He's returning?

🕒 Make your plans, humbly, seeking God's will wherever you and whatever you do. Don't presume the future. Appreciate today.

¹ Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 202.

A Warning About Wealth

James 5:1-6 (NET) ¹ Come now, you rich! Weep and cry aloud over the miseries that are coming on you. ² Your riches have rotted and your clothing has become moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have rusted and their rust will be a witness against you. It will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have hoarded treasure! ⁴ Look, the pay you have held back from the workers who mowed your fields cries out against you, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵ You have lived indulgently and luxuriously on the earth. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and murdered the righteous person, although he does not resist you.

Money is a tool, NOT the goal.

- Those who **hoard** money will realize it's emptiness as they step into eternity. Money will not satisfy forever.
- Those who are **dishonest** with money will get what is coming.
- **Luxurious living with no concern for others** is like fattening the animal for the slaughter. They are comfortable & fat, but for what end? (Remember Lazarus & the rich man).
- The rich are not to mistreat the poor, but look for opportunities to bless them.

How do we use our money - a TOOL or the GOAL; to further God's Kingdom...or OURS?

James 5:7-8 (NET) ⁷ So be patient, brothers and sisters, **until the Lord's return**. Think of how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the ground and is patient for it until it receives the early and late rains. ⁸ You also be patient and strengthen your hearts, **for the Lord's return is near**. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged. See, **the judge stands before the gates!**¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name. ¹¹ Think of how we regard as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and you have seen the Lord's purpose, that *the Lord is full of compassion and mercy*.¹² And above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath. But let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall into judgment.

Through the good times & through the tough times, we will walk with His people, share His gospel, and await His arrival.

Am I living like He's returning?

If the answer is "no", that can change starting today.

1. Turn from sin and turn to Him.
2. Seek a mature believer to help you GROW.

Discussion Questions

1. How did today's teaching challenge you, encourage you, or generate questions you need to have answered?
2. How would your life change if you knew that Jesus was returning at the end of this week?
3. Share some characteristics of a healthy church that is living like Jesus is returning, and what WE can do to help God's church develop those characteristics.
4. Share ONE area of your life a brother/sister can pray for/hold YOU accountable to live like Jesus is returning.