

If the Lord wills

What are your long term goals?

We all have to make plans in this world. We have to plan our week - our day. We have financial decisions to make - career decisions to make.. Did you know the Bible specifically states God's design for future planning? It's found in James chapter 4. The text is very straight forward and to the point, and what James writes and what we need to know today is essentially this:

A CHRISTIAN WHO PLANS LIFE APART FROM GOD COMMITS EVIL SIN.

Now in this text, James gives two examples of how one might plan his or her life. We have two planners, and by the wording, it becomes obvious: According to the Bible, there is a right way and a wrong way to plan life. So we are going to look in detail at those 2 ways.

Way #1 - The wrong way: making plans relying upon yourself. **4:13-14, 16-17**

Beginning in verse 13. This is what James writes:

[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. (ESV)

It sounds like a pretty good plan. These guys have thought this through. They're smart. They've done their research. They've got a full proof business plan. There's a team, flexibility, a timeline, and an expectation of profits.

James, however, makes a good point in verse 14. How in the world do you know what the next year will bring you?

Then he makes another point. How do you know you'll even be alive by this time next year?

The Bible reminds us over and over that life is short.

[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. (ESV)

Planning out your life and your profits apart from God and relying upon yourself, James says, is arrogant, boastful, evil sin.

You don't hold the future in your hands. You don't hold your future in your hands, so as a Christian, who should you look to for planning your future? Should you look the world? to a financial advisor? To a business partner? To an influential successful person? to yourself? Or should you look to God? the only One who does hold the future in His hands..

Your life is going to be over before you know it. It's very short. So as a Christian, what would be the best use of your time during this short life? Make a profit? Make it big? Get successful? Make a name for yourself? Or seek to do the will of God?

Way #2 - The right way: making plans relying upon God. **4:15**

[15] Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (ESV)

What drives people to plan life the right way is the will of God. If God allows it.. If God lets us live.. If God's will is that we wake up tomorrow, then we will live.. If God's will is that we do not wake up tomorrow, then so be it.

Our plans are always subject to change if the Lord wills it.

What James is getting at, I believe, is a constant attitude of the heart. This is the attitude of the Christian who loves God. Before he makes his plans he seeks God in prayer and seeks the will of God in the Word of God.

Matthew 6:33

[33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (ESV)

Proverbs 16:9

[9] The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (ESV)

Proverbs 16:3

[3] Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established. (ESV)

Psalms 37:4

[4] Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (ESV)

If I could encourage you this morning: Make your plans prayerfully and carefully. Make your plans relying on God. Make your plans seeking God's will first - above your own. You have know idea what God might have in store for you.

