

- I) V13-14 INTRO: Come now, you who say Today or tomorrow we will go to such and
REVIEW
- II) Up until this point, James has been addressing **division** in the church
Divisions amongst the people were **undermining its unity**
This was not a good thing and James had to address it
- III) In our day, some wonder why **unity** would be considered important
In their minds they may confuse **unity** with **uniformity**
UNITY ISN'T UNIFORMITY
- IV) **Uniformity** speaks of people abandoning personal gifts and identities and blending
It speaks of everyone **being the same**: not changing or being different in any way
- V) Obviously **uniformity** is not what God has called believers to
Just consider how different the early apostles were (Just a few)
PETER
- VI) Peter was a leader: outspoken, emotional, impulsive, loyal and courageous
He walked on water, confessed Jesus and yet later forsook and denied Him
JOHN IS REMEMBERED AS LOVING
- VII) John calls himself the one **Jesus loved**, who put his head on Jesus' chest
He wrote Jn 3:16 and 1 Jn 4:8 He **who loves not** knows not God; for God is love
HE IS KNOWN FOR LOVE
- VIII) At the same time he is also known as one of the **sons of Thunder**
When Jesus was about to enter a Samaritan village, they refused to welcome Him
Lu 9:54 when His disciples James and John saw this they said Lord, do You want
us to **command fire** to come down from heaven and **consume them**, just as Elijah did?
THOMAS IS UNFAIRLY REMEMBERED FOR DOUBTING
- IX) When Jesus was told Lazarus was near death, He decided to go to Bethany
His men tried to stop Him because recently, they attempted to stone Him
Jn 11: 16 Thomas said Let us also go, **that we may die** with Him
THE FACT IS
- X) Jesus had a mixture of followers that ordinarily would not get along
He had Matthew, a tax collector and Simon, a political zealot
He had Pharisees like Nicodemus as well as well known sinners
- XI) Under ordinary circumstances very few of these people would get along
And yet, because of Jesus and His amazing love, they were transformed
They put away their personal histories and united over Him and His grace

- I) Jesus knew that division was the natural way of dealing with disagreements
He knew that **division** would undermine the preaching of **reconciliation**
WHY IS UNITY IMPORTANT
- II) Unity is important because the church is the body of Christ
A body in disunity ceases being a body and stops functioning properly
BECAUSE OF THIS IT IS GUARDED
- III) Unity is important in the body of Christ for at least three reasons
FIRST
- IV) Jesus prayed that His followers would be united, as one body
Jn 17:20 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You
SECOND
- V) Unity is a powerful witness to the unbelieving world
A unified church is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of the gospel
Jn 17:21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, **that the world may believe that You sent Me**.
- VI) Unity **in the essentials** of the message of the gospel is of critical importance
- VII) The Spirit has baptized us into One body, and we belong to one another
1 Co 12:13 For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into **one Spirit**.
THIRD
- VIII) We must be united because we have a common enemy
It is Satan's strategy to divide us so that he can render us ineffective against him
Mk 3:24-25 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.
- IX) The church stands united, in opposition to Satan and in the face of persecution
We must be aware of Satan's schemes and how he works to undermine unity
IMPORTANT
- X) This does not mean that we agree on **everything that is taught**
Correct and proper doctrine is to be guarded, and error corrected
- XI) There are differences that churches have that may not be heresy
In 1627 German theologian Rupertus Meldinius coined the phrase: In **Essentials** Unity, In **Non-Essentials** Liberty, In **All Things** Charity and this is what we are to practice

- I) James is correcting them because they have fallen into the trap of **division**
Envy and strife had become commonplace, and these sins contributed to gossip
- II) This is why he wrote Jas 4:11 **Do not to speak evil of one another**
This includes speaking what may be true, but with a heart to hurt another
- III) This is destructive because it undermines the love of the Spirit in the church
It produces conflict and destroys relationships
Pr 16:28 A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; **gossip separates** the best of friends
- IV) Believers are to be known by **love**, which is lived out in harmony and is a witness
Heb 12:14 Make every effort to **live in peace with everyone** and to be holy;
without holiness no one will see the Lord.
INTERESTING
- V) The book of Proverbs actually speaks of things that God hates
Pr 6:19 (He hates the) one who sows discord among brethren
God actually hates (holds in highest contempt) the one engendering strife
- VI) Speaking evil of one another produces division and God hates this
Instead of speaking evil, the church is to preserve the peace of the Spirit of God
- VII) This is **our personal responsibility** and something we must seek to do
Eph 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, **bearing** with one another **in love**, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- VIII) We are to endeavor (**intensely labor**) to keep (**preserve**) unity and peace
Unity of the Spirit: The unity of **desires and affections** worthy of the Spirit
Bond of peace: Peace where the **interests of all** are held together by the Spirit
- IX) This is because gossip and slander destroys the unity and peace of the Spirit
Pr 11:13 A talebearer reveals secrets: but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals the matter
A faithful believer does not spread secrets, but protects someone's reputation
- X) There is an exception which is, if the friend is practicing sin

- I) 1 Co contains this kind of situation
1 Co 1:11 It has been declared to me concernig you my brethren by those of Chloe's household that there are contentions among you
- II) Believers attempt to resolve problems and to help others remain right with God
- III) There are times when letting church leaders know in order **to bring healing**
Gal 6:1 Brethren if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness considering yourself lest you also be tempted
FINALLY
- IV) V12 James reminded us that **only God** sees the heart and knows all details
We can only judge by outward things, and our judgment is not always correct
1 Sa 16:7 The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.
- V) Be careful not to become the recipients of gossip
Your ears are not trash cans, so carefully reject what isn't edifying
AT THIS POINT
- VI) James concludes this chapter by building on the theme of **depending on God**
This continues his exhortation to **the worldly people** in the churches
- VII) He addresses those who are seeking pleasure and self centered success
- VIII) This new section reveals how people generally make their plans
- IX) Too often there is no thought of God, of His leading, or what would be best
Many make their plans in life as if God does not exist, or is not involved
- X) His exhortation is simple: Do not make plans without **first seeking God**
Our plans should be prayerfully made, and committed to the Lord's leading
HE BEGINS
- XI) V13 Come now **you who say** Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city
This speaks to business owners, but applies to any with materialist leanings
The ones being addressed are those who make no room for God in their plans
NOTICE
- XII) V13 He gives a basic outline for what we would call a **business strategy**

- I) This is something you who own businesses understand and have experienced
This is general enough for **all of us** to benefit from

THEY HAVE A STRATEGY

- II) **First:** There is a **start time** worked out: Today or tomorrow
Second: Their **target** is determined: We will go to such and such a city
Third: They have a set **time line**: We will spend a year there
Fourth: They have a **strategy**: We will buy and sell
Fifth: They have a **goal**: We will make a profit

SOMEONE ASKS

- III) Is there something wrong with this: Should we not make plans and pursue them?
Is it wrong to research, strategize, plan, and to sacrifice **for a goal**?
Somebody once said: If you **fail to plan**, **you plan to fail**

- IV) James is saying: For the Christian, it is wrong when you plan **without praying** first
Obviously plans and strategies are important for success
Pr 21:5 The plans of the diligent (persistent) lead surely to plenty (abundance),
but those of everyone who is hasty (rash, impetuous), surely to poverty.

IMPORTANT

- V) This would mean that James **is not saying** that it is wrong to plan
Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication,
with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God

- VI) What he **is saying** is that it is wrong to exclude God **from your plans**
If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans!

WHY PRAY FIRST

- VII) Praying first is important because we don't control our own lives
We don't have **all information**, and **because we don't** we seek God's guidance

- VIII) The fact is God already knows what He would have for us
Mt 6:8 For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

- IX) He also has a better plan for our lives than we would naturally know
Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

- X) James is saying that believers should seek God first, as they make their plans
We lift our plans to Him, and we learn to follow the lead of His Spirit

- I) Pr 16:3 Commit your works to the Lord and **your plans** will be established (secured)
Pr 16:9 A man's heart **plans his way**, But the LORD directs his steps.

NOTICE

- II) V14 Whereas **you do not know** what will happen tomorrow
In their planning, no allowance has been made for unforeseen circumstances
- III) They **assume** they **will live long enough** to see their plans succeed
They think they will safely make it to the city and live another year
- IV) James is saying that there is no guarantee that they will even live that long
Job 14:5 A person's days are determined; You have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed
- V) We cannot control what will occur tomorrow, let alone 365 days from now
We do not know or control the future, only God does
Pr 27:1 **Do not boast about tomorrow**, for you do not know what a day may bring forth
- VI) Because of this, when we plan, we must consult the Lord through prayer
Pr 19:21 There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel-
that will stand

JESUS GAVE A PARABLE ABOUT THIS

- VII) Lu 12:16-21 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said to him, '*Fool!* This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

MY COUSIN ELANOR'S HUSBAND MANUEL

- VIII) V14 For what is your life: It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then
Life is a morning mist hanging over a field that evaporates when the sun rises
Growing up in Norwalk, I saw this often and those in this area have, too
- IX) When you are young, you think time moves too slowly!
When you begin to age, you think it moves too quickly!
Ps 144:4 Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow

- I) We can take life for granted, and pursue things that in the **end did not matter**
I remember lyrics from a song that impacted me many years ago
Spending counterfeit incentive Wasting precious time and health Placing value
on the worthless Disregarding priceless wealth
- II) Sometimes we pursue the wrong things and end up losing everything
- III) Our priorities as Christians must always be centered on the Lord
Mt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these
things shall be added to you.
- IV) In comparison to **eternity**, our lives are simply a blip on the screen
Ps 90:10 The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength
they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and
we fly away.
- V) Because this is true, we seek God to keep us centered on what truly matters
Ps 90:12 **So teach us** to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom
- VI) James is reminding us of what scripture teaches us is most important
Ps 103:14 He knows how we are formed; He remembers **that we are dust**
Eccl 12:6-7 Remember Him before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is
broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, and
the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns **to God who gave it**
Eccl 12:13-14 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear
God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring
every deed into judgment, including **every hidden thing**, whether it is good or evil
- VII) James is encouraging his readers to have a realistic understanding of the future
THE FACT IS
- VIII) Knowing that the **future is not in our control** actually benefits us
First: It helps us to keep our trust in God, as we consistently depend on Him
Second: It helps us value **the present** and **each moment** that we are blessed with
HE CONTINUES
- IX) V15 Instead **you ought to say** If **the Lord wills** we shall live and do this or that
We are never to leave the Lord out of our plans, living independent of Him

- I) Don't act as if He doesn't exist, but remember you can't live independently of God
Job 12:10 In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.
- II) We learn to seek Him as we make our plans
- III) This is how we ended up here in China
I was saved, prayed to be placed to sleep to my desires.
I started a study, met a girl, got married, got involved in ministry, planted a church, ended up here in China
- IV) James is saying that we are not to make **life plans** without first praying
All of our lives are prayerfully submitted to the will of the Lord
Some things in life are simply not planned for in advance
- V) V16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil
This speaks of proud pretensions, a proud confidence in their own knowledge
- VI) Some of his readers did not submit to the will of God for their lives
They would thoughtlessly brag about what they were doing, where they were going, how their plans were succeeding and how they were getting rich, so James rebukes this attitude
HE IS SAYING
- VII) You make your plans and then boast about the success of them
The businessmen were proud about their ability of predicting the future
You glory in your self-sufficiency, thinking you can live independently of God
- VIII) All such boasting is evil because it glorifies man and disregards God
- IX) V17 Therefore to him **who knows** to do good and does not do it to him it is sin
His point **seems to be** if you **know** you should pray, and don't, **then it is sin**
BRIEFLY
- X) There are sins of commission, and sins of omission
A **sin of commission** speaks of breaking a commandment
Lying, stealing, swearing, getting drunk, being violent, committing sexual sin
- XI) There are also what are called sins of omission
A sin of **omission** is knowing **to do right**, but refusing to do so

- I) To know what is right, and to refuse to do it, is sin
You are resisting what God commands, and in doing so are sinning
Jas 2:18 Someone will say You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith **by my works**
- II) Obeying God's word reveals faith and love for Him and results in a deeper walk
Jn 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.
HIS POINT
- III) They are to pray and seek God in their decisions
MANY BELIEVERS TAKE THIS VERY LIGHTLY
- IV) The fact is, knowing what to do obligates the person to do it
Lu 12:47-48 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.