



Practical Faith

A Study in the Book of James





Quick Survey

How many of you are “planners?”

How many prefer to “go with the flow?”

Why do you prefer your approach?





Embracing a Biblical Perspective About Our Plans

James 4:13-17





"Plans are useless, but planning is everything." — *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

"Failing to plan is planning to fail." — *Alan Lakein*

"A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow." — *George S. Patton*

"An hour of planning can save you 10 hours of doing." — *Unknown*

"Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." — *John Lennon*





James 4:13-17

[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.





James 4:13-17

[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.





Is it wrong to make plans for the future? Why or why not?



Wisdom from Proverbs

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. (Proverbs 21:5 ESV)

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Proverbs 10:4 ESV)





Wisdom from NT

[28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

[29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14:28–30 ESV)





*Is James at odds with these verses
regarding the value of planning?
Why or why not?*





The Problem

James is concerned with presumptive planning or planning with a self-reliant attitude.





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We May Presume...

- We have more power or control over the *timing* of our plans than we really have.





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We May Presume...

- We have more power or control over the *timing* of our plans than we really have.
- We have more power or control over the *location* of our plans than we really have.





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We May Presume...

- We have more power or control over the *logistics* of our plans than we really have.





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We May Presume...

- We have more power or control over the *logistics* of our plans than we really have.
- We have more power or control over the *results* of our plans than we really have.





Describe a time you presumed you had more control over the timing, location, logistics, or results of your plans?





Biblical Perspective

We have limited knowledge,
time, and control.





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Psalm 39:4-6

[4] “O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am! [5] Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah [6] Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!





Psalm 90:10

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.



**LIFE IS HARD
THEN YOU DIE**

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THEN YOU DIE**

Where's the hope?



*Does the brevity of life make our
plans & priorities insignificant?
Why or why not?*





Matthew 6:19-21

[19] “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.





Luke 12:16-21

[16] And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, [17] and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ [18] And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.





Luke 12:16-21

[19] And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." [20] But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' [21] So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."





*What do these passages teach us
about the significance of our plans &
priorities?*





James 4:13-17

[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.





Biblical Perspective

We have limited knowledge, time, and control...so we should seek God's will and humbly entrust our plans in His hands.



■ ■ ■ Wisdom from Proverbs

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

[20] Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. [21] Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand. (Proverbs 19:20–21)





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“Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink...which one of you, by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life’s span...” (Matthew 6:25-27)

“...and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” (Psalm 139:16)





We Should Trust...

- God is, ultimately, in control of the *duration* of our lives.





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“And David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him.” (1 Samuel 18:14)

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.
(1 Corinthians 3:6)

[4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4–5 ESV)





We Should Trust...

- God is, ultimately, in control of the *duration* of our lives.
- God is, ultimately, in control of the *achievements* of our lives





*If God is in control of these things,
then does it really matter how I live?
Why or why not?*





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Yes, It Matters...

- Our words matter because they reflect our heart's attitude... *so be humble about your plans.*





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Yes, It Matters...

- Our words matter because they reflect our heart's attitude... *so be humble about your plans.*
- Our deeds matter because they reveal the existence or lack of faith... *so act on what you know is right.*





Practical Summary

Planning is not the problem. A godless, self-reliant, & arrogant attitude about our plans is the problem.





Personal Application

What plan, ambition, goal, or priority needs to be adjusted in your life in light of this passage?





Personal Application

What needs to change in your approach, attitude or process?





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