

**James 4:11–17 (ESV)** *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? 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. 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.*

Together we obey God.

Do you believe the gospel?

“The gospel is God’s reconciling work in Christ – that through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, God is making all things new both personally for those who repent and believe, and cosmically as He redeems culture and creation from its subjection to futility,” Chandler, Geiger and Patterson.

The book of James asks and answers this question: If you really believed the gospel of Jesus, if you really believed what Jesus said he came to do, what would that mean for the way in which you live your life every day?

- In our day and age, I believe, most of the time, we live like functional atheists - our lives connect with God only in events like church and groups, but the rest of the time, we operate our lives apart from Him and apart from the gospel.
- **It's not that we don't know truth, it is that we forget it.**
- In other words, we get gospel amnesia.

**Vs 11-12** *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

1. We forget God is sovereign.

**Vs 13-14a** *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*

- Planning without God is pride. Planning with God is Humility.

- Planning in ink believing no one will ruin your plan is pride. Planning in pencil in case God changes your plans is humility.
- It is foolish to not have a plan, and it is foolish to have a plan that does not include the Lord.
- It is wise to make a plan and then say, “The Lord is welcome to change my plans.” (Remember He is for you - He is good - He is all knowing - His sovereignty is better).

What's the marker of when we have forgotten God's sovereignty?

- It is when your faith life becomes separate from your whole life.
- We build a firewall between our faith and our lives outside of church.
- Our life is not separated into things that involve Jesus and things that don't - all of life is about Him.

## **2. We forget life is uncertain.**

**Vs 14b** *yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring*

- One particular fault is to believe just because you have had success in the past that you will automatically have success in the future.

**Vs 15** *Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*

- “If the Lord wills” is not a Christian cliché, it's a conviction.

**It's ok that life is uncertain because God is sovereign.**

**Vs16** *As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

- It's not the plan that is evil, it is the boasting that is evil.
- It's not a sin to have a plan - I would say many times it's sinful if we don't plan. However, it is sinful to trust your plan more than you trust your God.

**Vs17** *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

- **Because of the uncertainty of life, you try to play the sovereign role in your life.**

**Psalm 24:1 (ESV)** *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,*

**How do we know what to do? We steep**

**Mat 6:30–33 (MSG)** *If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.*

- **Steep in the Word, in godly counsel, in godly community. If not, we live in functional atheism.**
- **Together we obey God**

**Vs 14b** *What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

### **3. We forget life is short**

- Arnold Toynbee, a British historian, makes this observation, “the Western world in which we live is, perhaps, the first civilization that doesn’t tell its citizens why they exist.”
- Life is like your breath on a cold day - vapor for a moment, then gone forever.
- Your life is like a breath - you are a life of breath on a cold day.
- No amount of strategic planning, no amount of due diligence, no amount of risk management, no amount of planning, and no amount of hard work will stop it.

What is life? Once you answer this question, all other questions begin to be answered.

**Isaiah 43:7 (ESV)** *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”*

- You were created once as a life of breath, but recreated by the breath of life.
- **Have you received the breath of life from Jesus?**