

Wisdom and Dependence on God
(Pandemic Planning)

James 4:13–17

Pastor Byron Hand



How to view life today and make plans for tomorrow.

Presumption - Getting it Wrong – 4:13-14

“James 4:13–17 warns believers to be careful not to be presumptuous in their plans or arrogant in their claims.” Morgan

Psalms 90:12 (ESV) So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Humility - Getting it Right – 4:15-17



“Make your plans in pencil, and know that God has the eraser. And He also has a pen, to write what He wants in ink.”
Donald Sunukjian

This week's text – James 4:13-17 – several translations:

ESV - 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.

CSB - ¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." ¹⁴ Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wills, 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 it is sin to know the good and yet not do it.

NET - ^{4:13} 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." ^{4:14} 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. ^{4:15} You ought to say instead, "If the Lord is willing, then we will live and do this or that." ^{4:16} But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ^{4:17} So whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it is guilty of sin.

NIV - ¹³ Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

The Message - And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today—at the latest, tomorrow—we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that." As it is, you are full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil.

NLT - ¹³ Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. ¹⁵ What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

God's Word Trans. - ¹³ Pay attention to this! You're saying, "Today or tomorrow we will go into some city, stay there a year, conduct business, and make money." ¹⁴ You don't know what will happen tomorrow. What is life? You are a mist that is seen for a moment and then disappears. ¹⁵ Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and carry out our plans." ¹⁶ However, you brag because you're arrogant. All such bragging is evil. ¹⁷ Whoever knows what is right but doesn't do it is sinning.