

SCHEDULES & SOVEREIGNTY

JAMES SERMON SERIES

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JAMES 4:13-17



WISE PLANNING ALLOWS FOR CHANGES.

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.

How to Recognize Shoddy Planning:

- Full of **details** without consulting God – 4:13
 - a. Planned the **time** "Today or tomorrow"
 - b. Planned the **place** "we will go into such and such a town"
 - c. Planned the **duration** "and spend a year there"
 - d. Planned the **activities** "and trade"
 - e. Planned the **outcome** "and make a profit"

*Planning is not bad! Proverbs 6:6-9

⁶ Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. ⁷ Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, ⁸ she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. ⁹ How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?

• **Horizontal**-only consultation: Consulting everyone but God – 4:14
...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.

- 1) Lack of **certainty** of the future: yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring – 4:14a
- 2) Lack of **honest** self-reflection: What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes – 4:14b

What has led many thinkers of the past to despair (the momentary existence of human life compared to the vastness of time and the universe) leads the people of God to hope.

Psalm 102:3,12

For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace... ¹²But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations.

Psalm 144:3-4, 15

O LORD, what is man that you regard him, or the son of man that you think of him? ⁴ Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow... ¹⁵ Blessed are the people to whom such blessings fall! Blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

Psalm 39:4-7

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 hand-breadths, 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! ⁷ And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.

How to Recognize Wise Planning:

- Life itself and all plans are contingent on **one** reality: "If the Lord wills..." – 4:15

Acts 18:21

But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.

- Obedience in the **little** things trumps **grandiose** plans for self-advancement – 4:16-17

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.

Application questions:

- What do I want to accomplish through my plans?
- What follows the final "so that" in my plans?
- What is the engine driving my plans?
- Do my plans allow for God to change them?