

**Sermon or Lesson: James 4:13-16** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Proper Regard Of Your Own Abilities

INTRO: When you make plans for the future, how often do your plans work out exactly the way you originally formulated them? Do you have to modify and adjust your plans as you go along? How often? Why do you have to frequently modify and adjust your plans as you go along? Are you deficient in calculating what will happen in the future or instead is there some other dynamic going on that causes you to have to make adjustments as you go along?

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READ: James 4:13-16

v.13 - READ

[Lesson Questions: What is it that we do, as depicted in this verse? Is this common or rare for us to do this kind of thing? In what other variation of forms can this take in your daily life?]

SECTION POINT: God has a problem with how we make plans for the future.

- - "now listen, you who say" (or "come now") - To all of you who having this line of thinking, pay attention because God has an issue with you. (Strong's #0033, #3568)
  - - This issue God has with you is in regard to your making plans and preparations for the future to pursue and achieve something for a period of time of your life.
  - - You have confidence in yourself, in your abilities, in your resources, in your management of circumstances and events in the future.
  - - You have self-sufficiency, being convinced that in and of yourself you possess all that is necessary to accomplish your goals you plan and prepare for in the future.
  - - You are entirely sure and secure that you will encounter no needs or other considerations beyond what you can accommodate or overcome on your own.
  - - In other words, you think and believe you determine your own future.
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v.14 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why does God have an issue with this?]

SECTION POINT: We overrate our own abilities to manage and determine our future.

- - But the reality is "you do not even know what will happen tomorrow", you cannot even determine for certain what will happen tomorrow, let alone for the next week, the next month, or the next year.
- - Furthermore, you fail to comprehend and accurately identify the true nature of your existence.

- - You are not as self-determining as you think. How do you think your existence has come about? At some point in the expanse of time, did you decide you would come into existence, and establish when and how that would happen?
  - - (optional) READ for added dramatic effect: Job 38:4-13
  - - In relation to all that exists in the universe over all of time, your life is "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes"- brief in duration; fleeting - passing quickly, drifting, fading out, then vanishes; Like the mist is subject to other surrounding forces in nature, you are quite limited in your self-determination.
  - - You fail to comprehend and accurately identify that the course of your life is not totally determined by you but is, in reality, subject to the supreme sovereignty (governance and authority) of God.
  - - You fail to comprehend and accurately identify that the magnitude of your ability to determine the course of your life is minuscule, insignificant, and fleeting in comparison to the magnitude of God's ability to determine what you encounter in your life.
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#### v.15 - READ

[Lesson Question: What does God prescribe for us to do in regard to this issue?]

SECTION POINT: We rightfully should include God in all of our plans for our own future.

- - With all of these realities in mind therefore, you should rightly regard your abilities to determine your future when you are speaking about your plans by properly acknowledging God's sovereignty and adding the condition phrase, "if it is the Lord's will".
  - - By default, this acknowledgement of God's sovereignty simultaneously makes a correct comparison and admission to your limits of determining your own future.
  - - In other words, you are letting God be the deity limitless God and you are staying in your rightful position of being a finite limited created being.
  - - With this acknowledgment, you are exercising a healthy, reality-based perspective that rests upon God-dependence rather than upon self-reliance.
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#### v.16 - READ

[Lesson Questions: What additional problem is raised here in verse 16 about what we do, and how commonly do we do this - highlighting our achievements?]

SECTION POINT: Additionally, we should rightfully give God credit when we accomplish our plans.

- - Not only does God have a problem with your self-determining line of thinking, He also has a problem when you boast and brag about it - your extravagant and "bombastic claims", your "empty and pretentious bragging", your inflated "self-confidence", your pride, your excessive self-admiration and self-praise, your self-exaltation (raise yourself). (Strong's #0212; AHD - 'brag')

- - All of this line of thinking is defective: presuming to know what will come in the future; presuming to think that you can determine and control your future; your confidence in your abilities; your sufficiency and reliance in your self; your certainty about what you will accomplish; your perspective on your existence; your opinion of your power to self-determine; your disregard of God; your failure to acknowledge His sovereignty to ordain what you encounter on a daily basis and even to override what you are planning and endeavoring to achieve.
  - - And your boasting and bragging in these regards are arrogant, prideful, sinful, and evil.
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#### IMPLICATIONS:

Q: Essentially and overall, what are we doing when we engage in this kind of sinful thinking and conduct?

- - You are taking a self-centeredness approach to life, which instead should be a God-centeredness approach to life. (v.14)
  - - You are living with no thought for or pursuit of God's will for your life. (v.15)
  - - Like in verse 12, you are again trying to play the role of God.
  - - You commit a sin of omission when you leave acknowledgment of God out of consideration of future plans.
  - - You commit a sin of commission when you boast and brag about your abilities to control circumstances and events that you encounter in life.
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BIG IDEA: Acknowledge, rely upon, and exalt the Lord when making and accomplishing plans and goals in your life, with no boasting or bragging about yourself.

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#### APPLICATIONS:

So what should be our proper attitude about and approach to accomplishing plans and goals in our life?

- - I am dependent on God each day for my existence and my life.
- - God establishes each day and my existence in it.
- - I can do each day only as much as God allows, gives me the abilities, and provides me opportunity.
- - Even though it may look as if I am in complete control of everything I am encountering in my life, I am not solely in control of my present nor my future but rather I am subject to God's control and influence over my present and my future; I need to acknowledge this regularly.
- - I have no right or reason to brag about or take the full credit for achieving something I have been planning for because God has a direct hand in establishing each day of my life.

## Why not make this your mindset right now?

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### Works Cited:

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