

Joyful Life Bible Studies

JAMES 4:13 - 5:6

Lesson 18

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review James 4:11,12. Humility is an important emphasis in James 4. How would *speaking evil of others* be in contradiction to a humble spirit?
 - a. *Who art thou that judgest another?* James 4:12b What did you learn about criticizing others from last week's lesson?
 - (1.) What are you going to do about it?
2. Observe and mark the paragraph divisions in James 4:13-5:6 as follows. Summarize the key message of each:
 - a. James 4:13-17
 - b. James 5:1-6
3. In the first ten verses of chapter 4, James reveals man's preference for the world and its pleasures and his lack of consideration of God. Last week, in our study of verses 11 and 12 we saw man's disregard of God in judging his brother. The first paragraph division of this week's study reveals how man, through the making of his own plans, ignores the providence of God. Begin your study of this week's lesson with prayer, acknowledging the sovereignty of the Lord. Express your desire to not only consider Him in all that you do, but to put Him first, yielding all of your plans to Him.

*The law of His God is in his heart;
none of his steps shall slide.*

-Psalm 37:31

SECOND DAY: Read James 4:13,14

1. James continues his teaching on humility by addressing those who were making their own plans without considering God. What were they saying? James 4:13
 - a. What is wrong with this kind of attitude? Proverbs 27:1, James 4:14a
 - b. James is not against planning, but he is against man's claim to a knowledge of the future and a disregard of God's will. Why is this so foolish and dangerous?
2. *Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?* Lamentations 3:37 NIV Why do you think we have the tendency to think we can chart our own course in life?
 - a. Contrast the outlook of the man described in Luke 12:17-20 with the attitude Jesus wants us to have as seen in Luke 12:22-31.
 - (1.) Does your thinking need an adjustment? Which way of thinking do you find most prevalent in your life?
 - (2.) We all have found our thinking paralleling that of the man in Luke 12:17-20. Share an example of a time you have *built* before consulting the Master Planner.
3. Write James 4:14 in your own words.
 - a. Why does *vapour* so vividly describe life?
 - b. According to the following verses how is our life described:
 - (1.) Psalm 39:5
 - (2.) Psalm 78:39
 - (3.) Psalm 103:15,16

- c. *What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?* Psalm 8:4a Realizing your frailty and knowing the awesome power of God, how does it make you feel to know that He is mindful of you, that you are of His concern?

- (1.) How does understanding the character and power of God and your importance to Him cause you to depend on Him and trust Him for your tomorrows rather than take them into your own hands?

*I can hardly recollect a single plan of mine,
of which I have not since seen reason to be satisfied that,
had it taken place in season and circumstance just as I proposed,
it would, humanly speaking, have proved my ruin;
or at least it would have deprived me of the
greater good the Lord had designed for me.*

-John Newton

THIRD DAY: Read James 4:15,16

1. Rather than boasting about what we are going to do tomorrow, what *ought* we to say? James 4:15

- a. How does Paul in I Corinthians 4:19a reflect this attitude?
- b. Saying *if the Lord will* is not hoping God's will is in line with ours, but that our plans are in accordance with His will. What are we acknowledging when we say *if the Lord will*?

- (1.) Why is this so important?

2. *But now ye rejoice in your boastings. . .* James 4:16a What does James 4:16b declare about *boasting of your own plans*?

- a. Why do you think *such rejoicing* is evil?

3. Rather than *boast* about our own accomplishments what do these verses say we are to *boast* in:

- a. Psalm 44:8

- b. Jeremiah 9:23,24

4. It has been said, *Man proposes, but God disposes*. Ponder the goals that you have for your life. Are you boasting in them or have you committed them to the Lord, subjecting them to His plans?

a. Write out one of your life goals.

(1.) What are you doing on a daily basis to accomplish this?

b. In what way are you yielding your plans to the Lord and depending upon His enabling for their accomplishment?

FOURTH DAY: Read James 4:17

1. Chapter 4 is summarized in verse 17. Choose one verse in chapter 4 that shows what *good* these Christians *knew to do*, but were not doing.

2. What is the sin of verse 17?

3. Sin is not merely harming someone, it is also not helping him. Sin is not only doing something wrong, it is not doing something right. We usually think about sins of commission and ignore sins of omission. Share an example of something that is a sin of omission.

4. Obedience to doing what is right is not an option any more than not doing what is wrong. What light does Luke 12:47,48a shed on our responsibility to known truth?

a. *For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* Jeremiah 29:11 TLB What does I John 5:3b tell us about God's commandments?

(1.) Since we know that God's plans for us are good, and His commands are not grievous, why do you think we balk at doing what we know to be good?

*All heaven is waiting to help those
who will discover the will of God and do it.*

-J. Robert Ashcroft

FIFTH DAY: Read James 5:1-6

1. The people in James 4:13-16 were making plans for their future through financial profit without considering the Lord's will for their lives. James continues his thoughts from this section with the same words used in verse 13, *Go to now*. James addresses the rich who have no place in their lives for God and who are oppressing others. He is not making a statement against riches, only the improper gain and use of them. Describe the attitudes and actions of the rich whom James is rebuking.
2. James 5:2 states, *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten*. James 5:3 continues the thought describing the greed of these rich men. The thought here is that they were hoarding their riches, *heaping their treasures*. At the time of this writing, the rich were not known by the land and houses they owned, but rather by the gold and silver and garments they had accumulated. Instead of laying up treasure in heaven they piled up earthly treasure *for the last days*. The right use of wealth is not to spend it upon self-indulgence or stockpile it, but *to do good with it*. What *miseries* does James 5:2,3 say will come upon these men?
3. By what method were these men becoming wealthy? James 5:4
 - a. What warning does Paul give in I Timothy 6:9?
4. Comment on the following quotation in light of James 5:1-6: *The bread that you store up belongs to the hungry; the cloak that lies in your chest belongs to the naked; the gold that you have hidden in the ground belongs to the poor.* Saint Basil
5. Who heard the *cries* of the defrauded *laborers*? verse 4
 - a. *The Lord of Sabaoth* means the Lord of Hosts. This seems to imply God will not only hear the cry of the laborers but will vindicate them. The oppressors will be punished. The Lord of Hosts is the avenger of the poor and needy. These verses in chapter 5 were not only a warning to the rich, but they were meant to be an encouragement to those that were being mistreated. How does knowing *the Lord of Sabaoth* hears your cries encourage you to endure tribulation?
 - b. In Psalm 73, the psalmist declared that his *steps had well nigh slipped* as he considered the prosperity of the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary of God. Then he understood their end. Often when we look at our circumstances and at the seeming success of those who deny God, we lose sight of God's big picture. Yet, God is still on the throne. He promises that the wicked will be judged. What does Psalm 37:7 instruct us to do when we are oppressed by others?

*I have found more JOY along the path of Thy instruction
than in any kind of wealth.*

-Psalm 119:14 NEB

SIXTH DAY: Review James 4:13-5:6

1. James describes earthly life as a *vapour*. Contrast life here on earth with life as it will be in heaven.
2. Across all the pages of our calendars and appointment books should be written *Deo volente, D.V.*, God willing. How has your attitude regarding planning for tomorrow been affected as you contemplated God's viewpoint of planning without considering Him?
3. Boasting about our plans for tomorrow reflects a spirit forgetful of our dependence on God; forgetful of the uncertainty of life; forgetful of who we really are. Such rejoicing is evil because it exudes with pride and denies the humility with which we should approach each decision we make. With this in mind, why is saying, *Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain considered evil?*
 - a. When we have this attitude of boasting, what are we presuming?
4. Share a time when you heeded the exhortation in James 4:17 and the impact your obedience had on you.
5. Earthly treasures are of no value in the coming kingdom. How does knowing this affect how you view riches and the endeavor to attain them?

*All my requests are lost in one,
"Father, Thy will be done!"*

-Charles Wesley