

Today Begin ~ James 4:13 - 5:11.

Recall 2:1-3:18; Four Mini-Essays In Proverb Form

2:1-13; Warning against favoritism.

2:14-26; Faith and works

3:1-12; Controlling the tongue

3:13-18; Godly vs worldly wisdom

Returns to this format and has 3 more mini-essays in proverb form, ~ 4:13 - 5:11

4:13-17; Making plans without God's input ⇒⇒ Today

5:1-6; Judgment Upon Wealthy Unbelievers

5:7-11; Waiting for the Lord

Making plans w/out God's input, ~ James 4:13-17.

James Begins ~ By Noting ~ An Example ~ Of The Practice Of Planning For The Future ~ Apart From God.

<sup>13</sup> 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."

▶▶ Come now ~~ is an expression used ~ only here and in James 5:1 in the NT.

▶▶ It is a form of address, ~ sp., ~ an attention getter.

▶▶ Can be translated a number of diff ways.

▷▷ E.g., ~ Now listen.

↪↪ Or even, ~ Look here. 1/15

Here James uses the example ~ of a self-confident declaration by businessmen, ~ who make their plans without consulting God.

▶▶Recognizably, ~ this applies to all believers ~ 77

▷▷who boastfully declare plans of any kind ~ for the future or otherwise, ~ w/out consulting God.

The problem James has with these plans, ~ though, ~ is not ~ the making of them.

▶▶The problem he has ~ is with ~ the attitude ~ with which the plans are formulated.

▷▷Made with ~ an arrogant self-confidence ~ and self-centered boasting.

Notice, ~ that all 4 verbs ~ are in the future tense and spoken with arrogant self-confidence.

▶▶Grk reads this way.

▷▷We will go into such and such a town ~~ and we will spend a year there ~~ and we will trade ~~ and we will make a profit.

▶▶These verbs communicate ~ the resolve of the speaker's intention ~ toward completing the verbal activity.

▶▶The speaker presents these plans ~ not as a matter of "if" ~ but "when" ~ they will happen.

▶▶In the following verses James makes it clear.

▷▷This attitude ~ is reflective of ~ arrogant self-confidence ~ and self-centered boasting. 2/15

James is speaking to believers ~ who would arrogantly plan out their lives ~ 77

▶▶ without giving any thought ~ to God's overriding ability ~ to control things.

▶▶ The heart of 4:13 ~ consists of a series of plans ~ that gives evidence ~ 77

▷▷ to the tunnel-vision ambition of such a person.

▶▶ Even the grammatical structure of the plans ~ provides a window into this prideful person's heart.

▷▷ Each plan is connected to the next with and.

▷▷ There is no pause or break.

▷▷ Plan A and Plan B and Plan C and Plan D.

▶▶ These repeated occurrences of ~ and ~ have the cumulative effect ~ 77

▷▷ of suggesting that the speaker ~ has his entire year mapped out.

▶▶ In their eyes, ~ no time needs to be spent ~ in contemplation ~ or considering God in any of the matter.

▶▶ The plan has been pieced together.

↪↪ And the only thing remaining ~ is its execution.

▶▶ In the case of these businessmen, ~ it starts with travel & ends with profit. 3/15

They declare these plans w/ arrogant self-confidence, ~ as if they have full control over their future.

▶▶ But note, ~ as we'll see, ~ James is not calling us ~ not to plan.

▷▷ Again, ~ it's all about our attitude in planning.

↪↪ IOW, ~ do we have ~ an earthly perspective ~ or ~ a biblical perspective?

→→ Arrogant self-confidence & self-centered boasting reveals earthly perspective.

▶▶ And this applies ~ to far more than planning.

▷▷ This encompasses all our ~ speaking, ~ thinking, ~ & behavior. ⇔⇔ Earthly or biblical?

Next, ~ Makes Us Aware Of 2 Problems With This Arrogant Self-Confidence.

It's misplaced ~ for 2 reasons.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ We Don't Know ~ What Will Happen Even Tomorrow, ~ Let Alone For A Whole Year.

<sup>14a</sup> Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

Prov. 27:1 basically says the same thing as James.

▶▶ Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

▶▶ IOW, ~ we are not to brag ~ about what we will do tomorrow ~ 77

▷▷ because ~ we don't know what will happen then. 4/15

▶▶ The thought behind this caution is that ~ only God knows the future.

We have no idea ~ what tomorrow will bring.

▶▶ We have no idea ~ what our life will be like tomorrow.

▶▶ Tomorrow is uncertain.

▶▶ This ~ is the reality we are dealing with. ⇨⇨ To ignore it ~ is folly.

▶▶ Plus, ~ we are people of such a nature ~ who cannot know what will happen tomorrow.

▷▷ I.e., ~ we are finite.

▷▷ God is eternal.

↪↪ Is. 46:9-10, ~ Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'

▷▷ Observing a parade.

Because the future is uncertain, ~ 77

▶▶ it is even more important ~ that we completely depend on the Lord.

▶▶ The plans for our lives ~ need to include frequent self-reminders ~ about God's role in the future. 5/15

▶▶ One helpful prayer is this.

▷▷ "Lord, ~ I know ~ I don't know what the future holds, ~ but I'm glad I know you hold the future!"

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Problem With This Arrogant Self-Confidence.

#### The Uncertainty & Brevity of life.

▶▶<sup>14b</sup> What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

▶▶ What is sure about life, ~ according to James, ~ is its ~ uncertainty.

#### The word mist ~ can also mean ~ smoke.

▶▶ And so it has been translated as ~ a puff of smoke ~ by a number of translations.

Mist/puff of smoke ~ is used here ~ as a metaphor ~ indicating the uncertainty and shortness of life.

▶▶ Our lives are ~ like a mist that evaporates quickly under the sun, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ or ~ like smoke blown away by the wind.

▶▶ The psalmist understood this.

▷▷ Ps. 102:3a, ~ For my days pass away like smoke.

▶▶ The man in Jesus' parable of the rich fool didn't. ⇒⇒ Lk. 12:16-20. 6/15

Furthermore, ~ none of us has the power ~ to prevent the day of our death.

▶▶ Eccl. 8:8a, ~ NLT, ~ <sup>8</sup> None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death.

▶▶ In Job 14, ~ Job notes ~ that our days are determined beforehand by God, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so that when they are completed, ~ we cannot live another day (v. 5).

▶▶ David spoke about his days being determined in Ps. 139:16 (NLT).

▷▷ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

▶▶ Barring the return of Jesus in our lifetime, ~ death is a battle we will not escape.

▷▷ We cannot cheat our way out.

Should pray ~ as David and Moses prayed.

▶▶ Ps. 39:4, ~ O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!

▷▷ It is likely ~ that David is asking ~ not for information.

▷▷ Rather, ~ it is more likely ~ that he's praying for 2 other things.

↳↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ For the willingness ~ to live with the facts.

↳↳ & 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ For grace to acknowledge and accept ~ the nature of human life. 7/15

▶▶Ps. 90:12, ~ So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

▷▷What Moses prays for is also instructive.

▷▷He prays that ~ we take seriously ~ the fact that our days are numbered, ~ 77

↪↪so that we make wiser use of them.

▷▷And not go around making ~ arrogant, self-confident statements ~ about the future.

In Vs 15, ~ James Gives Us The Proper Perspective That We Are To Have.

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

Here James provides ~ an alternative situation ~ to the one presented in 4:13.

▶▶Both are concerned ~ with how a person goes about charting out their day-to-day activities.

▶▶But each are carried out ~ with vastly different attitudes.

▷▷4:13, We will go, ~ we will spend, ~ we will trade ~ we will make.

▷▷Vs 15, ~ If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

▷▷See the diff?

James could have written vs 15 this way.

▶▶We will live and do this or that, if the Lord wills. 8/15

▶▶ But he didn't. ⇨⇨ He put ~ if the Lord wills ~ in a prominent place.

▶▶ Right out of the gate, ~ by placing this 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ James establishes ~ that our focus ~ is to be on the Lord.

▶▶ This gets our focus off of ourselves and our self-confidence.

▶▶ Take note of how the Lord's prayer begins.

1<sup>st</sup> & foremost, ~ in making plans for the future, ~ or for anything for that matter, ~ 77

▶▶ our focus is to be on our heavenly Father. ⇨⇨ He knows the future.

▷▷ He knows what's best for us, ~ infinitely better than we do.

▷▷ His mind is not clouded ~ with selfish, self-centered desires.

▷▷ His understanding ~ is perfect beyond measure.

▶▶ Ours is ~ faulty, ~ finite, ~ and tainted by our sin nature.

▷▷ Also, ~ our minds are easily clouded ~ with selfish, self-centered desires.

▶▶ So our 1<sup>st</sup> step in planning correctly ~ is to seek the Lord about making any plans.

▶▶ Likewise, ~ our 1<sup>st</sup> step when we get up in the morning ~ 77

▷▷ should be to seek our heavenly Father ~ for what we need that day. 9/15

In 4:13, ~ all of the plans were centered around the arrogant will of the person.

▶▶ However, ~ 4:15 ~ signals a switch ~ to the will of God.

▷▷ If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

▶▶ Recall that we said, ~ genuine submission to God ~ is living a life ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that continually expresses to him, ~ not my will, ~ but yours be done.

▶▶ If the Lord wills ~ is not merely a casual formula.

▷▷ It is a conviction and acknowledgment ~ that God has the final say on everything, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ and that the future is in his hands.

Furthermore, ~ recall that all of the future tense verbs in vs 13 ~ ¶¶

▶▶ come off as though the speaker views the plans ~ not as a matter of ~ "if" ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but "when" ~ they will come to pass.

▶▶ In contrast, ~ in vs 15, ~ the plans are made with the proviso, ~ If the Lord wills.

▶▶ This derails ~ any arrogant overtones ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that could have been detected in the self-confident planning in vs 13.

▶▶ In short, ~ all certainty ~ needs to be surrendered ~ to God's sovereignty. 10/15

▶▶ Instead of having ~ a when attitude, ~ we need to develop ~ an if attitude.

▶▶ We need to acknowledge God's sovereignty over our lives.

▷▷ And realize ~ we are utterly dependent on him.

▷▷ And every breath we take ~ is a loving gift ~ from him.

▷▷ Acts 17:28, ~ In him we live and move and have our being.

At the end of vs 15, ~ James tells us what will happen if the Lord wills.

▶▶ We will live and do this or that.

▶▶ Notice the phrase, ~ We will live.

▶▶ That is missing in vs 13.

▷▷ It says nothing ~ of the potential of death.

↪↪ Rather, ~ the planners take life for granted.

▶▶ We cannot justify being so arrogant.

▶▶ So James is telling us here ~ 77

▷▷ that part of the proper perspective we are to have in planning, ~ 77

↪↪ and in life in general, ~ is not to take life for granted. 11/15

▶▶ The reality is ~ we have no guarantee that we'll be alive tomorrow.

▶▶ So ~ to take life as guaranteed ~ is unwise.

▷▷ James wants us ~ to readjust the manner ~ in which we chart out the activities of our lives.

Go ahead and plan, ~ James says.

▶▶ But leave room for the Master Planner to carry out ~ not our will ~ but his.

Those Who Leave God Out Of Planning, ~ Also Engage ~ In Self-Centered Boasting.

<sup>16a</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance.

▶▶ I.e., ~ the way things are, ~ namely leaving God out of your planning for the future, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ you also engage in self-centered boasting.

Those who leave God out, ~ get a certain pride in themselves ~ ¶¶

▶▶ in planning their future with such arrogant self-confidence.

▶▶ Instead of making plans dependent on God's will, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ they brag about what they have decided to do, ~ as if they have the power to make it happen.

▶▶ Such boasting ~ is conceitedly praising oneself. 12/15

▷▷ It indicates ~ an arrogance ~ that does not acknowledge the One who controls the universe.

↳↳ Self-centered boasting ~ keeps the credit to oneself ~ and fails to give the glory to God.

*We are not to engage in self-centered boasting.*

▶▶ As Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 10:17, ~ Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

▷▷ 3<sup>rd</sup> pers impv. ~ The one who boasts ~ must ~ boast in the Lord.

▶▶ Rather than self-centered boasting, ~ 77

▷▷ we should be trusting and exalting in ~ who God is ~ and what he has done.

▶▶ Self-centered boasting ~ is foolish boasting, ~ as exemplified by Nebuchadnezzar.

▷▷ Dan. 4:27-30, 34-35.

*In vs 16b, ~ notes that self-centered boasting is evil.*

*Self-centered boasting is sinful ~ because it leaves God out of our lives, ~ as though he does not count.*

▶▶ It sets oneself above and against God.

↳↳ And it robs him of the glory that belongs to him alone. 13/15

Finishes This Mini-Essay By Saying ~<sup>17</sup> So Whoever Knows The Right Thing To Do And Fails To Do It, For Him It Is Sin.

In immediate context, ~ James is saying that the right thing to do is include God in planning.

▶▶ The word ~ So ~ introduces a concluding summary statement.

▶▶ The idea here seems to be, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ So whoever knows the right thing to do, ~ and I've just spelled out the right thing to do, yet fails to do it, ~ sins.

▶▶ We have been fully warned.

▶▶ Now that James has pointed the matter out to us, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we are w/out excuse when we leave God out of our planning.

But James puts this in gen. terms here, ~ which shows a much broader application.

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

▶▶ Covers believers knowing and failing to do the right thing ~ in all situations.

▷▷ The right thing to do ~ is to include the Lord in every aspect of our lives.

▶▶ To persist ~ in having an arrogant self-confidence ~ and in self-centered boasting ~ is sin. 14/15

James' Overall Purpose ~ Is To Instill ~ Correct Thinking & Right Behavior In Believers.

This, ~ as well as love, ~ is always what's behind his tough words.

▶▶ Like John, ~ James does not want us to sin.

And when we do sin, ~ beloved, ~ we must remember and act on these encouraging words from John.

▶▶ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

▶▶ And, ~ if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 15/15