



# THE BOOK OF James

*LIVING COUNTER-CULTURALLY*

*<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” —*

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*

*<sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

**James 4:13-17**

## **Series Focus Point:**

*Followers of Jesus will boldly, yet humbly stand against ungodly beliefs and values while practically applying the message of the Gospel in genuine, tangible, and loving ways.*

**Theme: *Living Counter-Culturally***

*Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"*

*<sup>14</sup> "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"*

*<sup>15</sup> The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.*

**Focus Point: *Whose perspective informs your decision making process?***

- 1. The Wrong Perspective**
- 2. The Right Perspective**
- 3. A Warning**

# ***1. The Wrong Perspective (vv.13,14,16)***

James states four things:

1. Going to a place – a town
2. Time spent there – a year
3. Activities – do business
4. The results – make a profit

Why is it wrong?

It completely ignores God. There is an absence of Him in the decision making process.

v.14 bears this out by saying “you don’t know what tomorrow will bring.”

Because God is absent, you are assuming you know what will happen in the future.

It is forgetting our frailty – *what is your life? It is a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

This is more than just acknowledging that life is short; it ignores the fact that God is in control of our lives.

Heb. 9:27 *It is appointed unto man once to die and after that face judgment.*

This is the sin of presumption.



How does our culture make decisions, when removing God from the equation?

1. Self

2. Experience

3. Peer pressure

4. Get what I can now

James identifies this as boasting in our arrogance and that type of boasting is considered evil. (v.16)

Evil is the twisting, marring, warping of the good. It takes the good and perverts it.

## *2. The Right Perspective (v.15)*

**WRONG**

- Ignoring God
- I am in control or adding God

**RIGHT**

- Acknowledging God's sovereignty
- God owns my life

“James is not trying to banish planning from our lives, but only that sort of self-sufficient, self-important planning that keeps God for Sunday but looks on Monday to Saturday as mine.”

*Alec Motyer*

## *2. The right perspective (v.15)*

**WRONG**

- Ignoring God
- I am in control or adding God
- Doing what we please

**RIGHT**

- Acknowledging God's sovereignty
- God owns my life
- Looking to God for how we should live out our lives

God's will is not mysterious, mystical or superstitious, we can know His will.

1. God's word
2. God's leading
3. God's provision

*Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.*

Four things:

1. Trust in the Lord – know and believe that God has your good and His glory in store for you no matter what happens.
2. Do not lean on your own understanding – do not trust your wisdom or other's alone. Look to God and His word.
3. Acknowledge Him – (NIV submit) based on the first two, God how can I best live this out?
4. He will make your paths straight – this is an ongoing reality, not a final illumination of all that you should do.



Questions you can ask to help “acknowledge God” in all your ways:

- If I do this will it bring glory to God? If so, how?
- How will this help me to put sin to death and grow in my faith?
- If I do this, will it serve others or only myself?
- If I do this, will it increase my temptation towards sin or will it decrease it?
- Will others see Jesus better?
- Will He increase as I decrease?

### ***3. A Warning (vv.17)***

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

Knowing that we must acknowledge God, His sovereignty, His rule and plan for our lives, to ignore Him or to treat Him only as a “part” of our decision making process, is sin.