

July 3, 2022

Confidence and Calendars (James 4:13-17)

Basic Outline:

An Expression of a Typical Plan (v.13)

Three Errors Exposed (vv.14-16)

First Error – Forgetting Our Finiteness and Mortality (v.14)

Second Error – Ignoring God’s Sovereignty (v.15)

Third Error – Boasting in Our Arrogance (v.16)

An Unexpected Starting Point (v.17)

Questions to Prepare:

- We all make plans. When have your life plans accomplished what you intended? When have your plans left you feeling disappointed?
- Have you ever been surprised by God’s direction for your life and had to change your plans dramatically?
- When was a time when it was particularly clear to you how fleeting life is?
- Have you ever been in the habit of saying “Lord willing” when making plans? Did it lose its meaning over time?
- Who is someone you know who is an example of making plans while depending upon the Lord? What does that look like in their lives?
- Is there an area in which you know God wants you to listen to Him but you haven’t obeyed? Are there any commands that you have not taken seriously?

Questions to Review and Apply:

- Before this sermon, would you have characterized prideful planning as a problem of yours? Has your answer changed after thinking about this passage?
- If so, are you more guilty of pride in the big life decisions, the plans of each day, or both?

- What are some errors we make in planning our days and lives? In what ways does your arrogance reveal itself in your planning?
- What are some examples of times in your life when your plans weren't very different from the plans of an atheist? Have you repented of them or would you make the same plans again?
- As a matter, do your prayers reflect your finiteness and mortality? How do they or could they?
- How might you live differently if you believed your life was a vapor and tomorrow were not promised to you?
- In what way is independent planning evil (v.16)? How will you not become tolerant of independent planning again?
- What are the little kingdoms you like to set up (or daydream about) where you get to play the part of sovereign?
- James 4:17 says, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." How is this verse important in the way we ought to make plans?
- Are there ways you might view your day differently if your starting point was the "right thing to do"? Are there ways you might view the next stage of your life differently?
- Are there commands that you know should be influencing your plans but which you've been ignoring?
- God's Word reveals what is the right thing for us to do. How can we make plans dependently when we become overwhelmed by His revelation? (There are a lot of right things!)
- What should the proud perfectionist do when they are overwhelmed by the right things to do? What should the proud pleasure seeker do when they ignore the right things to do?
- How can Jesus and the Gospel be a comfort to us as we plan to do what is right?
- What truths about God make this morning's message good news?
- What theme(s) is in common between James 4:13-17 and James 4:1-10 and 4:11-12? Can you trace his flow of thought?

