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| Topic | My Plans, God’s Will, My Worries |
| Reference  | James 4: 13-17 |
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Planning is very important in our lives. Our whole lives revolve around planning and we need to make good plans. In our jobs we need to have a plan. If we just go into work and have no plan of what we are doing; eventually we will not have a job anymore. In our family lives as well we need good family planning. We need to know at what age our children are going to come so we can have the necessary finances to plan for our children as well and that brings us to the next part of planning; financial planning. It is also very important, it is just not relevant in the secular world, it is also very relevant here in church.

If we want to do things right, we have to plan things right. There is a saying that says, *“whoever fails to plan, plans to fail”.* It is true, so many areas of our lives are planned out and it is good to plan and it needs to be plan. If we look at the ministries at church that are really successfully doing well are ministries which are highly planned. So therefore we need planning in so many areas of our lives and we plan in so many areas of our lives. So it is really interesting and really good to know what the Bible says about planning because it is going to affect so many areas of our lives and that is exactly what James is going to speak into today. He is going to speak to us about planning. Well he says and he starts off with this phrase.

13 Come now, you who say, “Today, or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and will spend a year there and trade and make a profit.”

There he chooses an example of a businessman but it could be any of us who plan. Here James is talking about somebody who is very-very well planned. If we look at this passage properly this person has everything covered. He has covered when things will happen, where things will happen, what will be done; he will be doing trading, why he is doing the trading; he will make a profit and how long it will take to do this. He is truly a really good planner. What is the problem with that because James immediately starts to rebuke that? Well the problem with it is that he has left no room for God to enter into that space. We call this **autonomous planning**.

There are two things which are problem with autonomous planning.

1. Autonomous planning **assumes longevity**. He assumes that he will have one whole year and where this assumption comes from.
2. It **assumes ability**. The fact that he will be able to go to such a town, the fact that he will be able to trade and the fact that he will be able to make a profit. He assumes ability.

Immediately James rebuke autonomous planning right away. He says,

**14** 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.

He rebukes right away because our future is unknown and as humans we are ignorant to what the future brings. We do not know what tomorrow will bring and that is so true for any of us. Right now we have plans and it is good to have plans but any of our lives could change immediately. Our lives could change right now by somebody else tweeting something. Our lives could change immediately through an email, through a facebook message. We have got no idea about future and James says that humans are ignorant. Then he says, the future is uncertain, human life is transient, it is here for a short while. He says, we are nothing but a mist. He is not thinking of a nice morning fog which lingers for long time by the sea, he is thinking of e cigarette puff, little vapour and then it disappears and leaves no smell and nothing behind. We are nothing but a vapour. We have no idea if tomorrow we will be around. It takes so many things for just our kidneys to work, but something can just go wrong and we do not even know. We all know people in our lives where something instantaneous changed their lives and even took their lives. To assume that is not one of us is ignorance. Some of us do not even know if we are going to be around here tomorrow. We have no idea of the next hour, as humans we are ignorant and we are insignificant. That is not a great start for being arrogant. That is exactly what James says, he says, you have no idea yet you do include the person who is everlasting in our planning and you do not include the person who is all knowing in your planning because God is the person who knows all things and has been around for all things. God is omnipotent, he is all powerful. He is capable of all things. We assume our capability, he has all capability. He is omnipresent, he is everywhere at the same time. We always have a feeling of overworking; doing so many things but God never had that feeling. God is omniscient, he knows all things. He owns all, he dwells everywhere and he sees all things and therefore not including him who has all the knowledge is arrogant. This is exactly what James says, which is called autonomous planning unmasked.

It is arrogant. Because it is believing that we are capable of making our plans and our decisions without the person who actually has the answers. Imagine your business right now, you have a boss who has experience of doing the business for many-many years and then you as a new manager come in and then suddenly you call all the shots without asking your boss. That is arrogant. That is believing that you have the knowledge and it is believing that you do not need God. It is believing that you are sovereign and not God and because of that it is not just arrogant James calls it evil. Such a boasting is evil because when we presume to take this sovereign position in our lives and think that we have all the capability and we do not need God, it means this we put ourselves above God and that is evil. That is idolatry and James in the very end of this passage in verse 17 says that, it is sin. He says, all of you who know but you ought to do and do not do it for you it is sin and as Christians we know that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, we know that he has all the knowledge and all the capabilities and we know that he is sovereign and we know that he is in control. So not to include him in our planning is sin.

So how then shall we plan? Are we supposed to not plan at all, are we supposed to just leave all planning aside and just say, only if the lord wills, is that what the passage is telling us. Clearly not because it tells us do this or that, this passage tells us that we should plan. This passage is not a passage that goes against planning, it just tells you how you should plan and how you should plan it says here

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

We are supposed to include God in our planning.

What is God’s will?

**If the Lord wills** is not:

1. A call to fatalism. It is not a call to relieve yourself of all responsibilities and say if the Lord wills he will do this or that. We still have responsibilities to do good planning. So if the Lord will is not a call to fatalism.
2. It is not a call to engage in pious talk. We always say “I will see at Bible study if the Lord wills”. When people who engage in this kind of pious talk they will say that the Lord told me to tell you. In one of Wesley books on how a minister should behave, it says, ***do not engage in pious talk***. So it is not a call to say if the Lord wills every time ending a sentence. No it is something very different than that. It is this

*If The Lord Wills is a call to convict our hearts of Gods sovereign will in every area of our lives even as we seek to please him by following his moral will as best as we can discern it.*

So God has two wills. He has a **sovereign will** and he has a **moral will**. What is the different between them? God’s moral will is what God would prefer all of us to do that can be thwarted. We can go against God’s moral will and then there is God’s sovereign will. What God will accomplish. No way we can thwart that and that is good news. Our failures are never going to land us into position where we are going to be responsible that God’s plan did not workout. It is good news. Our insufficiencies are not going to thwart God’s sovereign will. He will accomplish it besides our lameness, our incapabilities. God’s moral will is something that we need to focus on. The Bible says,

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in a man’s heart but it is the Lord’s purposes that prevail.

Whatever we need to plan we can plan but sovereign will, will still come true. The problem is all of us are always so focused on God’s sovereign will. We also want sign from God. We are not concerned about God’s moral will, we are always concerned about his sovereign will. We always want to plan according to God’s will and we have his will right here in Bible. We always say when God you will reveals yourself to me the things that we need, but God has already revealed himself to us in great detail in Bible, many chapters, many passages, and many words.

So how do we plan? So we have got three examples here.

The first one is kind of like a business man, me and my life. So we draw a big center, we put ourselves in the center.

How do we want my family life to look like and how do I want my work to look like. So it best suits me and then which friends I am going to hang out with that best suit me and then my desires. What desires I am indulging that best satisfies my soul. That is me and my life and many of us we plan that way. We put ourselves in the center and we see how do we want our lives to look like.

Some of us become Christians. So we hear about the put God first approach. So we put God first in the place. We go to church on Sundays, we go to bible studies, we check all the things that we done for God, we have reserved those days for God, so we are putting Him first on those days and then we will only put our families because we love them, we put them second and then we put our work because we need to work to make money to make a happy family then we put our friends because our friends can give us good networks so we can work and then have good families and because we are God’s people we just put our desires below that and because we are humble people we put ourselves last. It looks like a good Christian plan. The problem is that this still is autonomous planning, because you are telling God to be here on my Sundays and I check you off, be here on my Wednesdays and I will check you off but don’t get involve in my life, don’t get involved in my work. I do not want with my friends or please stay away from my desires and please do not tell me who I need to be. It is still autonomous planning but we think we have done the Christian thing. We have checked off God and then we go through rest of the list. The Bible tells us this in Proverbs 3:6.

Seek God’s will in all you do, and he will show you the path to take.

So we want to see God in all we do, who is that look like. We have to put God in the center of all that we do. When we go through his moral will and we read and we understand and we understand how families are supposed to look like and then we plan. To make our families look like He wants our families to look like and then we look at our work and we understand what the Bible says about work. Work is good, God made us to work. So yes your secular jobs are good. God values them. How we are supposed to behave in our work? What are the things we can compromise and what are the things we cannot compromise on. Again we flip from his moral will, we come in to a community, we discuss with our friends, how His work supposed to look like and then we plan in our work. Same thing with our friends, what kind of friend do you want me to be. I understand what kind of friend Jesus is, how can I be that kind of friend. So that we can come in community and encourage our friends and sometimes rebuke our friends and admonish our friends, to help our friends walk alongside with God and those friends who do not know Jesus we help them to know Jesus, how by lavishing grace and grace upon them and being a Christian model for them. God how do you want me to look like as a friend and we go to our desires and we read this book and we realize that our desires are terrible that we have hard hearts that we hardly desire God and we fall on our knees and we pray God change my heart. So that our we desires will align with God’s desires and then we can plan to fill those desires and lastly we look at ourselves who am I and we realize that the book tells us that for us and foremost we are children of God and then we find out our identity from Christ. So many times we invite God into our house and treat him just as a guest. When God comes and he takes over our house He becomes our landlord and He tells us how our lives should look like, how our houses should look like and He will renovate and He will realign all these rooms for us and then He will take over. If we seek God in all things He will show us our path. So then we will be ready to plan with regard to God’s moral will and be content regardless of what God’s sovereign will brings but that is not easy. It is difficult; nobody said it was easy, because we desire control. It is an innate desire in all of us to want to control things. We want to be sovereign over things in our lives. We want to be the masters of our kingdoms.

Our worries drive us to want to control things and all of us have worries. What are the things that we worry about?

1. The future of our children. When we are worried about their future we control our children.
2. Worry about our finances. We control our finances.
3. Worry about our health, we control our diet.

So whatever we worry about leads us to control those things. Our anxieties and fears push us to be controlling over those areas.

Many of the times our worries are just worldly and not godly.

If we ask ourselves what are the worries that we have which are godly and which are worldly?

When we are worried for our children, what are we worried about. Are we worried that they will know Jesus and read their bibles or are you worried that they will have great finances or read their study books.

When we are worried about our finances, are we worried that we have enough to contribute to God’s kingdom or are we worried to have enough to have a nice house and luxury at your pension.

What are our worries?

Our worries really show us the problems of our heart and then we start controlling those things because our worldly worries will draw us to worldly actions and we control those areas. Sometimes when we are not in control of certain areas our need for control is put into another place. For example, we do not have the possibility to be controlling our work places so we control our spouses. We can’t be controlling in our spouses we control our children.

When we start to control things we are willing to pay a price for it. The first price we are willing to pay for our control our planning is being spontaneous. We rather be managing everything and be controlling everything and then go of anything spontaneous. The second price we are willing to pay is we are willing to be lonely. Because everyone who control things it is a lonely-lonely place because we cannot be friendly with people who you try to control, you cannot be loving with people who you are trying to control.

Another reason why we are going to be lonely if we try to controlling this because we keep on nagging at everybody. We do not realize that other people also pay a cost for us being controlling, other people feel condemned. We might say we are worried for them and we love them, but our worry, our worldly fears drive us to control people and then we condemn them. There was a huge rise in suicides of teens because they felt condemned by their parents for the grades they were getting. Our worldly worries pushes people to fear condemned and that is why it is by no surprise that the most frequent command in the Bible is, ***do not fear, do not worry***, it appears over 300 times in the bible.

……“**Fear not**, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” Gen 15:1

**24 ….**. **Fear not**, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake.” Gen 26:24

“**Fear not**, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;” Isa 54:4a

“And **do not fear** those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” Matt 10:28

Our worries are always worldly, they are never godly and God tells us to fear not. The most profound passage about it is in Sermon of Mount in Mark 6:

**25** “Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

26  Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

**27** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

**28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,

**29**yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

**30**But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

The number one problem of our worries is that we do not trust God; we do not trust in his sovereign will, we do not trust that he is a good father. We do not trust that he will provide. We do not trust that all things are meant for good for those who love him.

**31**Therefore **do not be anxious**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

**32**For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

**33**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

**34**“Therefore **do not be anxious** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

People who do not know God have such worries but we who know God should not have such worries, because our heavenly father he knows our every need. We have to seek righteousness of God first, seek out what God’s moral us and He will add all things to you. He will provide all our needs. We will have troubles on a daily basis but the Bible says in,

Lamentations 3:22-24

**22** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
    his mercies never come to an end;
**23**they are new every morning;
    great is your faithfulness.
**24**“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
    “therefore I will hope in him.”

Even though we have trouble every day, there are new mercies every day. There is new grace every day, God will provide for us every day, and all we need to do is what the passage says in verse 24.

Let’s put our hope and our trust in him. When we start putting our hope and trust in him and trust that He will provide we exchange our worldly fears with godly fears. We do not fear about finances and everything, we fear the Lord and suddenly when we put our trust in God and feel satisfied because His track record is always complete, He always does what He says He will do. God’s track record is immaculate. When He says He will provide He will provide and we can rest on that and we do not feel the need to control.

We are people who forget God in our planning. We are people who are autonomous in our planning. How do we like to be forgotten or forsaken? We forsake God, we forget God and the Bible says that this is what we deserve

Psalm 9:17

The wicked shall return to Sheol,
all the nations that forget God.

When we forsake God when we forget God what we deserve is to be forgotten and we deserve to be forsaken by God but what happened on the cross. When Jesus was about to breathe his last breath his last words were, “Lord why you have forsaken me?” God forgot about his son, He ignored his sin, He poured all the forgetting that we deserved onto his son. He forgot about His son so that we can be remembered that is why God says I will remember you always and because He remembers us we can remember Him and when the anxieties come, when we have fear, because we do not know what tomorrow brings because we have these uncertainties we look back on the cross and we see what Jesus has accomplished, He rose again and with this rising again He guarantee us a future. Our hope is not an uncertainty; it is a certainty of coming back into the presence with God. In Christ we have a future that is guaranteed. In Christ we know what tomorrow will bring and when we set that into our hearts we do not need to fear.