

JAMES A Faith That Works

Study 14

Forgetting God:- Arrogance and Anxiety

James 4:13-17

A) There is a danger of forgetting God in the way we live

James 4:13-17

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

1) a) **Fill in the Blanks. According to the video lecture slide, fill in the blanks on the "rules for playing God."**

James 4:13	Rules for playing God
"Today or tomorrow"	Set your own schedule
"We will go into such and such a town"	Select your own path
"Spend a year there"	Place your own limits
"And trade"	Arrange your activities
"And make a profit"	Predict your own outcome

b) **Discussion Question. What is wrong with 'planning'?**

-It is certainly possible to believe in God yet forget about him. There is no mention of God in the plan. Without God, our life becomes "our right" and not an act of mercy from God, we believe it is our abilities that will make a difference, and getting material gain becomes life's sole purpose.

Sacred	Secular
Missionaries	Doctors
Monks	Lawyers

Pastors	Businessman
Elders	Teachers
Full-time ministry workers	Policeman
Evangelists	Carpenter
Priests	Developers
Sundays	Monday-Saturdays

c) Discussion Question. What is wrong with the “sacred & secular divide” as shown in the table above?

d) Reflection Question. Reflect on Psalm 9:17, Judges 8:34, Jeremiah 2:32 and Job 8:11-14, how often do you forget about God from Monday to Sunday?

Quick Verse Reference

Psalm 9:17

The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.

Judges 8:34

and did not remember the Lord their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.

Jeremiah 2:32

Does a young woman forget her jewelry,
a bride her wedding ornaments?
Yet my people have forgotten me,
days without number.

Job 8:11-14

Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
Can reeds thrive without water?
While still growing and uncut,
they wither more quickly than grass.
Such is the destiny of all who forget God;

so perishes the hope of the godless.
What they trust in is fragile;
what they rely on is a spider's web.

B) Forgetting God ignores reality

James 4:14
Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

2) a) Objective questions. Select all that apply. Which of the following is true about verse 14?

- A. We humans do not even know for sure what will happen tomorrow
- B. Human life is transient like a mist
- C. Human life is meaningless without God's eternal purpose and goal in the picture

James 4:16-17
As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone then knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

b) Discussion question. Why is it arrogant and evil to "plan"? (Refer to Deut 6:10-12 to help you)

Arrogance is taking someone else's credit (God's providence) and living without God at the center. Arrogance is reinterpreting his grace as our own efforts. It is stealing His glory. What did we have that was not given by God?

Deuteronomy 6:10-12
10 When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, 11 houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, 12 be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

c) Objective question. Select all that apply. Why should we be wary of "arrogance"/forgetting about God?

- A. Too poor will steal, too rich will become "independent" of God (Proverbs 30:7-9)
- B. Forgetting God Leads to Rebellion and Unbelief of God (Psalms 106:7)
- C. Forgetting God Leads to Idolatry, worshipping other things as god because they forgot the real one (Jer. 18:15)

D. Forgetting God Leads to Judgement (Psalms 106:23)

E. Forgetting Impoverishes them because they started depending on other things that cannot sustain them (Jeremiah 2:13)

C) Our Lives need to be centered on Him in humble dependence

James 4:15

Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

3) Objective question. Select all that apply. What is true about "the Lord's will"?

A. It is a magic word we should sprinkle at the end of our prayers or plans (James 4:15)

B. It is not superficial posturing like in Matthew 15:8

C. The Lord's will = Recentering our aspirations to God's will (Matt 6:9-10)

D. We bend Lord's will to our human will (John 15:7)

E. It means we re-organize even our relationships according to His will (1 Cor 7:29-31)

F. Is it following God's ethical will, not decretive will

G. We know God's ethical or dispositional will

H. We cannot know God's sovereign or decretive will

b) Objective question. Select all that apply. How do we remember God and remind ourselves to do the Lord's ethical will?

A. Have memorials like the Lord's supper (Joshua 4, 1 Sam 7:7-12, Mark 14:22-25)

B. Purposely Plan Spiritual Growth (Deut 4:9)

C. Fellowship, meet together and stir up one another to love and do good works (Hebrews 10:24-25)

D. Re-think about what hardship means (James 1:2)

E. Live as Dependant Beings (James 4:10)

F. Tell others of His Glory, share God's blessings (Deut 4:9)

Takeaway

A) There is a danger of forgetting God in the way we live

B) Forgetting God ignores reality

C) Our Lives need to be centered on Him in humble dependence

Case Study

Case 1 – Forgetting God’s Providence

Gabriel Ngo is a well-off Christian who attends Third Baptist Church. He grew up with a silver spoon, had good academic skills, and had the opportunity to go overseas to study. He had good social skills and was well-received at his workplace and easily climbed up the career ladder. He married a beautiful wife and has two boys and two girls who all did well in their studies.

When there was a severe flood in Taman Seri Muda, he helped the situation financially but said that the settlers made a very poor choice of choosing that location which leads them to their current state. He often claims that the Lord has blessed him because he always plans well and makes wise choices in life.

1) a) Discussion question. How much of Gabriel’s good life was due to his own effort and how much was due to God’s providence?

b) Discussion question. Seeing how God is involved in providing us with all good things, why do we tend to forget about God?

Case 2 – Talking Non-stop about God

“The week with its failures and successes has taught me one new lesson. It is this: 'I must talk about God, or I cannot keep Him in my mind. I must give Him away in order to have Him.' That is the law of the spirit world. What one gives one has, what one keeps to oneself one loses.”

— Frank C. Laubach, Letters by a Modern Mystic

2) Discussion question. Frank C. Laubach talks about remembering God by talking about him. Do you agree with Laubach?