

“Making Plans”

James 4:13-17

Mercy Hill Church | December 26, 2021

¹³ 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”— 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. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Introduction

- What’s one successful thing you planned -- where you had a plan or a goal, and things went according to plan?
 - Conversely, what’s one thing you planned that didn’t go the way you had hoped?
 - How did you feel? Why?
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God^[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

1. Presumption (vv. 13-14, 16)

- Question: What’s wrong with making plans? What’s wrong with planning?
- Presume: “To suppose to be true without proof”
 - Presumptuous: “Failing to observe the limits of what is permitted or appropriate”
- **“I’m in control of my life”?**
 - Proverbs 27:1 *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*
 - Hosea 13:3 *Therefore they shall be like the morning mist or like the dew that goes early away, like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor or like smoke from a window.*
 - Psalm 39:5-6 *Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah ⁶ Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!*
- **Presumption is a form of the sin of arrogance (pride) (v.16)**
 - Quote: “Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht” an old Yiddish saying mean, “Man plans, and God Laughs”

2. Remember God’s Providence (v.15)

- We must *not presume* but remember *God’s providence* when we make *plans*
- **God is in control (of our lives)**
 - Jeremiah 10:23 *I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.*
- **The rebuke isn’t that they were making plans, but rather neglecting God and being presumptuous that they were in control**
 - Compare v.13 & v.15 – key difference: “If the Lord wills”

- Examples from the life of the Apostle Paul:
 - Acts 18:21 *But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.*
 - Romans 1:10 *always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.*
 - 1 Corinthians 4:19 *But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.*
 - 1 Corinthians 16:7 *For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.*
- **We must *not* presume but remember *God's* providence (and sovereignty) when we make plans**

3. Faith Isn't Just Knowing (Belief) But Also Doing (Action)

- Faith = Knowing (Belief) + Doing (Action)
 - James 1:22, 26-27 ²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.,* ²⁶ *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.* ²⁷ *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*
 - Luke 6:43-45 ⁴³ *"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,* ⁴⁴ *for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.* ⁴⁵ *The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*
- ***Sins of Commission & Sins of Omission***
- We must *not* presume but remember *God's* providence when we make plans

Reflection & Application Questions

- What's one successful thing you planned?
 - What's one thing you planned that didn't go the way you wanted?
- What are some ways you see our society be presumptuous about things in life – why?
- In what specific areas of your life might you presume or be presumptuous about?
 - Why do you think you presume in these areas?
- In what areas of your life do you need to consider or be reminded of God's sovereignty & providence?
- How does James 4:17 change your understanding and perception of sin?
 - How does this point you to a deeper appreciation of the Gospel?
- What does it look like for you to not presume, but remember God's providence as you make plans?
 - In what ways is it easy for you to know this – but not do this?
- How does Jesus life, death and resurrection encourage you in this area of making plans in life?
- How can we as a church encourage and remind each other of these truths in the new year?