

1) Once again, James changes subjects ...

***James 4:13–17 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” <sup>14</sup> Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup> Instead, *you ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So for one who knows *the* right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.

2) James begins with a clear cut example of how we can be boastful and arrogant perhaps without even realizing it.

a) The first implication is that we show arrogance and boastfulness in making plans without the slightest consideration of what our life might be like tomorrow.

b) Truth is, we may not even be here tomorrow.

i) He makes the point that we are like a vapor – here today and gone tomorrow.

c) The most important implication here is that the person who is making these plans is doing so without any regard for what God may want.

3) As I considered this, I think where James is really going with this is not that we have to get a permission slip from God in order to do anything.

a) We have lives to live everyday and a lot of what we do in those daily lives may almost be too mundane to involve God directly.

b) But he is making the point that we must never take God out of our consideration regardless of the situation.

c) This is another of those subjects that Jesus, refers to. In this case indirectly since the point of the parable is not storing up riches for oneself.

d) This parable still says – consider God in what you are doing.

***Luke 12:16–21 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>16</sup> And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive.

<sup>17</sup> And he began thinking to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup> And he said, ‘This *is what* I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years *to come*; relax, eat, drink, *and* enjoy yourself!’” <sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This *very* night your soul is demanded of you; and *as for all* that you have prepared, who will own *it now*?’” <sup>21</sup> Such is the one who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich in relation to God.”

4) Once we become a member of the body of Christ and are living for Him, we must never close any part of our lives off from Him.

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- 5) Our responsibility is to be mindful of God in every aspect of our lives.
  - a) Again, under no circumstance should we ignore the possibility that God might have input for us on whatever we might be planning.
  - b) And that is also without regard to whether it is an activity for God or for ourselves.
- 6) Indeed, I think this may be as simple as having the proper state of mind – a mind and heart that is never without God’s presence.

### **Now, this leads to a couple of questions – first, are we always in that state of mind?**

#### **If not, why not?**

- a) If you are I personally am glad for you.
- b) I think that I am more that way today than I was 4 years ago but definitely not there every minute of every day.
- c) I realize now that when I was working it was much less the case.
- d) The idea of work and making every activity we participate in in that work consider God is not really an easy thing to even consider let alone do.
  - i) The relationship and interactions parts of work are great but the sitting at a drawing board or computer keyboard designing code – not so much.
- e) Not an excuse, just a statement of fact – and of course again I think we can be honoring of God in all that we do with the proper state of mind.

### **Second question is what are things that we might do that would assure we do not cut God out of our plans – that we are indeed in the right state of mind?**

- 7) James concludes this passage with a statement that knowing the right thing to do and not doing it is sin.
  - a) We have discussed this before – this is basically ignoring God and what He intends for us.
  - b) That of course is the route problem of what we were just discussing – leaving God out of our plans and/or, even our daily lives.
- 8) All of these last verses beginning with 4:7 have been about an appeal for submission to God with helpful applications of the principle to several different groups.
- 9) In 4:11–12, submission to God means that brothers do not verbally abuse one another.
- 10) In 4:13–16, submission to God means that our future plans are always made with God in mind.
- 11) And, as we just said, verse 4:17 submission to God means doing what God wants us to do and realizing that when we do not it is sin.
- 12) As we move on, James turns his attention to a group of folks even further from the truth.

## **James 5:1–6 (NASB 2020)**

### **Misuse of Riches**

<sup>1</sup> Come now, you rich people, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup>

Your gold and your silver have corroded, and their corrosion will serve as a testimony against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! <sup>4</sup> Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of armies. <sup>5</sup> You have lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and put to death the righteous person; he offers you no resistance.

- 1) These are I think without doubt, non-believers that James is speaking to here.
  - a) Actually, as becomes obvious toward the end of the passage, persecutors of the brothers and sisters.
- 2) He considers them as doing great now but warns them of the miseries and calamities that may be coming upon them.
- 3) Then he gets to the real issue – how they live their lives and some of the bad things they are doing.
- 4) Before we get to the criticisms we might want to answer a question?

**Knowing we are Christians not persecutors, nonetheless, are we rich people?**  
**Yes/No?      Why/Why not?**

- 5) So, since we have settled on the fact that we probably can be considered rich let's look at what James has to say to those who are RICH but are NOT believers.
- 6) First, he addresses what one commentator considers as hoarding – these folks are laying up treasure for themselves.
  - a) Jesus repeatedly warned that His return would be sudden and unexpected.
  - b) Not even considering that, our lives are not a given – as we discussed earlier we do not know if we will even be here tomorrow.
  - c) So, is this a total condemnation of saving or being frugal?
  - d) I personally do not think so.
    - i) Instead, I think it is the attitude we have toward these savings.
    - ii) In fact, we might in these folks case we might call them more accumulation than savings.
  - e) The Life Application Commentary states:

Their hoarding will not only demonstrate their wrong priorities, it will also show how their actions deprived the needy of help and resources that could have been given. James has already pointed out that “judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful”<sup>17</sup>

- 7) This is clear in James' next inditement – he calls these folks out for cheating their workers.

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<sup>17</sup> Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, [\*James\*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 123.

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- 8) I would contend that, even though this is a specific example, he is really saying ANY KIND of cheating would cause those who have been cheated to cry out against the ones who cheated them.
- 9) There is also no doubt that God knows of this and is definitely NOT pleased with it.
- 10) Next, he takes them to task for having nice things.

<sup>5</sup> You have lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

### **Is having nice things really what verse 5 is about?**

- 11) The answer is – “not really.”
  - a) There is no doubt that he is taking them to task but looking carefully at what James is saying, it appears to me that it is not having nice things.
  - b) Instead, it is their attitude toward these nice things (or as James says “lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously”).
  - c) To me, this says it is what their attitude toward those “riches” and how they used them that is the real problem.
- 12) James concludes his indictments of the rich non-believers by showing what their obsession with wealth leads to - condemning and putting to death righteous people.
  - a) In the society in which these folks existed, this was part of life.
  - b) One could be thrown in prison for not paying debts owed to others if the others were powerful and rich.
  - c) There was also provision in the law that debtors could be placed in “debt bondage” – forced to be slaves of those to whom they owed debts.
  - d) While death was not a direct punishment for debt, the conditions these folks suffered in prison or as slaves would many times result in the death or at a minimum a life destroyed.

### **So how would you summarize what this should mean to us as Christians?**

#### **Perhaps a different way to ask that would be...**

#### **What are the items we should be on the lookout for and combat in our lives?**