The Error of "Playing God"

JAMES 4:11-17

10-14-2020

*** DON'T DO GOD'S JOB!**

Verses 11-17 shows 2 jobs that belong only to God:

I. NEVER JUDGE APART FROM GOD'S WORD (V. 11 - 12)
(We need to get off the judgment seat and let God's Word do the judging!)

Because when we judge without God's Word:

A. WE ARE SETTING OURSELVES UP ABOVE GOD'S WORD (LAW) (V. 11)

1. God's Word (Law) is the Judge, not you (v. 11a)

2. God's Word (Law) is to be obeyed, not replaced (v. 11b)

B. WE ARE FORGETTING THAT GOD IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE (V. 12)

1. He alone has authority to establish the Law ("Lawgiver")

2. He alone has ability to enforce the Law ("Judge")

II. NEVER PLAN APART FROM GOD'S WILL (V. 13 - 17)
(We need to get out of the driver's seat and let God direct our lives!)

3 Questions to Answer:

A. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE? (V. 13 - 14a)

B. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE BREVITY OF LIFE? (V. 14b)

C. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES? (V. 15-16)

1. When you seek God's will, it shows your dependence upon God (v. 15)
2. When you don't seek God's will, it shows your arrogance against God (v. 16)

Conclusion: V. 17

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INTRO: Note previous context of worldliness (v. 1-10). The religion of worldliness is basically "humanism" - in which man becomes the measure of all things. He views himself as God. He is not bound by God's laws, so he thinks he can judge without God. He is not dependent upon God's will, so he thinks he can plan without God. He thinks he can chart the course for his own life and for the lives of others.

Humanistic man (like Satan) is so proud that he basically usurps those prerogatives that belong only to God.

(Today, men are legislating new laws in our country, and trying to throw out the Constitution, which was based on God's laws/principles. Today men think they are God by trying to "create" new life [test-tube babies; cloning, etc.] and by destroying life [ex. abortion]. Today, man wants to be free and easy and come and go as he pleases and be the <u>sole</u> determiner of his future.)

"God is not in all his thoughts" - Ps. 10:4.

Who does little man think that he is (cp. v. 12 - "Who art thou?"), usurping God's job?

ILLUS: how people (in pride and self-exaltation) like to do someone elses' job.

Today the humanistic thinking of this world system has infiltrated the church! When we set ourselves up as judges and as determiners (planners) of our futures.

These functions belong only to God!

It is His job to judge others and direct our lives.

*** <u>DON'T DO GOD'S JOB!</u>**

There are jobs that God has told us to do and some jobs we must never do (because they belong to Him only).

Verses 11 - 17 show <u>two jobs</u> that belong only to God:

I. NEVER JUDGE APART FROM GOD'S WORD (v. 11-12)

(We need to get off the judgment seat and let God's Word do the judging!)

When we confront a lost person about his need of Christ, we are not judging him! God's Word is!

When we confront an erring brother - again, it is God's Word that is doing the judging.

We are commanded by Christ to "judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

Paul said: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Judgment from God's Word (to the person face-to-face) is not wrong--it is commanded! (Matt. 18) What is wrong is your criticizing others behind their back.

"Speak not evil" = lit. don't speak down upon, or speak against.

Refers to "running each other down," critical, derogatory, malicious, harsh, unloving speech about people.

When you backbite, pass on juicy rumors or tantalizing tidbits of gossip, you are doing the Devil`s work for him. (He is the accuser of the brethren - Rev. 12:10).

When you judge without God's Word:

A. WE ARE SETTING OURSELVES UP ABOVE GOD'S WORD (LAW) (v. 11)

1. God's Word (Law) is the Judge, not you (v. 11a)

How do you know when you are judging someone? When you say:

I think that _____ is a _____.
I believe that _____ should be doing _____.
I don't think this _____ is being done right.

You set yourself up above the Law by adding to it your own personal rules. You become a pope and add to Scripture.

"Speaketh evil of the Law" = criticizes the Law (implying that it is not good, and that a new, better Law needs to be enacted).

To tear someone to pieces with words is to break the "royal Law" of Love! (cp. Ja. 2:8; see also Mk. 12:31; Gal. 5:14).

You who break this royal law deceive yourselves into believing that it is a good Law for some people sometimes, but a superior person like yourself cannot be bound to it.

2. God's Word (Law) is to be obeyed, not replaced (v. 11b).

No new laws (legislation) are to be added by you (ex. legalism - "You are not spiritual unless you obey my laws). You must never replace God's Laws (principles) with your own personal judgment.

All we are appliers of God's Laws. We can't make up any laws.

What hypocrisy! To nullify (make void) God's Law by adding your own Laws and replacing God's (the Pharisees did this - Mt. 15:3, 6).

B. WE ARE FORGETTING THAT GOD IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE (v. 12)

1. He alone has authority to establish the Law ("Lawgiver")

God has established the laws of the universe (gravity, etc.), the laws of righteous government (Rom. 13), and the laws which all men are to obey (the Word of God!).

God is the only Lawgiver. Rom. 14:4 & 10 - "Who are you to judge another man's servant" - That man is responsible to his own Master!

2. He alone has ability to enforce the Law ("Judge")

He alone can judge because He alone can save!

When you save someone, then you can talk about them -- Did you die for them!?

Heb. 9:27-28 - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

He alone can judge because He alone can destroy!

The Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22).

"God shall judge the secrets of men" (Ro. 2:16).

The only legitimate judging is God`s Word!

"Who art thou" (v. 12b) = Who do you think you are?

When we condemn others we are saying, "I am the Law."

Who do you think you are? What right do you have to set yourself up as legislator, judge, prosecutor, and chief executioner?

II. NEVER PLAN APART FROM GOD'S WILL (v. 13-17)

(We need to be get of the driver's seat and let God direct your life!)

Just as v. 11-12 did not mean you should never judge, this does not mean that you should not plan. You must! But you should seek God's plans and make them your plans.

(God's will for you is revealed through Scripture, and through His personal working in the details of your life [See Prov. 3:5-6])

The sin described now is planning without God - this is sheer secularistic behavior - it is worldliness!

"Go to now" = come now, listen now.
(Move [change] the way you're thinking)

V. 13 describes a traveling business man, who has all the details of part of his future worked out. He has everything predetermined!

1) He has a predetermined plan - "Today or tomorrow"
2) He has a predetermined place (destination)
   He plans to travel - Do you seek God's will before you decide to move?
3) He has a predetermined period of time
4) He has a predetermined program (he plans what he will do.
   Do you ask God for His will for your career?)
5) He has a predetermined purpose (he plans how much he will prosper.
   Are you dependent on God's will?)

He displays "calculated arrogance" (cp. v. 16). No one can alter his plans - not even God.

3 Questions to Answer:

A. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE <u>UNCERTAINTY</u> OF LIFE? (v. 13-14a)

The language reflects assurance and self-confidence; they assume that the outcome of their plans will occur exactly as planned.

Nothing in the future can be predetermined by you! Jesus said, "Take no thought for the morrow."

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow . . ." (Prov. 27:1)

READ Luke 12:16-20.

We should never make plans and <u>then</u> ask God to bless them!

NOTE: There is a big difference between telling God, "I want to do so and so; please bless my plans." and praying, "What is thy will for me, O Lord? Help me to plan as thou wouldst have me plan, so that I may do thy will." (Colson, p. 73).

B. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER THE <u>BREVITY</u> OF LIFE? (v. 14b)

Vapor = ex. breath appearing momentarily in the cold air; ex. smoke that quickly dissipates; ex. steam from a tea kettle.

Other figures applied to the duration of human life:
"a shadow that declineth" (Ps. 102:11)
"a breath" (Job 7:7)
"the cloud" (Job 7:9)
"grass" (Ps. 103:15)

God tells us to number our days (Ps. 90:12 - "So teach us to number our days--that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom")

If we would remember how short life is, we would put a different priority on our planning (ex. you pack a suitcase differently when you have much time, than you would if there was a fire in your house).

C. WHEN WE MAKE PLANS,
DO WE CONSIDER <u>GOD'S WILL</u> FOR YOUR LIVES? (v. 15-16)

We tend to make our own decisions, then get ourselves in hot water, and expect God to "pay the bill."

People say: I want God's will for every area in my life--and then they are mad, disappointed, etc., when God gives it to them. EX: "I'm willing for God to break up this dating relationship." (yet they are not really) . . . "I am willing to do God's will just as long as it is not _____."

1. When you seek God's will, it shows your <u>dependence</u> upon God (v. 15)

   "If the Lord will" = shows God's <u>sovereignty</u>.

   God alone can make our plans prosperous!

   "If the Lord will" = 2 ideas:

   1) We are saying "If God <u>permits me</u>, I will . . ."
      Acts 18:21 - After going to Jerusalem, Paul said, "I will return again unto you <u>if God will</u> (permit)
      I Cor. 4:19 - "I will come to you shortly <u>if the Lord wills</u>."

   2) We are saying "If God <u>gives me</u> life, strength, opportunity, I will . . ."

   Paul said: "I trust <u>in the Lord</u> that I will come to you shortly" (Phil. 2:19, 24). That is, "if it is the Lord's will."

   We depend upon God for <u>life itself</u> ("we shall live"), and we depend upon Him for <u>ability</u> ("and do this or that")

2. When you don't seek God's will, it shows your <u>arrogance</u> against God (v. 16)

   Such worldly (secular) overconfidence reveals pride and <u>dethrones</u> God out of your life!

   Some wrongly think that the will of God is optional: something they can accept or reject.

It's an obligation! You cannot "take it or leave it"

We say to our children: "Who do you think you are? You need permission from me - I am you dad!" . . . Our lives belong to God (our Father). We are His children (and servants). We are not our own. Therefore we must acknowledge that Christ owns us.

Conclusion: V. 17

Your planning is a moral issue - if you plan wrong (without seeking God for direction), it is sin!

For you to know that you should seek God's will, and for you not to do it, is sin!

Jesus taught that the servant who knows his father's will and does not do it will be punished with a heavy whipping (Lk. 12:47). "To whom much is given . . . much required"

God not only has a plan for the world, He has a plan for your life.

He has a "race marked out for us" to run (Heb. 12:1).

He has "good works prepared in advance" for his "workmanship" to do (Eph. 2:10).

"Too many Christians look upon the will of God as bitter medicine they must take, instead of seeing it as the gracious evidence of the love of God" (Wiersbe, p. 129).

We need more than careful planning; we need prayerful planning.

Have you been doing God's job? Who do we think we are?

Judging others is His job!
Guiding your life is His job!

I. Never judge apart from God's Word

II. Never plan apart from God's Will