"If The Lord Will We Shall Live"

(A Message on the Brevity of Life)
James 4:13-17 & Selected Scriptures
04/04/04

3 Questions to Answer:

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

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

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)

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

In a one word answer, why does God give us time?
Answer: OPPORTUNITY (Eph 5:16)

1. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **Salvation**
   2Pe 3:15; 2Co 6:2
2. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **Wisdom**
   Ps 90:12; Re 1:3
3. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **A Testimony**
   Col 4:5
4. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **Prayer**
   Heb 4:16
5. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **Service**
   Philippians 1:21-25
6. ***God gives us TIME to give us*** **the opportunity for:** **God's Will**
   1Peter 4:2

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Illustration: The Recent tragic deaths of 2 of Katie’s friends (Meghan Osborne and Emily Valentine)

(You 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:

I. WHEN YOU MAKE PLANS,
DO YOU 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).

II. WHEN YOU MAKE PLANS,
DO YOU 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).

III. WHEN YOU MAKE PLANS,
DO YOU CONSIDER <u>GOD'S WILL</u> FOR YOUR LIFE? (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!

Conclusion:

Why be time conscious at all?

Have you ever observed all of the time-related activities/celebrations we partake in?
Examples: Birthdates; Anniversaries; Memorials; Holidays;

It is important to be time-conscious. That is why we have watches; calendars (day-timers); live by schedules; do certain things at certain times of the day;

Certainly, one reason, mankind is so celebratory over the matter of time is simply this: To have the satisfaction of saying within ourselves "I made It!" "I have experienced another year" "I am still alive!" "The Death Reaper didn't get me yet!"

But should there be more to the extention of time than to merely have the satisfaction of saying "I made It another year"? Shouldn't there be a grander purpose to the time we are alloted?

In a one word answer, why does God give us time?

Answer: OPPORTUNITY

God gives us time to give us OPPORTUNITY

Eph 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

The Bible has a lot to say about time. The word "time" occurs 563 times from Genesis to Revelation. (In the KJV)

Time therefore is important to us, since we live in the realm of time and do so for a very brief time.

1. *God gives us TIME to give us*
the opportunity for: Salvation

2Pe 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;
2Co 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

2. ***God gives us TIME to give us***
the opportunity for: **Wisdom**

Ps 90:12 ¶ So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
Re 1:3 ¶ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

3. ***God gives us TIME to give us***
the opportunity for: **A Testimony**

Col 4:5 ¶ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

4. ***God gives us TIME to give us***
the opportunity for: **Prayer**

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

5. ***God gives us TIME to give us***
the opportunity for: **Service**

Philippians 1:21-25: For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

6. ***God gives us TIME to give us***
the opportunity for: **God's Will**

1Peter 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Application:

We need to make resolutions regarding the above mentioned reasons as to why God gives us time.

Note the resolutions of Jonathan Edwards

Note the resolutions written By A Young African Pastor and Tacked on The Wall of His House

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit Power.
The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line.
The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His.
I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure.
I'm finished and done with my low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

My face is set, by gait is fast, my goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companion few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear.
I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus.
I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me – my banner will be clear.