

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

*Undivided Devotion: The Letter of James*

Jeff Bruce, Lead Pastor

### **How to Make Plans When You're Not in Charge (James 4:13-17)**

#### **1. Planning without God (vv. 13-14, 16)**

*"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? –<sup>14</sup> 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." (vv. 13-14)*

*"As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil." (v. 16)*

#### **2. Planning with God (v. 15)**

*"Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (v. 15)*

#### **Getting Started:**

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. Think of a recent time your plans were disrupted. What happened? How did you respond?

#### **Going Deeper:**

3. Who does James address in this passage (see v. 13)? What socio-economic group did they belong to? How can wealth and upward mobility influence the way we think about the future? How can this pose a spiritual danger to us (see also Luke 12:15-21)?
4. What is James' issue with the people he's addressing? Is planning wrong (see Proverbs 13:11; 21:5; 22:3)? If not, what specifically is James condemning (see v. 16; compare 1 John 2:16)? How is this a further example of "*friendship with the world*" (James 4:4)?
5. How does verse 17 connect to this passage (vv. 13-16)? In context, what is the "*right thing*" to do? Why is the failure to do this "*sin*"? Why is ignoring God in our planning and dreaming such a serious matter?

**Application:**

6. How does Paul model the kind of life James describes in 4:15 (see Acts 18:21; 20:36-38; Romans 1:10; 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 4:19; 16:7)? What can we learn from Paul's example?
7. Jeff listed a number of ways we can be "*practical atheists*" in the way we think about the future. Which of these stood out to you? Why?
8. Jeff talked about God's will of decree and God's will of desire. What's the difference between these two aspects of God's will? How do we take both into account in our planning?
9. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?