

Plan Ahead

James 4:13-17

- James began chapter 4 talking about war with God, and he ended it talking about the will of God. These two subjects are related: When a believer is out of the will of God, he becomes a trouble maker and not a peace maker.
- Example: David committed adultery and brought trouble on to his family and his country. Jonah disobeyed God and almost got a ship full of sailors drowned. In each case there was a wrong attitude towards the will of God.
- Too many Christians look at the will of God as a bitter pill they have to take, instead of seeing it as the gracious evidence of the love of God.
- Example: A teenager once said, "I would give my life to the Lord but I am afraid," The minister asked, "What are you afraid of?" "I'm afraid God will ask me to do something dangerous!" The minister said, "Danger comes outside the will of God." The safest place in the world is right where God wants you!
- So where does the will of God come from??? Answer: THE HEART OF GOD. His will is an expression of His love, so you don't have to be afraid.
- **In this section, James points out three attitudes toward the will of God**
 1. Attitude number one: Ignoring God's Will (4:13-14,16)

- Seems like James was talking to the wealthy business owners. The measured success by how many times they got their own way, but James presented four arguments that revealed the foolishness of ignoring the will of God.

1. Argument number one: The complexity of life (v.13)

- Think of all that is involved in life: Today, tomorrow, buying, selling, getting, gaining, losing, going here, going there. Life is made up of people, places, activities, and goals, days and years, and each of us has to make crucial decisions day after day.
- Apart from the will of God, life is a mystery. When you know Jesus as Savior of your life and want to do his will then life starts to make sense.

2. Argument number two: The uncertainty of life (v.14)

- These business men were making plans for a whole year when they couldn't see ahead into one day! Check out their attitudes: We will go here, we will stay there, and we will buy, sell and make a profit.
- Life is not uncertain to God, but it is uncertain to us. Only when we are in His will can we be confident about tomorrow, because we know that He is leading us!!

3. Argument number three: The briefness of life (v.14)

- To us life is long and we measure it by years, but in compared to eternity, life is but a vapor. James borrowed that phrase from Job. Job says, “Our day upon the earth are a shadow,”
- We count our years by our birthdays, but God tells us to number our days.
- God reveals His will in His Word, and yet most people ignore the Bible. In the Bible, God gives precepts, principles, and promises that guide us through every area of life.

4. The forth argument is: The frailty of man (v.16)

- Man’s boasting only covers up their weakness. Man cannot control future events. He has neither the wisdom to see the future nor the power to control the future.
- How foolish it of us to ignore the will of God. It’s like going through the rainforest with NO guide!! Or going out into the open sea with NO compass!!!
- **The second attitude toward the will of God is: Disobeying God’s will (17)**
- These people know the will of God but choose to disobey it. This attitude expresses more pride that does ignoring God’s will, because this person says to God, “I know what you want me to do but I prefer not to do it.”
- Why do people who know the will of God deliberately disobey it? I already gave you one reason; Pride. Another reason is man’s ignorance of the nature of God’s will.

- Some act as though the will of God is something we can accept or reject. In reality, the will of God is not an option; it's an obligation. To treat the will of God lightly is to invite the discipline of God in our lives.
- Many of us have it wrong; we think the will of God is a formula for misery. Just the opposite is true! It's disobeying the will of God that brings misery!
- So what happens to Christians who deliberately disobey the known will of God? They are disciplined by the Father. Gods discipline is an evidence of His love not hatred.
- Disobeying Gods will today may not seem to be a serious thing, but it will appear very serious when the Lord returns and examines our works.
- **The third and last attitude toward the will of God is: Obedience to Gods will (15).**
- "If the Lord will" is not just a statement on believer's lips; it's a constant attitude of his heart. "My food," Jesus said, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."
- Everything in the universe operates according to laws. Take flight for example. The engineer that builds the plane has to obey the laws of aerodynamic in order to build a plane that functions properly. The pilot is schooled in these laws and operated within them to make flight possible. To disobey the laws that govern flight, the results will be a big crash and a loss of life and money.
- People who keep asking, how do I know the will of God for my life? First you start with the things you know you ought to do. Then God opens the way for the next step. We learn from both successes and failures.

- What are the benefits of doing the will of god? For one thing you enjoy a deeper relationship with Jesus. And how about seeing your prayers get answered? There is nothing worse than praying the wrong thing because you are not in the will of God.
- So which of these attitudes do you have towards the will of God? Do you totally ignore God's will as you make your daily plans and decisions? Or do you know God's will and refuse to obey it? Each of these attitudes is wrong and will bring sorrow and ruin to the believer who ignores it.
- But the Christian who knows, loves, and obeys the will of God will enjoy God's blessing. His very food will be the will of God.