

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
3RD-5TH GRADE
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 9

James 4:13-17



If the Lord Wills...

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To teach the importance of submitting all of our plans and desires to the Lord.

Key Verses

James 4:13-17—Main Teaching Passage

Proverbs 16:9

1 Peter 1:24

Memory Verse - Proverbs 16:9

"A man's heart plans his way,
But the Lord directs his steps."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, James 4:12.

Ask the kids what their plans are for summer vacation. Have them share about what they are looking forward to the most.

Now ask how they would feel if something happened that prevented them from going on that vacation. Would they be upset?

Show them that just because we make plans doesn't mean that we will get to do those things. Only God knows the future, so only He knows what the best plans are for our lives.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In the final section of James 4 we read about the war that takes place between the plans that we have for our lives and the plans that the Lord has. We are told that we should be wary of being too attached to our plans, of saying that “in the next 5 years I am going to...” because in all honesty, we have no idea of what is going tomorrow, let alone five years from now. Instead of making up our minds and committing to our plans, we should seek the Lord’s will for our lives. The underlying thought is clear: the Lord’s plans are better than ours, so if His desires for our lives are different than ours, we should be willing to submit to whatever He has for us.

In verse 14, we are reminded that our lives are fleeting and finite. 1 Peter 1:24 says, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall.” We only have a short time in this world to do our utmost for the Lord. We should be very careful to be about His business, and letting Him order our steps.

Chapter 4 finishes by summarizing all of the instructions we have received so far into one easy verse. “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” If you know what is right, and you don’t do it, then it is as bad as if you had broken the law.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK

It is fun to make plans for the future. You and your family might enjoy planning out your summer vacation every year. You might look forward to a birthday party that your friend is having, or going to a movie that you have been looking forward to. It is important to make plans and to work toward those things.

James 4, however, tells us that once we have made our plans, we have to hold on to them very gently. You and I don’t know what will happen tomorrow, so the pool party you were going to might get canceled because of a lightning and thunder storm, or you might have to miss a vacation because someone gets sick.

There is only one being in the universe that knows the future. The Bible says that God “sees the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10). God does know what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, and next year. This means that He doesn’t make plans that are bad or wrong. As we have already seen in James chapter 4, everything that comes from God is good, including His plans.

LOOK (Continued)

Did you know that God has made plans for *you* and *your life*? Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” God has made plans for your life, and His plans are good, designed to give you a future and a hope! Your plans are faulty, changeable, and oftentimes they are harmful. God’s plans are better than your plans!

So when something doesn’t go our way, we should be careful to remember that God knows better than we do. We should be willing to set our plans aside and trust that He knows what He is doing. This is incredibly important because, as we read in verse 14, our lives are very short. We only have a limited amount of time to do our very best for the Lord. So if God’s plans are the best, and He wants us to do certain things before our short time on earth is over, we should always be seeking to put His will before our own.

Finally, the chapter finishes by saying that if we know what to do, and we don’t do it, then we are in sin. Normally when we think about sin, we think about laws that we have broken. This verse, however, tells us that doing nothing can be sinful too. If you know the right thing to do and don’t do it, then you have, in effect, done the wrong thing.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Proverbs 16:9.

Ask the kids: “Are their ways of knowing what God wants us to do?” and “What are some things that God wants you to do in your life?”

Pray: Ask the Lord to make His will for the kids’ lives known. Ask for ears to hear what He is saying to all of us. Thank Him that He has plans for our lives and that those plans are for our good.

Parent Question: Why can we trust that God’s plans for our lives are better than our plans?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on James 4:13-17 by David Guzik

A humble dependence on God.

1. (13-16) A caution against an attitude of independence from God.

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

a. You who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”: James rebuked the kind of heart that lives and makes its plans apart from a constant awareness of the hand of God, and with an underestimation of our own limitations (you do not know what will happen tomorrow).

i. “This was the custom of those ancient times; they traded from city to city, carrying their goods on the backs of camels. The Jews traded thus to Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea, Crete, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, &c. And it is to this kind of itinerant mercantile life that St. James alludes.” (Clarke)

ii. This attitude that James challenged goes far beyond making wise plans for the future. “Not, let us go, but, we will go, in the indicative mood; noting the peremptoriness of their purposes, and their presuming upon future times and things, which were not in their power.” (Poole)

iii. “Notice, that these people, while they thought everything was at their disposal, used everything for worldly objects. What did they say? Did they determine with each other ‘We will to-day or to-morrow do such and such a thing for the glory of God, and for the extension of his kingdom’? Oh, no, there was not a word about God in it, from beginning to end!” (Spurgeon)

iv. “There are two great certainties about things that shall come to pass – one is that God knows, and the other is that we do not know.” (Spurgeon)

b. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away: James asked us to consider the fragility of human life, and the fact that we live and move only at the permission of God. James does not discourage us from planning and doing, only from planning and doing apart from reliance on God.

i. The idea that our life was a vapor or shadow was a frequent figure of speech in the Old Testament (Psalm 102:11; Job 8:9; 1 Chronicles 29:15).

ii. We also remember the story Jesus told about the rich man who made his great plans for the future, and foolishly lost it all when his soul was required of him (Luke 12:16-21). “They might easily observe that many things fall out betwixt the cup and the lip, betwixt the chin and the chalice.” (Trapp)

iii. "There are a thousand gates to death; and, though some seem to be narrow wickets, many souls have passed through them. Men have been choked by a grape stone, killed by a tile falling from the roof of a house, poisoned by a drop, carried off by a whiff of foul air. I know not what there is that is too little to slay the greatest king. It is a marvel that man lives at all." (Spurgeon)

iv. Knowing that life is short, we must be diligent and energetic about the common duties of everyday life. "It is sinful to neglect the common duties of life, under the idea that we shall do something more by-and-by. You do not obey your parents, young man, and yet you are going to be a minister, are you? A pretty minister will you make! As an apprentice you are very dilatory and neglectful, and your master would be glad to see the back of you; he wishes that he could burn your indentures; and yet you have an idea you are going to be a missionary, I believe? A pretty missionary you would be!" (Spurgeon)

c. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." It is nothing but sheer arrogance that makes us think that we can live and move and have our being independent of God. This boastful arrogance is the essence of sin: a proud independence, the root of all sin, as was the case with Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15) and Adam (Genesis 3:5-7).

i. Paul knew and lived this principle: I will return again to you, God willing (Acts 18:21). But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills (1 Corinthians 4:19). I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits (1 Corinthians 16:7).

ii. "All such boasting, when life is so precarious, is worse than absurd, it is wicked, a positive sin, a specimen of the ungodly haughtiness (James 4:6) of which men should repent." (Moffatt)

iii. You boast in your arrogance: "The word is alazoneia. Alazoneia was originally the characteristic of the wandering quack. He offered cures which were no cures and boasted to things that he was not able to do." (Moffatt)

2. (17) A challenge to live according to what we know in the Lord.

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

a. To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin: James knows that it is far easier to think about and talk about humility and dependence on God than it is to live it. Yet he makes the mind of God plain: as we know these things, we are accountable to do them.

i. Here James returned to his consistent theme through his letter: the idea that genuine faith is proved by action. "However high and orthodox our view of God's law might be, a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not in fact put much store by it." (Moo)

ii. Yet we also see that the uncertainty of life, to which James referred to in the previous passage, should not create fear that makes one passive or inactive. The uncertainty of life should make us ready to recognize what is good and then do it. "This uncertainty of life is not a cause either for fear or inaction. It is always a reason for realizing our complete dependence on God." (Moffatt)

b. To him it is sin: Jesus told a story with much the same point in Luke 12:41-48. The story was about servants and how they obeyed the master in the master's absence. Jesus concluded the story with this application: For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:48). Greater light gives greater responsibility.