



PV Household Worship

May 7-12, 2018

❖ **Daily Memory Verse: James 4:14**

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.

❖ **Song:** Christ The Sure and Steady Anchor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eD9FiYCLKDM>

Monday, May 7, "If we are prepared to die, we are prepared to live." Read James 4:12-17

James 4:13, 14 says, "*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"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.*" Did you ever hear about Dr. Stuart Berger, a nutritionist, who claimed that he had the formula for living past the century mark? Although he had supposedly found the secret of youthfulness and had convinced many to follow his advice, he died in his sleep at the age of 40, grossly overweight. How about Magazine publisher J. I. Rodale? He was a zealous advocate of health foods who claimed at the age of 72 that he would live to be 100. The same week that his prediction appeared in The New York Times, he was being interviewed for a television program, again claiming that his bones were as strong as ever. Moments after making his boast, he died of a heart attack. And then there was author Jim Fixx, who promoted a regular jogging routine in order to prevent coronary trouble. Yet at the age of 52 he died of a heart attack—yes, ironically, while running. It really is quite arrogant to boast and make our own plans apart from recognizing and trusting God with the number of our days. Yes we ought to take every possible measure to keep ourselves healthy. But in the final analysis, each of us must pray, "I trust in You, O Lord . . . My times are in Your hand" Any day, even today, may be our final day on earth; we need to be sure that we are ready to depart. Are you?

- What does the word "sovereign" mean? (look it up in a dictionary)
- What does James 4:15, 16 say about God's sovereignty? Do these verses bring you peace or worry? Why?
- Memory Verse James 4:14
- Prayer: Father, help me to understand that You alone are sovereign and my life is in Your hands.

Tuesday, May 8, "He alone has our Life in His hands." Read James 4:12-17

James 4:14 says, "*What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.*" Novelist Bret Lott received two life-changing phone calls on the same day. The first told him that one of his most promising writing students had died unexpectedly from a brain aneurysm. The second call came several hours later from a popular television talk show host telling Lott that one of his novels had been picked for a monthly on-air book club. This meant instant celebrity status and financial success. The first call was sobering, the second was exciting. Change can come quickly! Lott, a Christian, took a thick black marker and wrote the deceased student's name on a white index card and carried it with him for quite awhile. He kept the index card in his pocket to remind him not to let the fame go to his head. James compares our life to "*a mist or s vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.*" Instead of being driven by our success today we should remember that our time is in God's hands and each day is a gift from Him. If you know Jesus, one day God will call on you

to be with Him. Knowing this should give us humility and perspective on every phone call that comes our way. To make the most of today, always do what you do with God's Sovereignty in mind. He alone has our Life in His hands.

- Why do you think James says our life is like a mist or vapor?
- Who is the oldest person you know? Who is the youngest person you knew who died?
- Where is the balance in planning ahead wisely, and foolishly presuming on God?
- Memory Verse James 4:14
- Prayer - Father, fill me with Your Spirit and make my life matter for Your glory.

Wednesday, May 9, "So, is it wrong to plan for the future?" Read James 4:12-17

James 4:15 says, *"Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'*" The people to whom James was writing were making plans while excluding God's plans and purposes to direct their lives. So, is it wrong to plan for the future? Of course not. It is foolish, however, to forget that God may and usually will allow some "uncontrollable unexpected" events as He sees fit. As Jesus' followers, we must recognize that there are things in life that are the "uncontrollable unexpected." James reminds us that any view of the future that omits God is foolish and proud. I've heard people from time to time use the phrase *"Lord willing."* The phrase may have lost its meaning, but the certainty of God's overruling hand should not. As we look ahead with God firmly in view, we can face the future with confidence in His loving plan. Ultimately, all that happens to us is for the best—even when it's hard to go through. We must trust Him and His plans for our future. Poet A. Smith writes, *"I know who holds the future, And I know who holds my hand; With God things don't just happen— Everything by Him is planned."* We may not know what the future holds, but we can trust the One who holds the future.

- Where is the right balance between knowing that life is a vapor versus not becoming fearful and depressed about it one day ending on earth?
- What do you think James is meaning when he says, *"Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'*"
- Memory Verse James 4:14
- Prayer - Father, every breath, every heartbeat, and every movement is a gift from You. Help me to love and glorify You for as many days as You give me here on earth!

Thursday, May 10, "If The Lord Wills" Read James 4:12-17

James 4:15, 16 says, *"You ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil."* Every year Lake Superior State University publishes a list of words they believe should be banished because of their "over-use". Topping the list are the words *"selfie"* (a term that received more nominations than any other), *"twerking"*, and *"hashtag"*. This list of words is a reminder that language is always changing and can persuade, impress, or annoy us. What words would you like to banish from your life? If James were to make a list, it's likely he would include *presumptuous, arrogance, and self-confidence*. After he encourages believers to draw near to God and not to judge others, James presents the following characteristics of a prideful person who's far from God: He's *self-assertive*. *"Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year."* He's *self-centered*. *"We will do business there and make a profit."* He's a *presumptuous* man who couldn't possibly know what the future holds. His *boastful* self-confidence clouds the reality that his life is limited and he is not really in control. Only as we humble ourselves

before God and recognize that He alone summons the number of our days will we experience godly peace and joy.

- Do you agree with the saying "we should live every day as if it is our last?" Why or why not?
- Why is it arrogant to make our plans apart from seeking God? Why does James say that this is "evil boasting"?
- Memory Verse James 4:14
- Prayer - Father, help me not to presume on You or the future plans You have for me. Help me to quickly and humbly surrender my plans if they are not Your plans.

Friday, May 11, "Transformed or transformational?" Read James 4:12-17

James 4:17 says, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." Sometimes some of the greatest nuggets in God's Word are hidden in plain sight, yet other times they're tucked away and preserved for a specific time and reason. We hear much taught on the subject of committing sin (the act of commission), but we don't hear as often about the sin of "omission." James defines this principle very simply. When God tells us to do something that is good, and we choose to not to do it, then the good that we don't do becomes sin to us. In the busyness of life, our priorities can seem to be so appropriate and necessary. So much so, with our to-do lists directly in front of us, we lose perspective. We become unable to see anything beyond the list on the page. For the believer, though, living a full life goes far beyond any "to-do list" of things to clean, things to fix, new hobbies or dream vacations. Knowing we were made for God and eternity should shape our present days so that our lives are not only transformed, but *transformational*. What about God's list? What about His plans? To know them and not do them is sin. We need "to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in God's wisdom and make every day count for His glory.

- Explain James 4:17 in your own words?
- Is your "to-do" list made up of things you want to accomplish or things the Lord has called you to do? How can we discern the difference?
- Memory Verse James 4:14
- Prayer – Lord, pour out Your grace and help me to do the "right" things that bring glory to You.

Saturday, May 12, Read James 5:1-6

Review memory verse.

Prayer: Father, make us ready to hear your Word. Reveal your truth to our hearts. Give us grace to listen and obey. Bind the enemy of our souls and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Give us joy as we meet with your people for doctrine, prayer, and worship.