

April 27, 2025 - James 4:13-17 - Beware of Presumptuous Planning"

Introduction:

"Drill, Baby, Drill" has become synonymous with President Trump's plan to boost fossil fuel production. He has expressed a desire to increase oil drilling on public lands, offer tax breaks to the oil, gas and coal producers as well as expedite the approval of natural gas pipelines. I as a believer and student of the Word of God don't believe with today's technologies that it will lead to global warming and the destruction of the planet. However, big oil needs to be careful and cautious in its attempt to pull these resources from the earth.

Case in point...In November of 1980 the Texaco Corporation using the very latest and best equipment, set about drilling for oil at Lake Peignoir (*pen weir*) in Louisiana. The company boasted about the millions of gallons they would reap and the huge fortune the enterprise would make.

"After a few hours of drilling they sat back expecting oil to shoot up and the profits to come rolling in. Instead, they watched a whirlpool form, sucking down not only the entire lake of 1,300 acre, but also 5 houses, 9 barges, 8 tugboats, 2 oil rigs, a mobile home, most of a botanical garden and 10% of nearby Jefferson Island, leaving a half mile wide crater. No one knew that there was an abandoned salt mine underneath. "A local fisherman said he thought the world was coming to an end." This illustrates the wisdom that God gave through Solomon. **Proverbs 27:1; "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."**

There is this commercial it's just a commercial but it does reflect the presumption of our culture. A 62 year old retired lady boast, "I have a good long life ahead to enjoy my retirement and then she speaks of the insurance coverage she has. That is good but the boasting is very presumptuous. James in verses 14-17 deals with living by the will of God and begins with...

I Warning of Presumptuous Planning. Vv. 13

1. James chapter four pictures a typical Jewish Merchant, making resolutions for the next year. "James concludes by saying in verse sixteen, that boastful resolutions are "evil." You might say, "What is wrong with making plans? Planning is great, but presumptuous planning, projection and counting on the future is always folly. Jesus gave us a wonderful example of this exact

thing. The parable that Jesus taught deals with this kind of presumption.

Luke 12:16-21

2. Notice that James does not find fault with planning, we have all heard, "Fail to plan, plan to fail." The fault that James finds with this man plans is that he left God out of the equation. James warning is against an arrogant attitude in planning on the basis of profitability.

The merchant in James 4 assumed he could plan unconditionally. In planning the next year's itinerary he acted arrogantly as though he himself were in control of the future. When dealing with the future, which is what planning is all about, God expects us to acknowledge the fact that He alone is in control of the future.

Too many of us are setting ourselves up today concerning tomorrow, so that when tomorrow gets here we are totally disillusion and shattered because today's plans, today's dream does not become tomorrow's reality.

3. No one except God really knows what the future holds and we would do well not to count tomorrow as fact. (Church sign) God gives us only the grace sufficient for today. It may be God's plan to take us home either in the rapture or by death. Someone once said, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present! James next expounds on this truth in verse #14 as he reminds his readers to...

II Consider the Brevity of Life – vv. 14

1) James said, "life is like a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. The Greek word for vapor is "Atmis" it refers to a mist or puff of smoke. Because life is short, we ought to plan beyond the parameters of this life. We ought to plan for eternity. This is a repeated Biblical theme: Job said, "For we *are but of yesterday*, and know nothing, because our days upon earth *are a shadow*:") Job 8:9

2) Life's plans are always tentative. Things happen that we don't plan on. Sometimes the weather doesn't even cooperate with us. We cannot control the day before us.

9/11 taught us this very disturbing truth... Therefore, our life is entirely in God's hands. Nobody plans for the hardships, trials, illness etc. The Lord

may allow something of this nature to teach us, mold us and make us what He wants us to be. If we make our plans with-out God in mind then when things don't go our way we can become angry with God and dishearten about the future.

Illustrations:

One of the greatest painters of all time was the Italian artist called Raphael (1483-1520) Sanzio. When his short life ended at age 37, his half-finished masterpiece, "The Transfiguration," was carried in his funeral procession as a symbol of life's incompleteness and brevity. Since James brings his readers to the realization of this truth when he teaches that the best approach is ...

III Providential Planning vv.15 -17

1) It is planning that says, "I will do such and such if God wills." James "if" (v.15) is vital; it makes all the difference. It isn't the "if" of doubt, concern or fear. Rather it is the "if" of confident reliance on benevolent wisdom of a sovereign God who promised to work out everything for your good. This is the "if" that removes all others. It is the one that takes worry away and points to the kindness of an all-powerful God. The person who plans with God rejoices in the assurance that the expert Planner is at work alongside and plans "Lord willing."

2) In order to plan providentially you must have a proper perspective of life. Careful planning is important but it is foolish to plan without God. When dealing with the future, which is what planning is all about. Failure to recognize God's providence as the all-important factor in planning reveals an arrogant attitude. That is what we see in this passage. God expects us to acknowledge the fact that He alone is in control of the future. He is sovereign!

3) Verse 17 is a truism or an axiom, "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" Here is the person who believes in God and believes God is supreme and knows God has a will and just doesn't do it. What is implied here in not doing what you know you ought to do, it is the fact that you went ahead and did what you ought not to do.

Conclusion:

Doing the will of God is another test of living faith it's another way to examine your heart to see if you're genuinely God's child." Is it your strong desire to do God's will?