

LESSON 10
TALKING ABOUT TOMORROW
JAMES 4:13–17



1 Think back to grade school. What did you want to be when you grew up?

2 What dreams do you have for the next five to ten years?



Read James 4:13–17 and the following notes:

☐ 4:13–16 ☐ 4:14 ☐ 4:17

3 What is the attitude behind the quote in 4:13? When have you recently heard someone talk like this?

4 For what reason is a self-reliant approach to life foolish?

5 The general statement about sins of omission in 4:17 is important on its own. How does it relate to planning for the future and boasting about tomorrow?

6 Why do Christians sometimes boast, brag, and make plans for their lives and work and yet give no thought of God?



Many people say they believe in God but are really practical atheists. In the way they approach basic decisions and plan for the future, they live as if God didn't exist. They take no account of God's sustaining care or grace; they act as if they are self-sufficient and in control; and they take credit for all the good things they experience. Listening to them speak or watching them work, one would have no idea that God is a factor in their life. James, in his usual candid way, simply calls this attitude foolish, sinful, and evil. How much better to actively recognize God's right to order and direct our life as he pleases. If you have given your life to Christ, have you also given him your future?

7 Self-reliance and independence rightfully belong to God alone. Why do believers, and churches for that matter, so often want to take matters into their own hands?

8 Give some examples of planning or talking about the future in a way that leaves God out of the picture.



9 What are some past decisions in either your personal life or the life of your church where you now wonder whether God was left out of the picture?

10 Some people forget about God when it comes to financial planning. When do you tend to leave God out of the picture?

11 We have all heard people boast about their future plans. When are you most tempted to boast? What might you be trying to gain through this?

12 What causes you to set goals and plan for the future with little regard for God?

13 What personal warning signs indicate you are leaving God out of the picture? In what situations should you be alert to this?

14 How is it possible to plan and set specific goals for the future so that God is pleased and honored?

15 When do you next expect to be talking about your plans for the future (with spouse, friends, or coworkers)? How will you avoid boasting and leaving God out of the picture?

16 Determine how you can answer the question of what you are going to do next week or next year. Some people say, “God willing . . .” and others say, “If the Lord wills. . . .” What is a natural way for you to bring God into your plans?

A How is Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42–44) a model for submissive, believing prayer about the future?

B When can praying “If it is your will” indicate an unbelieving or weak attitude? What is the relationship between boldness and submission in your prayers?

C James teaches the general principle that whoever knows what to do and doesn’t do it sins. Sins of omission need to be forgiven as much as sins of commission. In what areas of your life are you failing to do what you should?



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