

James 4:13-17

Introduction: Another test in our text of genuine saving faith, is one who desires to do God's will. There are many fruits of true repentance in the epistle of James. Today's text gives us the proof of a desire to do God's will in our life.

Psalms 40:8 **"I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."** Psalms 143:10a **"Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me..."** Mark 3:35 **"For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."** John 7:17 **"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself."** In Matthew 7:21 we find this sobering warning, **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*."** 1 Peter 4:2 **"So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."**

The greatest example of God's will is Jesus Himself. In John 6:38 He describes the Messianic mission, **"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."** Jesus explained to His shortsighted disciples in John 4:34 **"...My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."** And of course, in the most pressing and powerful moment in the Garden, enduring human affliction He said, Matthew 26:39 **"And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."**

True Christians are characterized by doing the will of God. Ephesians 6:6 **"Not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."** And in the Lord's prayer, **"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."** The words of the hymn *"Have Thine Own Way Lord"* should be reflective in every believers life:

Have Thine own way Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter;
I am the clay.
Mold me and make me
After Thy Will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.
-Adelaide A. Pollard

On the other hand a disregard for the will of God or disinterest in His will is a certain mark of pride, that ugly underlying sin which produces worldliness, slander, immoral behavior and other hideous sins, cf. James 4:1-12.

I. THE FOOLISHNESS OF IGNORING GOD'S WILL - VS. 13-14

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1. The words “Come Now” are insistent, even a brash call for attention. It means “listen up” or “get this.” Isaiah 1:18 **“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.”**
2. The Greek construct of the word literally reads *“the ones who are saying.”* This indicates people were habitually living without regard for God’s will.
3. Planning and being successful at making money is not a sin. This was common place in those James was writing too. James’ rebuke was those who habitually think through and articulate their plans as if God did not exist or care, cf. James 4:11-12 (they often placed themselves in the place of God as the judge).
4. The problem wasn’t in the planning, it was in the absence of God in their agenda.

II. THE FOOLISHNESS OF BEING SELF CENTERED IN THIER PLANS - VS. 13

1. The same principal is that of Satan in Isaiah 14:13-14
2. There are also five presumptions the man makes without regard to God in his plans
 - 2.1. They chose their own time, today or tomorrow
 - 2.2. They chose their own location, do business in such and such city
 - 2.3. They chose their own duration, spend a year there
 - 2.4. They chose their enterprise, engage in business
 - 2.5. They chose their own goal, to make a profit
3. The problem with all of this is they planned as if they were sovereign and invulnerable, cf. Luke 12:13-21

III. THE FOOLISHNESS OF LEAVING GOD OUT OF YOUR PLANS - VS. 14

1. You don’t know what your life will be life tomorrow. Proverbs 27:1 **“Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.”** Life is full of trials and a matrix of forces, events, people and circumstances of which we have little or no control over. It is therefore impossible to plan as if it were guaranteed. (Personal plans and illustrations)
2. For the Christian we have the comfort of knowing that God is omniscient, omnipotent and sovereign and is working all things out, cf. Romans 8:28. In Psalms 37:3-5 **“Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart.”** Proverbs 3:5-6 **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.”**
3. Another reason for those who leave God out of their plans is the brevity of life. You are just a vapor, which is literally a puff of smoke or steam from a cup of coffee. How foolish in light of the brevity of life to plan without God. The Bible repeatedly stresses the shortness of human life, cf. Job 7:6,9; 8:9; 9:25-26; 14:1-2

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IV. BOASTING IN ARROGANCE IS EVIL

1. Boasting means "to be loud mouthed" or "to speak loudly" 1 Corinthians 1:19 **"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."**
2. The word arrogance comes from a root word meaning "to wander about" and reflects an empty pretense. This word was used to describe charlatans who traveled around selling phony goods. cf. Isaiah 47:7-15

V. DO THE RIGHT THING AS YOU LIVE

Finally the promised blessing of planning and acknowledging God in those plans.

1. We should say, "if the Lord wills" we will go and do
2. Planning and living in this world with the acknowledgment of God that He is the provider, protector and sustainer, we can say as the Psalmist says, **"Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart"** (Psalms 37:4)
3. By acknowledging God we recognize that He is the central focus to all our plans
4. Paul's response to stay longer at Corinth, **"But taking leave of them and saying, I will return to you again if God wills, he set sail from Ephesus"** (Acts 18:21), **"always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you"** (Romans 1:10), **"and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly"** (Philippians 2:24) and finally in Hebrews 6:1-3 **"Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits."**