

Fleshed Out: A Journey Through the New Testament Letter of James

“Seize the Day”

Discuss

The Bible calls us to have a “vision” for our lives. A plan for the general direction that we would like to go. God even details how it is unhealthy to not consider the consequences of our actions, whether good or bad. Generally, having a plan for what we are trying to accomplish is a good thing, but James gives us a warning about all of our “planning”.

For the Christ follower, we are to make our plans in conjunction with God. James warns us against coming up with plans of our own. Left to our own devices, our plans may be self-centered and outside of God’s will. But if we make plans *with* God, we have a general understanding that our plans are fluid and dependent on God’s guidance. James does not want us to develop “tunnel vision” when it comes to our plans.

“Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.” ([James 4:13-17, NIV](#))

- What are some of the plans that you have for the future? What are some of the activities or experiences you enjoy most?
- What are some of the reasons we should partner with God when we are making plans for the future?
- James is not warning us about planning, he’s warning us about presuming--presuming that we have more control over our lives than we actually do. Are there any areas of your life where you can begin to give more control over to God? What are they?

There are so many things that we cannot do on our own. For example, we cannot make our own heart beat or make blood go through our veins. James lets us know that to take on an attitude of presumption is like bragging about something that you did not do.

He challenges us to see each day, our very next breath and the beat of our heart as a gift from God. We can make plans, but we should do so in humility. No matter what you plan out, make a habit of whispering a prayer to God saying, “If it is your will”.

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- Are you in the habit of seeking God’s will when you make plans?
- Have you ever made a plan, only to have God “call an audible.” How did things turn out?
- When you set up your plans, and it becomes obvious that God is moving you in a different direction, is it difficult for you to accept the new direction He’s leading you towards?

When we come to the end of our lives, what is really important will be very clear. Take a little time and think through some of life’s biggest questions:

- ❖ Who do I love?
- ❖ Who will I miss?
- ❖ What do I want to do during my life?
- ❖ Am I ready for what happens when I die?

While answering these questions, begin to develop a plan for what actions you should take in light of each answer. Invite God to guide your thoughts and let Him know that He can “call an audible” anytime He wants.

Next Steps

When it comes to our relationship with God, we should interact with a spirit of humility. When we are presumptuous about our plans, that sends the opposite message. Begin to say, “Lord willing” when you make plans, not just to say extra words, but as a reminder that we are not making these plans on our own.

August 30: [Money God's Way](#)

September 1 : [The Ground Online Book Club: “A Voice in the Wind”](#)

September 1: [REALIFE High School Kickoff](#)

Daily: [Training Camp](#)

Continued Reading

Read: [Proverbs 3:5-6, Msg](#)

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Prayer

God,

I know there are things that are outside of my control. When I make plans, I know that I still need your help and guidance. My life is yours, and you can come in and direct me as you see fit. I pray for a clear vision for my life, and the ability to take steps towards the vision. Lead and guide me Lord.

Amen.