

# HOW TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE Text: James 4:13-17

## *While Living on the Edge of Eternity*

1. **As we begin a new year 2026 – it is natural to make plans...**
    - a. but even as we make plans, we don't know what the future holds...
    - b. And it is impossible to predict all that life will bring.
  2. **But God has given us wisdom and instructions in His word—  
on the Right Way and Wrong Way to plan for the Future.**
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## **I. THE WRONG WAY: Trusting in Self (James 4:13-17)**

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### **A. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIFE**

1. **James is talking about the normal responsibilities of life**
  - a) Working, Planning, Engaging in Business, Making a Living...
  - b) Paul made Tents... Lydia was a merchant – a seller of purpled dyed clothing...
  - c) Some were fishermen... some shepherds... or scribes...
  - d) These are all the normal responsibilities of life...
2. **James is not condemning our Normal Responsibilities of Life**
  - a) It is good for us to work hard—We are commanded to support ourselves...  
and our families... and to help others in need...
  - b) It is good to plan—We are called to make wise decisions
3. **This is not a criticism of working, planning or living...  
but of the arrogance of living life w/ no consideration of God or eternity.**

### **B. THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE FUTURE**

1. **We cannot know what the future holds (v.14a)**
2. **Our life is like a vapor... (v.14b) We ALL Live on the edge of eternity!**
3. **Did you know your grandparents? Great-Grandparents? Great-Great?**
4. **Dad said in a sermon: in 4 generations no one will even know who we were**

### **C. THE WRONG WAY TO MAKE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

1. **With PRESUMPTION (vv. 13–15).**
  - a) The presumption of assuming we can live and plan our lives without God
  - b) This was the parable of the Rich Fool—the farmer who had a windfall year and decided to build bigger barns (**Lk 12:16-20**).
  - c) It is not a sin to be successful – it is a sin to ignore God.
2. **With ARROGANT BOASTING (v. 16).**
  - a) This Greek word for someone who boasts of things he is unable to do
  - b) Like people who think they can control the future—but can't control themselves.
  - c) This is Boasting in SELF — While Ignoring GOD
  - d) **Example: Jim Hoff used to tell the story of a man he worked with who was constantly boasting about how he was going to retire in Mexico...**

### 3. **With the sin of OMISSION (v. 17).**

- a) Usually we think of the sin of commission: that is committing a sin
  - b) We tend to forget the sin of Omission: Refusing to do what is right & commanded
  - c) **Parable of the Talents**... 1 man is given 5 talents, another 2, another was given 1
  - d) but he went and buried the talent and then blamed the master! (Mt 25:19-30)
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## II. THE RIGHT WAY: Trusting in God (Proverbs 3:5-7)

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### (1) **TRUST IN THE LORD (3:5)**

1. **Some people put more trust in News Anchors or Social Media Influencers...**
  - a) More Trust in Politicians or the Stock Market than they put in God!
2. **God knows the end from the beginning... But We don't.**
3. **To Trust God Means We Put Our Faith in Him –**  
– That We Trust His Word and His Promises.

### (2) **WITH ALL YOUR HEART (3:5)**

1. **Not just a cold, intellectual faith—but a deep Whole Hearted Faith...**
2. **A childlike confidence in our Father's wisdom, faithfulness, and love.**
3. **Ex: When the disciples were caught in a storm on the sea of Galilee**  
**They saw Jesus walking on the water in the storm!**
4. **Peter showed great faith when He stepped out of the boat into the wind and waves and walked on water... But then he looked down and doubted – He took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink**

### (3) **DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING (3:5)**

1. The Hebrew word here Lean is not 'incline', but to 'support yourself',  
Meaning: Don't depend or rely on your own understanding
2. This requires humility (Proverbs 14:16, 12)
3. It also requires wisdom (Proverbs 12:15; 24:6)

### (4) **IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM (3:6)**

1. **It means more than just believing in the existence of God...**  
—Even the demons believe and tremble (James 2:19)
2. **'In All Your Ways' Acknowledge Him**
  - a) not just in worship on Sunday
  - b) not just in times of Crisis or hardship
3. **It means To walk with God, and Honor God in all that we do.**
  - a) To "invite" Him into your everyday life & decisions—
  - b) To talk w/ Him throughout the day

### (5) **HE WILL DIRECT YOUR PATHS (3:6)**

1. **GOD DIRECTS US THROUGH HIS WORD: (Ps 119:11, 105)**

- a) God has given us His word for this very purpose!
- b) As a lamp unto our feet to guide us and direct our path.

**2. GOD ANSWERS PRAYER: (1 John 5:14–15)**

- a) God Direct Our Path When We Follow His Word—
- b) And He Also Answers Our Prayers According to His Will

**3. PROVIDENCE: (Romans 8:28) At times God opens doors and closes doors**

- a) **Joseph** had to have wondered why his life had to take such a tragic turn...
- b) He was hated, sold as a slave, falsely accused, ended up in an Egyptian prison
- c) He had to Trust in God—Even though it didn't make sense. **[LIST]**

**(6) DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES (3:7)**

**“The most misleading way to feel wise is to feel superior.” (Derek Kinder)**

**1. It is God who is the source all Truth and Wisdom...**

- a) Truth is not derived from Culture—or from the inner self
- b) True Wisdom is from above – It is from God and leads us back to God

**2. A historian who was reflecting on the early explorers wrote...**

- a) **“The greatest obstacle to discovering the shape of the earth, the continents and the ocean was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>**

**3. What they thought they knew—was not actually true.**

- a) Many of the great discoveries of the world would've happened much earlier if it was not for mistaken theories and the 'illusion of knowledge.'

**(7) FEAR THE LORD AND TURN AWAY FROM EVIL (3:7)**

**1. This is the natural result of trusting God. (Psalm 119:11, 104)**

- a) As we trust Him, we draw near Him and get to know Him better...
- b) Which naturally leads to more reverence and respect.
- c) Which leads us further away from Evil and Toward a much better life!

**2. A Life that is right with God is blessed in all areas of life!**

**Spiritually, Mentally, Emotionally, and Physically**

- a) v.8 The Hebrew Word translated 'Flesh' here is literally the word 'navel' and is usually taken to be the center point of the whole body.

- **A Life of greater peace — spiritual peace that surpasses understanding!**
- **A life of inner-strength — not sick with worry...**
- **A Life of Trusting God — not Discouraged with Doubt.**
- **A Life of Faith, Hope and Love — knowing that God is Faithful**

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. The wrong way to plan for the future is arrogantly trusting in SELF**
- 2. The Right way to plan for the future is to humbly Trust & Obey GOD**
- 3. God will see us through, and carry us through to the end (Phil 1:6)**

<sup>1</sup> The Discoverers, Daniel Boorstin, cited by Gary Henry, Wordpoints.