



HOW TO FACE YOUR FUTURE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to Face Your Future

SERMON REFERENCE: James 4:13-17

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1827

We are a people obsessed with the future; we consume the news, looking for what's in store for us. The only way we can face the future is accepting that God is the only one who knows it.

James 4:13-17 gives an example of a businessman with some very big plans. He knew exactly where he was going, how to get there and how to succeed...at least he thought so.

If we can learn from the three mistakes he made, we can better face the future as individuals, families, and churches.

The businessman's first mistake was godless planning. (See James 4:13-14.)

He has planned out everything: his time frame, the place, his procedure, even the profits he would make. But not once did He seek any guidance from the Lord, or show any reverence toward Almighty God. He didn't take God into consideration at all.

Adrian Rogers says, "The biggest fool is not the man who says there is no God. There's yet a bigger fool: the man who says there is a God, and doesn't live like it."

We must not forget that God has a plan for each of us. How tragic it would be to miss it because we have made idols out of our own plans. We must get sin and stubbornness out of our lives and listen for His voice.

The businessman's second mistake was his dangerous presumption: the promise of tomorrow.

We have been grace sufficient for today's load, not tomorrow's, for a reason. This passage calls life a vapor (James 4:14): it appears for a little while and then vanishes.

We never know when our time is up; today could quite possibly be our last. God alone determines our days.

And finally, we must recognize this businessman's tragic procrastination.

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

You can do wrong by doing wrong, and you can also do wrong by not doing right.

Adrian Rogers says, "The sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission."

The way to face the future is to bring God into our planning, live one day at a time and obey God daily, step-by-step.

Life Application

Have you made some grand plans without the counsel of Almighty God? Ask Him what He would have you do. And worship Him through your obedience.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) People are obsessed with the future.
 - i) We want to know what the future will hold.
- b) Many people make predictions about what the future will be.
 - i) Some bring their intellect and intuition.
 - (1) They talk about what they perceive the future will be.
 - ii) Others are more superstitious.
 - (1) They might look in tea leaves.
 - (2) They may go to an astrologer or to a palm reader who pretends to be able to tell the future.
 - iii) But there is no one who knows the future.
 - (1) Not even the devil knows the future.
- c) Our Lord tells a story through the apostle James about a boastful business man who tried to plan his future.
 - i) James 4:13-17
 - ii) This man made three tragic mistakes in his planning.
 - (1) These are the same mistakes that we can make if we're not careful when we plan for our future.
- d) In today's message, we will look at these three mistakes.

2) THE MISTAKE OF SELFISH PLANNING (JAMES 4:13, 15)

- a) He planned the period of time.
 - i) James 4:13
 - ii) He said, "Shall I do that today, or shall I do that tomorrow?"
- b) He planned the place.
 - i) James 4:13
 - ii) He looked at the demographics and found a good city for his enterprise.
- c) He planned the procedure.
 - i) James 4:13
 - ii) He had an idea, a way that he could make money.
 - (1) He was going to buy and sell.
 - (2) He understood commodities, buying, and selling.
- d) He planned the profit.
 - i) James 4:13
 - ii) He was going to buy and sell to get gain.
- e) The Bible does not condemn planning; the Bible encourages it.
- f) The Bible does not condemn hard work or business; the Bible encourages it.



- g) What had this man done wrong?
 - i) In his whole procedure, there was no reference to God.
 - ii) James 4:15
 - iii) He was not seeking God's will.
 - iv) He was simply seeking his own plans.
- h) Psalm 14:1
 - i) There is a bigger fool than the person who says there is no God.
 - (1) It is the person who says that there is a God but does not live like it.
 - (a) They leave God out of their plans.
- i) James 4:15
 - i) We should be seeking the will of God.
 - ii) When you take the word "live" and turn it around, it spells the word "evil".
 - iii) There is a big "if" in the word "life".
 - (1) We should consider the frailty of life.
 - (2) "If God wills..."
- j) Instead of asking God to bless what we are doing, we need to ask God to help us do what it is that He is blessing.
- k) God has a will for you.
 - i) James 4:15 makes this plain.
 - (1) If God wills something, then we should know the will of God.
 - ii) The following verses clearly teach that God has a plan for you:
 - (1) Psalm 32:8
 - (a) There is a way that you should go.
 - (2) Isaiah 30:21
 - (3) John 16:13
 - (a) We have the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to guide us.
 - (4) Romans 8:14
 - iii) There is no need to flounder around like a ship without a compass.
 - (1) God has a plan for you.
- l) There are three words that will help you to know God's will for your life:
 - i) Confession
 - (1) Get your heart completely clean.
 - (2) When you pray and ask God for wisdom, pray with a clean heart.
 - (3) Psalm 66:18
 - (a) God will not guide you, answer your prayer, or reveal His will to you if there is sin in your heart.
 - (i) God's will is not for rebels.
 - (4) 1 John 1:5-6
 - (a) You will either walk in the light or walk in the darkness.
 - (b) If you don't have fellowship with God, then you will be stumbling in darkness.
 - (5) 1 John 1:9
 - (6) The first step in knowing the will of God is to confess your sin.



- ii) Consecration
 - (1) It is not enough to be freed from sin.
 - (a) We must also be freed from stubbornness.
 - (2) Be willing to do God's will anytime, anyplace, and at any cost.
 - (3) Do you come to God wanting your will and asking God to superimpose His blessing upon your will?
 - (a) Rather than saying, "Speak Lord, Your servant hears", we say, "Listen Lord, Your servant is speaking".
 - (4) Proverbs 3:6
- iii) Concentration
 - (1) You have to listen to know the will of God.
 - (a) God speaks many times, but we are not listening.
 - (2) Tune your ear to hear God.
 - (a) This is why we need a quiet time.
 - (b) Resolve to get up early in the morning to have enough time to listen to God.
 - (3) Many times, people ask why God does not lead them.
 - (a) Are you listening to God?
 - (i) The music doesn't stop just because you turn the radio off.
 - (ii) It may be that God is still speaking, but you have simply failed to listen to what God is saying.
- m) Don't leave God out of your life.

3) THE MISTAKE OF SINFUL PRESUMPTION (JAMES 4:14-15)

- a) James 4:14
 - i) Not only did this man plan without God, but he also presumed about the future.
 - (1) He thought that he had a long time to live.
 - (2) No one knows how long they are going to live.
 - ii) In this verse, the word "vapor", which is the Greek word "atmos", is the word from which we get our word "atmosphere".
 - (1) Our lives are like a fog.
 - (a) It is there for a moment, and then it is gone.
- b) God speaks of the brevity of our lives.
 - i) Isaiah 40:6-7
 - ii) 1 Samuel 20:3
 - (1) This could be the last step you take.
 - (2) We don't know when death will come.
 - iii) When you were conceived in your mother's womb, your heart began to beat.
 - (1) That heartbeat is all that there is between you and Hell, if you are not saved; or between you and Heaven, if you know the Lord.
 - iv) James 4:14
- c) James 4:15
 - i) We should be careful that we do not plan without God.



- (1) Isaiah 56:12
- (2) Proverbs 27:1
- d) Do not presume upon tomorrow; we need to live one day at a time.
 - i) Matthew 6:34
 - (1) God is not telling us not to plan; He is telling us not to worry about tomorrow.
 - ii) There are two enemies of today:
 - (1) Yesterday
 - (2) Tomorrow
 - (a) Many times, today is crucified between these two thieves.
- e) Paul said, concerning yesterday, that, "We are to forget those things which are behind".
 - i) Philippians 3:14
 - ii) We are to leave them buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness.
 - iii) There are certain things we need to let go:
 - (1) Past guilt
 - (a) Confess it.
 - (b) 1 John 1:9
 - (c) Isaiah 1:18
 - (d) Don't live with past guilt.
 - (2) Past grief
 - (a) Has someone broken your heart?
 - (b) Have you had a sorrow this past year?
 - (c) Bury it in the grave of God's forgetfulness.
 - (3) Past grudges
 - (a) Has someone done you wrong?
 - (b) Is your heart filled with bitterness?
 - (i) Then, they have taken you prisoner.
 - 1. Let them go.
 - (4) Past glory
 - (a) Did you do something great last year?
 - (i) That was last year; forget it.
 - (b) Forget those things which are behind.
- f) Yesterday can take the joy out of today, and anticipating tomorrow can take the strength out of today.
 - i) Many people are enduring today, waiting to get to tomorrow.
 - (1) What is life?
 - (a) Life is what happens to us while we are anticipating tomorrow.
 - (2) Psalm 118:24
 - (3) Today is the only day that you have.
 - (a) Tomorrow never gets here; it is only today again.
 - (4) We are to live one day at a time.
 - (5) James 4:15
 - ii) Many people are enduring today, worrying about tomorrow.
 - (1) Matthew 6:34



- (2) God gives us trouble; He engineers it.
 - (a) “Evil” here does not mean “sin”, it means “problems” and “difficulties”.
 - (b) God gives us sufficient trouble or difficulty to cause us to lean upon Him.
 - (i) The worst thing that could happen to us would be to not have any problems.
 - (ii) Problems are God’s gift and blessing to us.
 - 1. God gives us a sufficient amount so that we will trust Him.
 - (iii) He doesn’t give too much because He remembers our frame.
 - (c) God gives us a sufficient amount of grace to meet these difficulties.
 - (i) That is God’s ecology.
- (3) When we worry, we go into tomorrow and borrow trouble from tomorrow and bring it into today.
 - (a) God has not given us strength today for tomorrow’s trouble.
 - (i) Deuteronomy 33:25
 - (ii) God gives sufficient strength for sufficient evil for today, not tomorrow.
 - (b) When we bring tomorrow’s problems into today, we overload today.
 - (i) Worry doesn’t get us ready for tomorrow.
 - 1. It takes the joy out of today.
 - (ii) When we meet tomorrow, we do so out of breath because we were living today with a load we were never intended to carry.
 - 1. Worry is the interest we pay on borrowed trouble.

4) THE MISTAKE OF SLOTHFUL PROCRASTINATION (JAMES 4:17)

- a) For many of us, we procrastinate in doing what we already know we ought to do.
 - i) The problem is not knowing what God wants us to do, but it is doing what we know we ought to do.
- b) The sin of omission is failing to do what we know we should do.
- c) The Bible teaches that the sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission.
 - i) It is a greater sin to fail to do what we ought to do than to do what we ought not to do.
 - ii) If we are doing what we ought to do, then we cannot do what we ought not to do.
- d) We see in the Bible how God judged things and people for failing to do what they ought to have done.
 - i) The fig tree was cursed because it brought forth no fruit.
 - (1) Matthew 21:18-19
 - ii) The man who hid his talent in the ground was condemned and called a wicked, slothful servant.
 - (1) Matthew 25:14-30
 - (2) He simply did nothing with his talent.
 - (3) But others took their talents, invested them, and doubled them.
 - (4) James 4:17
 - iii) In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite left the man by the side of the road.



- (1) Luke 10:30-37
- (2) They simply passed him by.
- (3) James 4:17
- e) It is the sin of omission that is the great sin.
 - i) People are lost not because they lie, steal, kill, etc.
 - (1) These are sins worthy to condemn us, but these sins have been paid for with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The reason why people are lost and go to Hell is because of what they do not do.
 - iii) John 3:18-19
 - (1) People go to Hell not because of what they have done that is so bad.
 - (a) Those sins can be forgiven.
 - (2) People go to Hell because they have omitted to receive Christ as their Savior.
- f) The sin of omission is why people have trouble with their thought life.
 - i) They have wicked thoughts that they want to get out of their minds.
 - ii) The reason they are thinking wrongly is because they are not thinking what they ought to think.
 - (1) God created and engineered us where we cannot think two thoughts at one time.
 - (2) If you are thinking what is right, then you cannot be thinking what is wrong.
 - (a) Isaiah 26:3
 - iii) Our minds are like gardens.
 - (1) If we cease to cultivate the garden, then weeds will grow.
 - (a) We don't have to plant the weeds because the seeds are in the air.
 - (2) If we fail to weed the garden and plant the right things, then we will have a garden of weeds.
- g) Many homes are broken because of the sin of omission.
 - i) All you have to do to ruin your marriage is to simply neglect it.
 - ii) You don't fall in love; you grow in love.
 - (1) Love is not like a diamond that you take out and look at.
 - (2) Love is like a flower.
 - (a) It has to be watered and cultivated.
 - (3) You have to visualize it, verbalize it, and vitalize it.
- h) Churches fail because of neglect.
 - i) People neglect to bring their tithes to God's house.
 - ii) They neglect to attend the worship service, pray for the pastor, and witness to others.
 - iii) When we stay away from church, it is a vote to close the doors.
- i) The sin of omission is the reason why many of us are spiritually barren.
 - i) Do you have a quiet time?
 - ii) Do you read God's Word?
 - iii) Many Christians are weak because of the sin of omission.
- j) James 4:17



5) CONCLUSION

- a) Three big mistakes Christians make:
 - i) You plan without God.
 - ii) You presume that you have all the time in the world.
 - iii) You fail to do what you know you should do.
- b) Live today like it is your last day.
 - i) Live every day for the Lord.
 - (1) Psalm 118:24
- c) How would you treat your family if you knew that you had one more week to live?
 - i) Begin to treat them that way today.
 - (1) Proverbs 27:1
- d) If you want God to guide your life, then be swift to obey Him when He tells you something.
 - i) The way to know the part of God's will that you don't know is to obey the part you do know.
- e) James 4:17
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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I want you to take God's Word and turn if you would please to James chapter 4. If you can find James chapter 4 I think it will help you today as we study together the Word of God. Now we're on a threshold of a brand new year and when we come to the end of an old year, the beginning of a new year we begin to think one more time about the future. So I'm speaking to you today on this subject, "How to Face the Future".

Now, Americans are obsessed with the future. We want to know what the future will hold. Listening to the pundits on television talking about the political future, and they're all making their prognostications about what the future is going to be. And so they bring their intellect, and they bring their intuition, and they talk about what they perceive the future will be. Other people, who are a little more superstitious, they might look in the tea leaves, or go to some astrologer, or some palm reader, or someone who pretends to be able to give the future. Of course, they're all fakers and frauds; there's no one that knows the future, the devil doesn't even know the future. As a matter of fact, the devil is, if you'll think about it, a knucklehead. I mean really, think about it. I mean the effrontery to think that he could succeed in what he has attempted to do. And he will find his place in the lowest Hell. Some people attempting to know the future read books like MegaTrends and others.

Our Lord tells a wonderful story through the apostle James about what I want to call a boastful business man. A man who was trying to plan his future. I want you to see it. We begin in James chapter 4 verse 13 through 17 "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will enter, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.' Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.' But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Here was a man, a first century wheeler-dealer, a boastful businessman. He was looking toward the future; he was making his plans for the future. Maybe it was on the threshold of a brand new year and he's thinking about what his future would be. He made three tragic mistakes. The same three you'll make if you're not careful when you plan for your future because this first century business man has plenty of twentieth century brothers.

What are the three mistakes that he made, take your Bibles before you and I want you to see what they were. First of all, he made **the mistake of planning selfishly**. Selfish, self-centered planning. Now listen to what he said again in James 4 verse 13, "Today or tomorrow." The very first thing he did, he just simply planned the time. He planned the **period** of time. He gets out his calendar, he sharpens his pencil. He begins to make some entries in his calendar. "Shall I do that today, or shall I do that tomorrow?"

He plans the period then he plans the **place**. Look again if you will in verse 13, "We will go into such a city." So he lays his calendar aside and he picks up his map. And he begins to look at the demographics and he says, "There is a good city for my enterprise." And so he plans the particular place that he will go.

But not only does he plan the period and plan the place, he plans the **procedure**. He has an idea, a way that he can make money. He's going to buy and sell. Now maybe he has a degree in marketing from the



University of Jerusalem. He's a man who understands commodities, buying and selling and all of these things. And so he says, "Now, I can buy for this and I can sell for that."

And so he's figuring now, not only the period and not only the place, he's figuring the procedure and then he figures the **profit**. He says, "I will buy, I will sell, I'll make some money, I'll get gain." So he's got it all worked out. I mean he's doing a wonderful job. You just have to give him "A" for planning. And we often tell you here at the church that you ought to plan, and this man has done a wonderful job. Let me say this, the Bible does not condemn planning, the Bible encourages it. The Bible does not condemn hard work, the Bible encourages it. The Bible does not condemn business, the Bible encourages it. What was wrong with what this man did? Simply this, in this whole procedure there is no reference to God whatsoever. I mean he is simply planning without God. And that's what James is going to rebuke him about. He forgot to say, "If the Lord will you'll do this or that." He's not seeking God's will, he's simply seeking his own plans.

Now, the Bible says in Psalm 14 verse 1, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The man who says, "There is no God", is an unmitigated fool. But did you know there is a bigger fool than the man who says there is no God? Who is the bigger fool? The man who says, "There is a God", and then doesn't live like it; we have plenty of fools like that, some of them in the auditorium today. They say that they believe in God, but they make their plans, selfish planning, they leave God out of their plans. The key is in James 4 verse 15, "For that you ought to say, 'If the Lord will', we shall live, and do this or that." It is the will of God that we're to be seeking. You take the word live turn it around it's evil; read it backward it's evil. But if you look at the word live and look right in the center of the word live are two letters "i-f". If! If! There's a big if in life. L-I-F-E, the word "if" is right in the middle of that word life.

Have you ever thought about that? I mean, have you ever considered the frailty of life? Old timers used to sign letters, and maybe you've seen some of them, at the bottom they would put, "I will do thus-and-such", or "I will see you next week". And then they would put down there, "D-V". Have you ever seen that? What does that mean, D-V? It's "Deo volente", "God willing". If God wills I will do this or that.

What you and I need to do at this threshold of a new year, is come to God and not say, "'God bless what I am doing", but, "Lord, help me to do what it is that You're blessing." Now God has a will for you. Verse 15 makes it plain. You ought to be praying and saying, "If God wills." And if God wills something then you ought to know the will of God.

Now, I want to give you some verses that teach very clearly and very plainly that God has a plan for you this coming year. No ifs, ands, and buts about it. Psalm 32 verse 8, God says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye." Maybe that verse ought to be in the front of your Bible. "I will teach thee and instruct thee in the way that thou should go. I will guide thee with Mine eye." Now either that is true or it is not true. I submit to you that it is true. God has a plan for you, there is a way that you should go, it would be a shame if you would miss it. Again, Isaiah chapter 30 and verse 21, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'" And our Lord increased and compounded that promise when He talked about the dear Holy Spirit who lives in our heart. John chapter 16 verse 13, "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you." We have the Holy Spirit to guide us, we have the Word of God to guide us. Romans 8 verse 14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." There's no need for you to be floundering around like a ship without a compass, without a rudder, on a dark a stormy night. God has a plan for you!



Would you like to know God's will? Three simple words. The first word I want to lay on your heart is the word **confession**. On this threshold of a new year, get your heart clean, completely, totally clean. When you pray and ask God for wisdom, pray with a clean heart. Psalm 66 verse 18 says this, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." God is not going to guide you, friend, God is not going to answer your prayer, God is not going to reveal His will to you if there's sin in your heart. God's will is not for rebels. First John chapter 1 verses 5 and 6, listen to this, "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you," listen to it, "that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." This year, you with either walk in the light or you will walk in the darkness. If don't have fellowship with God you'll be walking in darkness and you'll be stumbling in darkness. But the Bible says in that same chapter, First John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And so the very first step, if you would know the will of God, is a confession of your sin. Say, "Oh God, on the threshold of this new year, I want to be absolutely, totally, completely clean before You."

And then after that confession, comes that **consecration**. It's not enough, friend, to be freed from sin, you must be freed from stubbornness. You must just simply come to God and say, "Now, Lord, I am here to do Your will. Any time, any place, any cost." Have you done that? Have you taken the contract with God and signed it at the bottom, and then said, "God, You may fill in the contract." Or do you come to God wanting your will and asking God to superimpose His blessing upon your will or you're trying to superimpose your will upon God's will? Rather than saying, "Speak, Lord, Your servant hears", we say, "Listen, Lord, Your servant is speaking". But the Bible makes it clear and plain in Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 6, if, "In all of thy ways acknowledge Him, He will direct our path." No sin, no stubbornness.

Confession, consecration, now here's the third one: **concentration**. You've got to listen to know the will of God. God speaks many times but we're not listening. We're to tune our ear to God. That's the reason that you need a quiet time. Would you, on this threshold of a new year, resolve that you're going to get up early in the morning to have enough time to listen to God? Many times people say, "Well, why does God not lead me? Why do I have no sense of God's direction? Why, I've gotten the sin out of my life. I want to do the will of God, and yet, I don't know the will of God." May I ask you another question? Are you listening to God? Do you have a quiet time? Did you know the music doesn't stop when you turn the radio off? It may be that God is still speaking, but you have simply failed to listen to what God is saying. I couldn't put it much more simply than this, confession, consecration, and concentration. Three simple words. Confession, consecration, "I want to do Your will", concentration, "Lord, I'm listening to You". Try it. Friend, don't have this selfish planning, don't be a practical atheist, don't leave God out of your life.

Now that's the first mistake that this first century man made. This first century wheeler-dealer. It was simply selfish planning. "I will do this. I will, I will, I will", but he left God out of it.

Now here's a second big mistake that he made concerning the future and I don't want you to make it. Not only was there, selfish planning, but there was also **sinful presumption**. Look if you will in James 4 verse 14, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." Not only did this man plan without God, he presumed about the future. He thought that he had a long time to live. But God says, "You don't know how long you're going to live. And, therefore, you must not only help Me, let Me plan your future, but you must live each day



as if it were your last day. He says, "Your life is like a vapor." The Greek word for vapor is *atmos*, A-T-M-O-S. It's the word we get atmosphere from. He's saying your life is like a fog.

This morning, if you got up early enough and went out for your paper and breathed, you might have seen your breathe in front of you as it just condenses there like a little fog. It's there, and then it's gone. Or like the mist over a lake, sometimes on a summer day, it's there for a moment, and then it's gone. And God speaks of the brevity of our lives and we need to learn this, our life is like the grass that withers, it's like a leaf that fads, it's like the fog that evaporates. Again the Bible says in First Samuel 20 verse 3, "There is but a step between me and death." Death lurks behind every bush, between every parked car; you don't know when death is going to come. "There is but a step between me and death." That could be the last step I take. You say, "Well, you look healthy enough." But what if an airplane comes through the roof? What if the boiler goes up? Do we have one under this building? "There is but a step between me and death."

When you were conceived in your mother's womb, your heart began to beat. I talked to some people this past week, they came by to tell me that God is going to bless them with a little baby. And they said, "Pastor, we got to hear the heartbeat!" That's not just a blob of tissue in there, you know! That's a little human being. We got to hear the heartbeat. Then, you know, that little baby is born and it's a happy day. And the little baby begins to grow and the little heart gets stronger. And he begins to run out and play with the boys and girls and exercise, to eat that good food. That little heart just beating in that chest.

Then he gets to be a teenager and he sees that special girl across the room, that heart just keeps on beating. And he gets to be a young man finds the girl he's going to marry, proposes to her. She says, "yes". That heart beats, he's a strong man. He lives his life, heart is beating, and beating.

He gets older. He goes to the doctor and the doctor says, "I don't like the sound of that heartbeat. It's not beating just right. Take this medicine. Doing better. Then again doesn't beat just quite right. Goes to the doctor again. And doctor says, "We're going to change the medicine a little bit." He's doing somewhat better. Then the phone call comes, "Papa's gone to Heaven. He's gone."

But you know what, sometime that little beat stops in mother's womb. Sometimes it stops on the playground. Many time I've preached a funeral for a teenager. That little heartbeat that's all there is between you and Hell if you're not saved or Heaven if you know the Lord. Just a heartbeat! Just a heartbeat! Death is but a step away. Your life is like a vapor, it appears for a little while and then vanishes away. And as you plan for this coming year you ought to say, "If the Lord will, I will live and do this or that." Now we all think other people are going to die suddenly, we don't think that we're going to die suddenly. But how careful we ought to be that we don't plan without God.

Do you know what happened last night? A lot of people were at a drunken party last night. I mean, probably, there was more wild drinking last night than any other time of the year, wouldn't you agree with that? Now you weren't there, but I'm talking about those other folks. I mean they just were having a wild party. Do you know why they were having a wild party? Why, it's the beginning of a new year! You know, the Bible speaks of these kind of people in Isaiah 56 and verse 12, "Come ye, they say, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." They say, "We are going to get drunk and have a wonderful New Year." The Bible's very relevant, isn't it? Listen to it again, "Come ye, they say, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Can't you hear them saying there in Isaiah's time, "It's party time! Hey,



we're going to celebrate the New Year!" But God's Word says in Proverbs 27 and verse 1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

And so I would say to you very clearly and very plainly, don't plan without God. And I would say to you very clearly and very plainly, do not presume on tomorrow. You'd better learn to live one day at a time. And our Lord has told us clearly and plainly in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow," that is, no worry for tomorrow, "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Now what does that verse mean? He's not telling us not to plan, but He's telling us not to worry about tomorrow. He's telling us that we're to live life this coming year one day at a time, not presuming that we have tomorrow because our lives are like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

There're two days that are enemies of today: one is yesterday, and the other is tomorrow. And, many times today is crucified between those two thieves; yesterday and tomorrow. Now the apostle Paul said concerning yesterday in Philippians chapter 3 verse 13, "We are to forget those things which are behind." Just leave them buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness. And on the threshold of a new year, what you need to do is to let go, as Brother Whitmire's already said, of that past year; past guilt, confess it. First John 1:9, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us." You can start this New Year as white as snow. Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Don't live with past guilt.

And don't live with past grief. Has someone broken your heart? Have you had a sorrow this past year? Has your heart been crushed? Bury it in the grave of God's forgetfulness. Don't go around licking your wounds. Past grudges; has somebody done you wrong? And you're continuing to hate and resent and your heart is filled with bitterness, then they have taken you prisoner; let them go! Don't feed a fever.

And past glory. Did you do something great last year? Well that was last year; forget it. Forget those things which are behind. When I played football and we'd have a good game, the coach would come into the locker room and he'd say, "Boys, put away your press clippings, that other team hasn't read them." Just forget the past glory; that is gone, that is over. Now yesterday can take the joy, the strength out of today, and tomorrow can take the strength out of today. Anticipating tomorrow.

William Marston, a psychologist, surveyed 3,000 people. He found that 90% of them were enduring today to get to tomorrow. Do you know what life is? Life is what happens to us while we're planning tomorrow. That's what life is. Life is what happens to us while we're looking forward to tomorrow, just anticipating tomorrow. Always is going to be better than tomorrow. But friend, Psalm 118 verse 24, "This is the day the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." This is the only day you ever have, tomorrow never gets here; it never gets here. When you think it gets here, it's only today again, isn't it? It never gets here! We're to live one day at a time. You ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that."

And some live waiting for tomorrow, others live tomorrow, worrying about tomorrow. You say, "What if we have calamity? What if we have an economic downturn? What if I get sick this year? What if Jesus comes this year? What if? What if? What if? Don't worry about tomorrow. Matthew 6:34 Lord says, "Take no anxious thought about tomorrow. The morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Sufficient what? Sufficient trouble. God gives you trouble. God engineers trouble.



Did you know why you have so much trouble? God planned it for you. It's God's plan. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The word evil does not mean sin; it means problems, difficulties. God says, "I'm going to give you sufficient difficulty." Sufficient difficulty for what? To cause you not to be self-sufficient, but to cause you to lean upon Me. Did you know the worst thing could happen to us is not to have any problems; to be problem free. Problems are God's gift, God's blessing to us. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." God says, "I'm going to give Adrian some evil today." Not sin, evil, badness, heartache, sorrow, pain, difficulty. Why? So Adrian will trust in Me. How much will I give Him? A sufficient amount. Not too much." He knows our frame, He knows we are but dust. He'll never put two tons on a ton-and-a-half truck. He remembers our frame. He knows our frailties. And so God gives me a sufficient amount, and that causes me to lean upon Him. And so God gives me a sufficient amount of trouble, and God gives me a sufficient amount of grace, and that is God's ecology. My trouble; God's grace. And I live today trusting God.

Now, when I go over into tomorrow and I borrow trouble from tomorrow and bring it into today, God has not given me strength for tomorrow. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 33 verse 25, "As thy days are, so shall thy strength be." And God gives sufficient strength for sufficient evil for today and not tomorrow. And when you reach out into the future and you bring tomorrow's problems into today, what you do is overload today and worry doesn't get you ready for tomorrow, it just takes the joy out of today. And when you meet tomorrow, you meet tomorrow out of breathe because you were living today with a load you never intended to live. And worry is the interest you pay on borrowed trouble.

Now in Matthew 6:34, what our Lord simply said is this, "Take no thought for the morrow, the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." And our Lord told this man through James, and tells us, number one, don't plan without God; sinful planning. Selfish planning. Number two, don't presume that you have tomorrow, sinful presumption.

And then there's a third thing our Lord talked about here, and I want you to see that in James 4 verse 17, "Therefore," put a circle around the word therefore because it's the third mistake and the big one. "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." Did you see that? "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." And that's the third mistake many of us will make concerning the future. The first one is planning without God. The second is presuming upon the future. And the third is procrastinating to do what we already know we ought to do. That is slothful procrastination. Selfish planning, sinful presumption, and slothful procrastination; that's the danger that we face today.

Do you know, many of us say, "Oh, I wish I knew God's will for my life." Come up here and I'm going to tell you something, for most of us, the problem is not knowing what God wants us to do, it is doing what we know we ought to do. Isn't that right? Or failing to do what we know we ought to do. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." And so, this failing to do good, this sin of omission. And this is such a dangerous sin because most of us have this dirty dozen things we don't do. You know, we don't do this, and we don't do that, but this is not talking about what we do that's wrong, it talks about what we fail to do that we know that we ought to do. The Bible teaches that the sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission. It's a greater sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do. Because if you're doing what you ought to do you can't be doing what you ought not to do because everybody can only be doing one thing at a time. So it's always a bigger sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do, and if you're doing what you ought to do you can't be doing what you ought not to do. I can't say that again, but it's true. That is true!



I mean, if you go through the Bible, and you will see in the Bible how God judged things and people, not for what they did that was wrong, per say, but for failing to do what they ought to do. For example, the fig tree was cursed. Why was the fig tree cursed? Did it bring forth poison fruit? No! It brought forth no fruit. The man who hid his talent in the ground, why was he condemned and called a wicked and a slothful servant? Did he steal it? No, he just simply did nothing with it. Other people took their talent and doubled it, and they invested it. Many of you are just simply doing nothing. A man fired a man who was working for him. He said, "Why'd you fire me? I didn't do anything." He said, "That's why I fired you." You didn't do anything. "For him to knoweth to do good and doeth it not."

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Priest and the Levite left that man by the side of the road. Did they stop and beat on him? Did they rob him? No! They simply passed him by. "To him to knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." It is the sin of omission that is the great sin.

Do you know why people are lost? Not because they lie, steal, kill, rape, commit perjury, or whatever. Those sins have been paid for with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men today are lost not, therefore, because of what they do but because of what they do not do. The Bible says in John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." And John 3 verse 18 says, "He that believeth in Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not," what, "believed."

Do you know why you'll go to Hell today, if you do go to Hell? Not because of what you've done that is so bad, those sins can be forgiven. But because you have omitted to receive Christ as your Savior. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." That's the reason that so many of us are messed up in our thinking. You say, "Pastor, I wish I didn't have all these dirty thoughts in my mind. I wish I didn't have all these wicked thoughts." Your problem is not what you're thinking is wrong, your problem is what you fail to think. God created you and God engineered you to where you can't think two thoughts at one time. If you're thinking what is right, you cannot be thinking what is wrong. And it's simply the sin of omission that gets your mind in trouble. Isaiah 26 verse 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." Is your mind stayed on God? Your mind is like a garden, if you cease to cultivate that garden, you don't have to plant weeds, they will grow. The spores, the seeds are in the air. And if you fail to weed your garden and plant the right things, I can promise you there will be a crop of weeds and your mind will be a garden of weeds. That's the reason so many homes today are broken up. We have so much difficulty in homes. What do you have to do to ruin your marriage? Beat your wife, curse your wife, no, just neglect her. Don't be like the man whose wife said, "You never tell me that you love me." He said, "When we got married, I told you I loved you, if I change my mind I'll let you know." There're people just like that. Their marriage is ruined just simply by neglect.

Let me say this, you don't fall in love, you grow in love. Love is not like a diamond that you get and treasure and take it out and look at it. Love is like a flower. It has to be watered, it has to be cultivated, it has to grow. You have to visualize it, you have to verbalize it, you have to vitalize it.

Why do churches fail? Do you have to burn the church? Do you have to start spreading false doctrine for a church to fail? No, just neglect your church. Neglect this coming year to bring your tithe to God's house. Neglect to attend the worship service and the prayer meeting. Neglect to pray for your pastor. Neglect to worship. Neglect to witness and any church will die. Did you know when you stay away from church on



Sunday night, it's a vote to close the doors on Sunday night? Did you know, if every member voted like some of you vote, there would be no church here tonight? All you have to do is simply neglect. You don't have say, "Let's make a law there be no Sunday night church. Let's make a law there be no Wednesday prayer meeting. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him, it is sin."

There's a reason that so many of you are spiritually barren. You don't do what you know to do. You don't have a quiet time. You don't read God's Word. It's not that you say, "I'm going to commit adultery, I'm going to fail, I'm going to get drunk, I'm going to steal." No, no, no, no, no. Suppose you came to me and you said, "Pastor, I'm just so physically weak I can hardly put one foot in front of another." I say, "Well, do you think you have some sort of a disease?" "Well, I really don't think so." "You got heart problem?" "No, I don't think so. But I'm just so weak." I say, "Maybe it's your diet, what are you eating?" "Well, nothing." "You don't eat?" "No I don't eat. Well, I eat every Sunday at 9:30. You know, I come in to get a little nourishment. My pastor feeds me but, other than that I just don't eat." Well friend, if that's the way you live physically, after a while you'll shrivel up, you'll die, or you'll be very weak and emaciated. Why are so many Christians so weak? It's the sin of omission. "To him who knows to do good, and he does it not, to him, it is sin."

Here are the three big mistakes that you can make this coming year. Number one, you just plan without God. Number two, you just presume that you have all the time in the world. Number three, you fail to do what you know already that you ought to do and you'll make a mess of this New Year. I want to encourage you to get alone before God and say, "Oh God, I want You to lead me, I want You to guide me. Lord, I'm going to confess. Lord, I am going to consecrate. Lord, I'm going to concentrate. I want you to say to the Lord God, "Oh dear God, I'm going to live today like it were my last day. I'm going to squeeze all of the juice I can out of this day, this Sunday, and then tomorrow, Monday. I'm going to live every day for You and when I wake up in the morning I'm going to say, "This is the day the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it." How would you treat your family if you knew you had one more week to live? Begin to treat them that way today. Because you don't know, you don't know. "Don't boast about tomorrow."

And then, if you want God to guide your life, when God shows you something, when God tells you something, then be swift my soul, be jubilant my feet. Obey God! The way to know the part of God's will you don't know is to obey the part you do know. It's hard to steer a ship that's not moving. And when God speaks to you, and you know to do good; do it! If God says to you, "Confess some sin", confess it. If God says, "Make it right with a brother", make it right. If God says, "Give some money", give it. If God says, "Witness to that person", do it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." And if you'll do these things God'll give you a wonderful, wonderful new year.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. I want you to think today about your soul. You know the Bible says, "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." Today is the day that you need the Lord. What is your life but a vapor? If you're not absolutely certain that you're saved, you're not ready to face a coming year, you're not ready for tomorrow. You're not even ready for this afternoon. God's Word says, "Today, if you'll hear God's voice, don't harden your heart."

Let me invite you to pray and invite Christ into your heart. Let me help you to pray, would you pray like this, right where you are, "Dear God, I know that You love me." Would you tell Him that? Just affirm that He loves you, and He does love you. You say, "In spite of my sin?" Yes, He does. "God commendeth His love



toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Lord, I know that You love me. And, Lord, I know that You want to save me." You say, "Does God really want to save me?" Yes. "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." You say, "Has God chosen me?" Oh yes He has. Christ died for your sins and for the sins of the whole world. He wants to save you.

So why don't you pray, "Lord, I know that You love me and know that You want to save me. And Lord, I know that You will save me." You say, "Pastor, will He save me?" If you trust Him. For the Bible says, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." If you'll come, He'll never turn you away. "And Lord, I believe that Jesus died for my sins." Did He die for your sins? Oh yes He did. The Bible says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him," on Jesus, "the iniquity of us all." My sin and your sin was laid on Jesus, and He carried that sin to the cross and died for it.

"Lord, I believe if I trust You, You'll save me." You say, "If I trust Him will He save me?" Oh yes He will. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." So pray this way, "Lord, I know that You love me. Lord, I know that You want to save me. Lord, I believe that Jesus paid for my sins on the cross. And Lord, know, by faith, I receive Him as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Forgive my sin. I'm sick of my sin, I'm tired of my sin, I refuse, I repent. I refuse to be controlled by my sin, I repent of my sin. And Lord Jesus, right now, right now, today, I receive You by faith as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart, forgive me, save me Lord Jesus." Pray that prayer from your heart, "Save me, Lord Jesus." Say it and mean it, "Save me, Lord Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then pray this way, "Lord Jesus, thank You for doing it. And now, Lord Jesus, this morning I will make it public; I'll not be ashamed of You. Because You taught me, Lord Jesus, if I'll believe in You, to make it public. You told me Lord, if I would confess it before men, You'd confess me before the Father. And so, Lord, today, when that invitation is given I'll make it public." Just tell Him that. And you say, "Lord, it may be hard. I'll be frightened, but Lord, You'll give me the strength and I'll do it with Your strength.

Father, I pray that many today will pray that prayer and make it public that they've trusted Christ. In His wonderful name, Amen.



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