



PLANNING YOUR FUTURE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Planning Your Future

SERMON REFERENCE: James 4:13-17

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2268

James 4:15-16 says, "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance..."

If we're honest, we all want to know what the future holds; we believe if we know what lies ahead, we can set ourselves up for success and avoid failure. But the Book of James offers three warnings for us in planning our future.

First, beware of self-centered planning: "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit" (James 4:13).

This businessman had planned the period of time, the place, procedures, and profits. The problem is he left God out of the plan altogether; he did not consult with God or seek His will.

Psalm 32:8 says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." God has a plan for every area of our lives. If we confess our sins, acknowledge Him as Lord and listen closely to Him, He promises to guide us.

We must also beware of self-confident presumption: "...whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

Our lives are like vapors -- here for a moment, quickly gone; we don't know what the future holds, so we must not be frivolous with our time.

Finally, beware of self-complacent procrastination. "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Procrastination is a very deceptive and dangerous sin. The sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission.

Adrian Rogers says, "It is a greater sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do."

It is good to plan, but we must commit our plans to God and actively pursue His will for our future.

LIFE APPLICATION

Would you like for God to guide you this coming year?

Adrian Rogers says, "Face your future by giving your heart to Jesus Christ. Let the Holy Spirit of God be in you to guide you and give you a hope that is wonderful and glorious."



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The businessman in James 4:13-17 would be considered a success by today's standards.
- b) Failure is succeeding at the wrong thing.

2) BEWARE OF SELF-CENTERED PLANNING

- a) This man is looking forward to the future in a business endeavor.
- b) He planned the period of time.
 - i) Either today or tomorrow, he was going to a city to stay for a year.
 - (1) That was where he was planning to invest his time for that year.
- c) He planned the place he would go.
 - i) He looked at the advantages and disadvantages, and picked a particular city.
- d) He planned the procedure.
 - i) He is going to buy and sell.
 - ii) The Bible does not condemn business; it encourages it.
 - iii) The Bible does not condemn planning; it encourages it.
 - iv) The Bible is not against making a profit.
- e) What he did wrong was he left God out of all his plans.
 - i) He had not consulted with God or sought the will of God.
- f) For many today, our worship life is one thing and our business life is another; the secular and the sacred.
 - i) The biggest fool is not the person who says there is no God, but the person who says there is a God but does not live like it.
- g) Have you really taken God into your plans?
 - i) "If" – "If the Lord will..."
- h) God wants to show you His will.
 - i) To be guided with God's eye means that you have a very close relationship with Him.
 - ii) God says to us, "Do not go this way or that way. This is the way."
 - iii) We have a heavenly guide who is the Holy Spirit of God.
 - (1) He is here to lead us.
- i) God has a plan for every area of our lives.
- j) Confession
 - i) Confess your sins.
 - ii) Get your heart right with God.
 - iii) We are wasting our breath if we pray with unconfessed, unrepented of sin in our hearts and lives.
 - iv) If there is sin in our lives, the rather than walking in the light, we are stumbling in the dark.



- v) Do you have an idol in your life?
 - (1) An idol is anything that you love more, serve more or fear more than God.
 - (2) If you have idols in your heart, what right do you have to ask God to guide you?
 - vi) Make certain there is no unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your life.
 - (1) How can you expect to have God in your life if you regard iniquity in your heart?
 - k) Consecration
 - i) It is not enough to be clean; we need to be consecrated.
 - ii) Do you really want to know the will of God or do you just want God to help you in your plans?
 - iii) Have you acknowledged Him in all of your ways, not just some of your ways?
 - l) Concentration
 - i) Listen to God.
 - ii) The Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Bible as a gentle dove and a still, small voice.
 - (1) This is why we need that quiet time alone with God.
 - iii) Some people believe that God never speaks to them.
 - (1) God is speaking; are you listening?
- 3) BEWARE OF SELF-CONFIDENT PRESUMPTION
- a) Our lives are like a vapor.
 - i) "Vapor" is the word from which we get our word "atmosphere."
 - ii) It is there for a little while then vanishes away.
 - b) Do not boast carelessly about the future.
 - c) We do not know what the future holds.
 - i) This may be your final year; we do not know.
 - ii) We need to beware that we do not frivolous with the use of our time.
 - d) Ask the Lord to help you not to waste your time.
 - i) Ask Him to help you apply your days unto wisdom.
 - ii) Ask Him to help you to live out the rest of your days being used of Him.
 - e) To kill time is suicide by degrees.
 - i) Do not presume upon the time that you have.
 - f) In Luke 12:16-20, Jesus told a parable of a rich farmer.
 - i) He had great crops, so great he did not have enough room to store it all.
 - ii) He decided to tear down his old barns and build bigger ones.
 - iii) Then, he said to himself that he had so much goods laid up for so many years that he would eat, drink and be merry.
 - iv) But God called him a fool, for that night his soul would be required of him.
 - (1) Then, who would get all these things he had laid up in store.
 - (2) This man said, "Many years."
 - (3) God said, "Tonight."
- 4) BEWARE OF SELF-COMPLACENT PROCRASTINATION
- a) Here was a man who knew what he ought to do, but did not do it.



- b) He was boasting of himself of all that he had done.
- c) He has become complacent.
- d) He is aware of God's will, but he does not want to do it.
- e) Procrastination may be the biggest problem most of us have today.
 - i) It is a very deceptive sin.
 - ii) Other sins are very obvious.
 - iii) Most people do not think of procrastination as a sin.
- f) It is a greater sin to fail to do what we ought to do than to do what we ought not to do.
 - i) The Bible teaches that the sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission.
 - ii) If we are doing what we ought to do, then we cannot do what we ought not to do.
 - (1) But even if we are not doing what we ought not to do, we still would not be doing what we ought to do.
- g) It is not that the man said he would never do it; he just never did it.
- h) The sin of procrastination is not only very deceptive, it may look kind of respectful.
 - i) One person does not know what God is leading another person to do, so the person may look fine and respectful to others, but he has sin in his heart and life.
- i) It is the reason that many are lost.
 - i) People do not go to Hell because they lie, steal, commit adultery, etc.
 - (1) These are sins worthy to condemn us, but these sins have been paid for.
 - ii) The reason that people are lost today is because they have failed to do what they ought to do.
 - iii) No longer is a person condemned to Hell because he is a sinner; those sins have been paid for.
 - iv) He is condemned because he has not believed.
 - v) A person does not have to do anything to be lost.
 - (1) They are already lost.
 - vi) It is the sin of omission that sends a soul to Hell.
- j) Many people want to correct their thinking.
 - i) They want to get bad images, hatred and negative thoughts out of their minds.
 - ii) The reason that people think wrongly is because they are not thinking rightly.
 - (1) They are not thinking what they ought to think.
 - iii) God made us to where we cannot think two thoughts at one time.
 - (1) If we are thinking what is right, then we cannot think what is wrong.
- k) David got into trouble and committed adultery.
 - i) His problem was not aggressive lust, but simply neglected duties.
 - ii) David failed to do what he ought to have done.
 - (1) Therefore he did what he ought not to have done.
 - iii) Center your heart and mind on God.
 - (1) Fill your heart and mind with what is right, true and pure.
 - (a) Then you will not have difficulty with impure unclean thoughts.
- l) The sin of omission is the reason for many broken homes.
 - i) God's plan is one man and one woman until death do them part.



- ii) All you have to do for your home to fall apart is just to neglect to do what you ought to do.
- m) Many churches fail because of the sin of omission.
 - i) We have half-empty churches because people have simply neglected their church.
 - ii) The Israelites were coming out of Egypt and preparing to cross over the river into Canaan.
 - iii) The tribes of Reuben and Gad told Joshua they did not want to cross.
 - iv) Joshua reminded them that their brothers were going to war in Canaan against the Canaanites.
 - v) Reuben and Gad said they would come over and help their brothers when it was time for war.
 - vi) Joshua told them if they did not do so, they would sin against the Lord.
 - vii) Many people today want to stay on the easy side of the river.
 - (1) They do not want to work and help build the church.
 - viii) No man has a right to be at peace when his brethren are at war.
 - ix) You do not have to go to war against the church for it to fail, just neglect it.
- n) There are a number of people who know there is a death to die, a God to face and a judgment to go through.
 - i) Yet they are not saved and simply say they will do it someday.
- o) The Bible says that today is the day of salvation.



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Turn to the book of James. We're going to be talking about your future, so you ought to be interested. James chapter 4; in a moment we're going to begin reading in verse 13.

We're interested in the future. We want to know what the year is going to bring to us. People have different ways of looking in the future. Would you believe that some use tea leaves to try to look into the future? Others use palm readings. Others use astrology. Those who are a little more sophisticated read books like Megatrends and other things, trying to understand what the future holds for us.

Now I'm going to read to you a story. It's a story about a first century wheeler-dealer, a boastful businessman, a man who was making plans for his future. And he has many brothers here in this twenty-first century. And I want us to look at the story and we're going to learn some lessons from it.

This is James chapter 4 beginning in verse 13 through verse 17, "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow 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."

Now, we're going to be talking about a man who in many respects would be called a successful man in the first century or the twenty-first century. But let me give you a definition of failure before we even get started. And it may be a different definition than you've been used to. But failure is succeeding at the wrong thing. Failure is succeeding at the wrong thing. Everybody in this city may be calling you a success, and you may be an abysmal failure.

All right, this man made three major mistakes, and I don't want you to make them. So as you plan for your future, I want to give you three warnings; we'll let each one of them begin with the word beware.

First of all, beware of self-centered planning. Now listen to this man. Get inside of his head as he's planning. He is looking forward to the future in a business endeavor. And first of all, he's planning the period of time. Look if you will in James 4 verse 13, "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will enter into such a city and continue there a year.'" Now this man in his mind, he says, "All right, today or tomorrow I'm going to go to a city, and I'm going to stay there for a year." So I can see this man. He has his calendar out. He has his pencil sharp. He's looking at these things. And so he encircles this day, he draws a line through this year and he says, "That's where I'm going to invest my time this coming year." So he's planning the period of time. But he's not finished yet.

He's also planning the place where he's going to go. Look at it again in verse 13, "I will go into such a city." Now he has all of the cities out there. He's looking at this city, that city, the advantages here, the advantages there. Said, "That's the city." And so on the map, he puts a circle around the city.



Over here on the calendar, he has these dates underlined. So he has already planned the place, and he has planned the period. But not only that, he goes on to plan something else.

He plans the procedure. Now he's going to buy and sell. Evidently he has some marketing scheme. Maybe he has a degree in marketing from the University of Jerusalem. He has a degree in administration, so he has been running the numbers. And he says, "I can buy the product high, for this and I can sell it for that and I can make a profit." So he has planned, he has planned the period, he's planned the place, he's planned the procedure.

He's also planned the profits. He says, "I will buy and sell and get gain." "That's it. I am going to make a bundle this year."

Now he's doing all of this planning. Sounds good to me. Doesn't sound like he's doing anything wrong. The Bible certainly doesn't condemn business; it encourages it. The Bible certainly doesn't condemn planning; it encourages it. The Bible is certainly not against making a profit; it encourages all of those. These things are not wrong.

Look at this man and you'll find out what was wrong with him. He left God out of his plans altogether. He's not consulting with God. He's not seeking the will of God. He's like so many here, your worship life is one thing; your business life is another thing. You've divided your life into the secular and the sacred. And so you come to church and worship, and then you plan your life as if there were no God. And the biggest fool is not the man who says there's no God; the biggest fool is the man who says there is a God and then doesn't live like it. Have you really taken God into your plans?

You see, the key to all of this, look in James 4 verse 15 and you'll see the key to all of this, "For that we ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.'" He'd not said, "Lord, what is Your will?" He's not seeking the will of God. He is not saying, "Oh God, show me Your will." He says, "I'm going to do it this time. I'm going to go to this place. I'm going to do this procedure. I'm going to make this kind of money." He has not at all sought to bring God into his plans. There's a big if in all of this, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that."

Have you ever asked God, "Lord, bless what I'm doing," rather than "Lord, help me to do what You're blessing?" To find really the will of God? Now God wants to show you His will. God wants to show you His will as you look into your future.

I want to give you a few verses. Just jot them in your margin, wherever you're making notes. And don't try to look them up. Let me just give them to you right now. Psalm 32 verse 8, here's a promise, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye." By the way, be guided with God's eye means that you have a very close relationship with Him.

Have you ever been guided by anybody's eye? If you're married you certainly have. Have you ever been in a restaurant, start a conversation, and your wife looks at you and you stop right away and you go in another direction? She just said, "Bud, don't say any more about that." You know, that's just guiding with your eye. When, my children were little, and they'd sit on the front row, Joyce would be in the choir and I'd be preaching, they'd be cutting up. Nobody else would know it, but I'd look down



and say, "You're going to get it when you get home." And go right on. Just guiding with the eye. And they'd straighten up. That's the kind of an intimate relationship we need with the Lord.

Isaiah 30 verse 21, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'" There's sort of a heavenly sonar. There's God saying, "Don't go this way; don't go that way. This is the way; walk in it." Would you like God to guide you that way in the coming year?

John 16 verse 13. Listen to it. Jesus gives the promise with more specificity, speaking of the dear, precious Holy Spirit, "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." We have a Heavenly Guide; He is the Holy Spirit of God. He is here to lead us.

One more verse, Romans 8 verse 14. Listen to it, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." How wonderful. How wonderful to have God guiding us with His eye. How wonderful to hear the voice of God saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21. How wonderful to be led by the dear Spirit of God. We don't need to be floundering around and come to the end of our life, and in the words of another say, "Well, my youth was a mistake, my manhood a struggle, and my old age a regret." How sad to come to life that way.

Now listen. God has a plan for every area of your life, not just your church life; your education, your business, your marriage, your recreation. God has a plan for your life. Do you want it? Let me give you three words that'll help you to find it. And we'll let them start with the letter C.

The first is the word confession. Confess your sins. Get your heart right with God. You want God to lead you? Listen, Psalm 66 verse 18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." You are wasting your breath if you pray with unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your heart and in your life. Are you listening? That's so plain. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." We talk about the great prayer promises; that is one of them.

Listen to First John 1 verses 5 and 6, "This then is the message that we've heard of Him and declare unto you, 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. And we lie and do not the truth." You see, if there's sin in our lives, rather than walking in the light, we're stumbling in the dark.

Let me put it this way. Do you have an idol in your heart? You say, "Oh, no, they worship idols over in foreign countries. We don't worship idols here." Well, do you know what an idol is? An idol is anything you love more than God. An idol is anything you serve more than God. An idol is anything you fear more than God. Let me give you a verse of Scripture; Ezekiel 14 verse 3, "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them?" That is, can these men who have idols say, "God lead



me?" God says, "Look. These men have idols in their heart. What right do they have to come to Me and ask Me to guide them?"

So if you want to know God's will for the future, number one, confession. Make certain there's no unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your life. Does that sound strange to you? That's normal living. That's normal living.

As I stand before you, and I don't say this braggingly, I'd be a fool not to say it, there's no unconfessed, unrepented of sin in my life that I know of. I'd be a sheer fool. How can you expect to have God in your life if you regard iniquity in your heart? Number one, confession, First John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Number two: consecration. It's not enough to be clean; you need to be consecrated. Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Do you really want to know the will of God, or do you just want God to help you in your plans? Have you acknowledged Him in all of your ways, not some of your ways? Acknowledge Him. And don't say, "Listen, Lord, your servant is speaking." Say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

Number three, listen: confession, which leads to cleansing, then consecration, and here's the most important. Well, not the most important, but a vital thing, and that is concentration. Confession, consecration, concentration: listen to God. You see, there's the voice behind you. There's God guiding you with His eye. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as a gentle dove, as a still, small voice. This is why you need that quiet time alone with God. You say, "Well, God never speaks to me." Well, you'd be foolish to deny that there's no music in the air just because you have your radio turned off. God is speaking. Are you listening?

So here's the first thing I want to say to you as we think about your future: beware of this godless planning. Beware of self-centered planning. Okay? Let's move the second thing.

Not only should you beware of self-centered planning, but you need to beware of self-confident presumption. Look in James 4 verse 14 and 15, "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 you ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, or do this, or that.'"

One of our dear ladies said, "I was driving on the highway. There was ice on the road. The car in front of me hit its brakes; I hit my brakes, and my car spun around and turned over and over and over," an SUV. She said, "Everything just flashed in front of my eyes." And she said, "God delivered me." I said, "What was going through your mind at that time?" Said, "I thought, I won't see my mother again." Then she said, "I turned my thoughts to God immediately. Then I kind of felt around to see if I'm all here, and I was."

Our lives are like that, just like a vapor. The word, "What is your life, it is even a vapor" it's the word atmos, A-T-M-O-S. It's the word we get atmosphere from. It's like that foggy breath you see in the



morning on a crisp, cold air day. It's there for a little while, and then vanishes away. This may be the last sermon you will ever hear. Don't boast carelessly about the future.

You know, the old timers used to sign their letters "D.V." Did you ever get a letter that somebody would sign at the end, "I'll see you so and so, D.V.?" What does that mean? "Deo volente:" "God willing. God willing." We don't know what the future holds. Now we think, "Well, you know, I've got this coming year to live." This may be the year you check out of here. This may be the year, this may be the year that you are going to Heaven. Or this may be the year that you're going to Hell. This may be your final year. You don't know.

I may have told you about a friend I had named Bob. He and I were in seminary together, and Bob and I would commute from our church field to seminary on the Chef Menteur Highway down in New Orleans, from New Orleans to the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. We would go back and forth on Sunday mornings, about a 65 mile trip. And I had to be in class at 8:00 in the mornings, so you can imagine what time I had to get up and go. And we would drive back and forth and fellowship.

Bob pastored a little church out in the country, actually the area that Brett Favre comes from, the great football player. And he pastored a church there and he would talk to me and I would talk to him, and he was a big old tall, handsome, sun-crowned guy. We would fish together there for speckled trout in the Gulf Coast, and laugh and talk back and forth going to school, pray together, encourage one another in the ministry.

Bob was in his 20's, early 20's. He said to me on an occasion, "Adrian, I know of a man on your church field who's lost. He doesn't understand how to be saved. He's very sick. He doesn't have long to live." As I remember what he said to me, he said it something like this, "Adrian, he has one foot in the grave and another foot on a banana peel." I think that's the way he said it. He said, "He's had a very serious heart attack. He's an old man. I don't think he has long to live. His name is Mr. Bourgeois." He said, "Adrian, he's on your church field. Would you go by and talk to Mr. Bourgeois about Jesus?" I said, "Yes, Bob, I will."

So I went upon a time, just cold turkey. He didn't know me at all, but I knocked on the door. The old man came to the door. I said, "Are you Mr. Bourgeois?" He said, "Yes." I said, "I'm Adrian Rogers. I live here in this town and I'm the pastor of the little Baptist church here. Would you mind if I just came in and shared with you about the Lord Jesus Christ and how you can know that you're going to Heaven when you die?" He said, "No, not at all. Come in." So I went in and I shared with Mr. Bourgeois. And he prayed and asked Jesus to come into his heart, was wonderfully saved, and I thank God for that. But that's not the end of the story.

Bob, my young sun-crowned, tall, handsome, vigorous buddy, a few days after that, was having dinner with his wife. He ate a meal, they had a little conversation, he stood up, took a few steps across the living room floor, gave a gasp, fell down, and died right there in the living room. This was a young man in his 20's, the picture of health, in my estimation. Now he had said to me, "Adrian,



there's an old man on your church field who only has a few days to live." That old man lived for years. It was Bob who only had a few days to live.

Now I know what you're thinking. You think, "Well, I'm in good health, I'm young, I'm this, I'm that." Friend, you don't know, do you? You do not know. James 4:14, "What is your life? It's a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." And what we need to beware of is not only self-centered planning, but what we need to beware of is self-confident presumption, thinking we're going to do this, or we're going to do that, and we get frivolous with our use of time.

Proverbs 27 verse 1 says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." So I'm going to ask you as you plan the future to say, "Lord God, I don't know what the future holds, I don't know how much more time I have. So Lord, help me not to waste time. Help me to apply my days unto wisdom. And Lord, may I live out the rest of my days, whether they be few or whether they be many, may they be used for You." To kill time is suicide by degrees. Don't presume upon the time that you have.

If this were the last sermon you would ever hear, would you go from this meeting place to Heaven or Hell? Many a time I've preached the last sermon that a person has ever heard before they died. Are you ready? Do you know Jesus? Are you saved? "Oh," you say, "I'll get saved one of these days." "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Now here's the third and the final thing I want to lay upon your heart as you think about your future. Not only beware of self-centered planning, leaving God out of your plannings; beware of self-confident presumption, to think that you have so much time.

And by the way, before we leave that point, you know Jesus in Luke 12 verses 16 through 20 told of a rich farmer. He also was a businessman. Farmers are businessmen. This man had great crops, so great that he didn't even really have enough room to warehouse it all. And he said, "What am I going to do? My barns are overflowing." He said, "Well, I know what I'll do." First of all, I'll tear down these old barns. I'll build bigger barns. And then I will say to myself, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Eat, drink, and be merry.' And Jesus said in Luke 12:20 that God said unto him, "You fool. You fool." "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall though things be that you have laid up in store?"

You got a big bank account, do you? You say, "I've got enough squared away for my retirement. I'm all right." You may not have 24 hours. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He said, "Many years." God said, "Tonight." His clock was slow.

Here's the third thing you need to beware of. Not only self-centered planning, not only self-confident presumption, but perhaps the most dangerous thing of all, and it is this, friend. You need to beware of self-complacent procrastination. Now notice to where James is headed. Look at it. He says in James 4 verses 15 to 17, "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." Here was a man very complacent, very boastful. "All such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Now, here's a man who knew what he ought to do, but he didn't do it. He's boasting in himself; all that he's done. He has become complacent. He is aware of God's will, but he doesn't want to do



it. Procrastination may be the biggest problem most of us have today. It's a very deceptive sin. You see, other sins are very obvious: drunkenness, stealing, hate, violence, these are all very obvious. Procrastination is so deceptive. Many of us think we're doing good if we don't do the dirty dozen sins. You know, we have our little list of sins and we say, "Well, I don't do any of those things. I'm fine." But most of us don't think of procrastination as a sin. Now the Bible says, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I've said this before, but I want you to listen to it. It is a greater sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do. Now most of us don't believe that, but I believe it with all of my heart. The Bible teaches it. The Bible teaches that the sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission. It's very simple if you think about it.

Why is it a greater sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do? Simple. If you're doing what you ought to do, you can't do what you ought not to do. But even if you're not doing what you ought not to do, you still wouldn't be doing what you ought to do. So it is a greater sin to fail to do what you ought to do than to do what you ought not to do. The sins of omission are greater than the sins of commission.

A little boy said, "The sins of omission, those are the sins you ought to have done and didn't do." No. What are the sins of omission? Why does he say in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin?" It's not that the man says, "I will never do it." He just doesn't do it. It is self-complacent procrastination.

Now this sin is not only very deceptive, but you know, it's kind of respectful, because you don't know what God is leading me to do. You don't know what God is telling me to do, so I may look very fine to you, very respectful to you, and yet this sin would be in my heart and in my life.

Let me talk to you about the sin of omission, the sin of procrastination. Let me tell you why it is such a dangerous and deceptive sin. It's the reason that people are lost. Why do people go to Hell today? Because they lie, steal, commit adultery? No. Oh, those are sins worthy to damn us, but those sins have been paid for. Now, the reason a person is lost today simply is because he's failed to do what he ought to do. John chapter 3 and verse 18, Jesus said, "He that believeth on Him," speaking of Himself, "is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed." No longer is a man condemned to Hell because he's a sinner, because those sins have been paid for. "He that believeth on Him," on Jesus, "is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." Why? Because he has not believed.

One time I read of a tract. On one side it said, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer: Acts 16 verse 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." On the other side of the tract it said, "What must I do to be lost?" And there was nothing printed there. Why? Because you don't have to do anything to be lost. You don't have to curse the church. You don't have to blaspheme God. You are already lost. John 3:18, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: he that believeth not is



condemned already, because he hath not believed." It is the sin of omission now that sends a soul to Hell.

Many of you want to correct your thinking. You say, "My mind is messed up. How am I going to get these images of pornography out of my mind? How am I going to get this hatred out of my mind, these negative thoughts out of our mind?" Do you know why you think wrongly? Because you're not thinking rightly. You see, the reason we do this, what Zig Ziglar calls, "This stinkin' thinkin'," is because we're not thinking what we ought to think. Your mind is like a garden. You don't have to sow weeds. All you have to do is to fail to cultivate the garden. The weeds will come.

Let me tell you something wonderful. God created you. God made you where you cannot think two thoughts at one time. If you're thinking what is right, you cannot be thinking what is wrong. Now, when David got into trouble and committed adultery with Bathsheba, the Bible teaches in Second Samuel chapter 11 that it was in the afternoon. David was still in bed. He hadn't gotten out of bed. He had forgotten, I'm certain, to have a quiet time with the Lord in the morning. His problem was not aggressive lust; it was simply neglected duty. He was failing to do what he ought to have done, and, therefore, he did what he ought not to do.

Center your heart, your mind on God. Fill your heart and mind with that which is right, true, just, lovely, pure, virtuous, of good report; you're not going to have difficulty with impure, unclean thoughts.

The sin of omission is the reason many homes are broken up. Now God's plan is one man married to one woman till death do them part. But we have homes, even in our Christian churches, that are being fractured and coming apart. What do you have to do to harm your home? Do you have to beat or curse your wife? Do you have to commit adultery against your husband? No, just neglect to do what you ought to do. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I don't know how many times a day I tell Joyce that I love her, but I do. I hold her in my arms and say, "I love you. You're precious. You're wonderful to me." Listen. One man said to his wife, she said, "Why don't you tell me 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." Love is not like a diamond that you get and hold and treasure forever. You know the ad, "Diamonds are Forever." By the way, they're not. No. Love is like a flower. It has to be cultivated. It's tender. Love is a growing, living thing. This is why so many homes fail, just by neglect. Your love, you have to visualize it, you have to verbalize it, you have to vitalize it.

Why do churches fail? Why do we have here in our county half-empty churches? Is it because people have gone to war against the church? No, they have simply neglected their church.

There's a verse of Scripture over there in the book of Numbers, chapter 32 verse 23, and this is what it says, "But if ye will not do so, behold, you've sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Now what sin is that? Well what had happened is when the Israelites were coming out of Egypt and going into Canaan, before they crossed over into Canaan, there on the east side, before they went over to what we call today the West Bank, on the east side, there were two tribes, Reuben and Gad, who said to Joshua, "Look, we don't want to cross over. We just want to stay here. The grass is tall and lush. Our families love it here. If it's all right with you, we'll just stay here." But Joshua said,



"But your brothers are going to war over there. When they cross over into Canaan, the Canaanites are there. There're going to be battles." And the tribes of Gad and Reuben said, "That's okay. When it's time for war, we will come over and help our brothers." And here's what Joshua said, "All right. But if you don't do so, you've sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Now what does that mean to us today? Well you know we have a lot of people who want to stay on the easy side of the river, don't we? We have a lot of people who want others to work and build their church, but they just want to sit over here on this side and not come to the aid of this church. Question: how much of the work of this church is being done by you, or do you think you've done God a wild favor when you get here on Sunday morning? Did you know that when you don't come, it's a vote to close the doors? If everybody voted like you voted, there wouldn't even be a service. Some of you folks are watching at home. You could be here, but you didn't come. You're a member of Bedside Baptist.

"He wasn't much for stirring about, it wasn't his desire. While others worked to build their church, he was sitting by the fire. Same old story day by day, he never seemed to tire. No matter what the others did, he was sitting by the fire. At last he died, as all must do, some say he went up higher. But if he's doing what he used to do, he's sittin' by the fire.

No man has a right to be at peace when his brethren are at war. We have people in our churches that say, "Well, feed me, feed me." Or, "Brother So-And-So feeds me more than Brother So-And-So." They want to eat the meat, drink the sweet, let others work. They don't do anything. They're the reason that so many churches are failing today. You don't have to go to war against the church. Listen, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

If every member of this church were just like you, what kind of a church would this church be? If everybody sang with the same enthusiasm you sing with, if everybody gives the same portion of their salary that you give, if everybody prays for the lost like you pray. We have people who are clock-watchers during the invitation. They're not interested in souls getting saved. They're interested in being the first in the cafeteria line. That's right. They really do not care. They say, "Well, I haven't done anything wrong." "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I'm telling you, the reason that people are lost is the sin of omission. The reason that people have wrong thinking is the sin of omission. The reason that homes break up, the sin of omission. The reason that churches fail, it is the sin of omission; failing to do what we ought to do. You say, "Well, one of these days I'm going to get to it." Friend, you have sin in your heart. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I've got to conclude the message today, but as we think about your future, beware of self-centered planning. Don't leave God out of your plan. As you think about your future, beware of self-confident presumption. You do not have a promise of tomorrow. Your life is like a vapor. What you're going to do. If you think about your future, beware of self-complacent procrastination, saying,



"Mañana, one of these days I'm going to do it." "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

I'm going to give an invitation for some of you to come and be a part of this New Testament church. You ought to do it, then do it. Why do you wait? Some of you need to give your heart to Jesus. You say, "One of these days, I'm going to do it." Now, there's some people who don't believe in God at all. They don't believe in Heaven or Hell. But I have met a number of people who know there's a God, a death to die, a God to face, a judgment to go through, and you ask them why they're not saved, and they say, "Well, I'm going to, I'm going to do that some day." Listen to me. Why would you talk that way? I've never talked to a man who ever said, "I am determined to go to Hell." But people think, "One of these days I'll be saved." But the Bible says in Second Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." The Bible says Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

You want to face your future? Face your future by giving your heart to Jesus Christ and letting the Holy Spirit of God be in you to guide you and to show you and to give you a hope that is wonderful and glorious. If I had a thousand lives to live, I'd give them all to Jesus.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. How many of you would say, "Pastor Rogers, I am saved. I know that I'm saved, and not because I, quote, 'feel saved,' but because I have a Bible reason. I have repented of my sin. I've trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord. As evidence that I've trusted Him, I made it public and followed Him in believer's baptism. I am now following Jesus, living for Jesus, in obedience in the fellowship of a New Testament church, and that is my testimony."

Now if you couldn't say yes, there may be several reasons. First of all, maybe you've never really repented of your sin and trusted Jesus. Or maybe you've done that and yet you've never really acknowledged Him and made it public and followed Him in believer's baptism. Or maybe you've done that, but you're not in fellowship right now and you know it. Or you know you need God to work in your heart and in your life. Well what a wonderful time it would be today for you to start this new year, this wonderful time, with none of the baggage of yesterday, to say anew and afresh, "I'm giving my heart to You, my God."

If you're not saved, I want you to pray a prayer like this, "Dear God, I'm a sinner and I'm lost. I'm ashamed of my sin. I repent of my sin. I turn from my sin to You, Jesus. I open my heart. I receive You by faith into my life as my Lord and Savior. Take control of my life and begin now to make me the person You want me to be, and I will follow You the rest of my days if You will only give me strength. I will live for You, not in order to be saved, but because You have saved me by Your grace. I just trust You now. In Your holy name, Amen."



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