

Business Planning

2-8-26

James 4:13 (NIV)

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.”

As we have said before, James is like the NT book of Proverbs giving us cause and effect truths for this life. Here James challenges church going worshippers to live out our Christianity in our everyday business affairs. Our worship may be exemplary, our personal morality impeccable; but when it comes our business do we think entirely on a worldly plane. James is warning Christian business people not to put a false security in their worldly plans.

James 4:14 (NIV)

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Our time on this earth is like a vapor soon to vanish. Like the rich fool of Jesus’ parable in Luke 12:13, feeling secure, he makes rational plans for his future without consulting God who is the provider all things.

God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.” When making our plans we need to remember:

Psalm 144:4 (ESV)

Man is like a breath;

his days are like a passing shadow.

Since our physical life is only a vapor and God is eternal, we should include HIM in our plans.

Leaving God out of our plans is an arrogant assumption of self-sufficiency and a declaration of independence from God. It is a failure not to recognize this reality. Therefore:

James 4:15 (NIV)

Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

This is not simply to add a “God willing” at the end of every plan. We must make plans consulting God. Each plan should be evaluated by HIS standards and goals; laid before God with adequate time spent in *listening* for God’s ideas. Therefore, the statement “if God wills” is a prayerful belief that after consulting God we are proceeding in the will of God.

We never have to feel insecure about plans made with careful prayer consulting God's directions. We must have a sincere appreciation for God's control of affairs and for his specific will for us. This does not rule out planning. But it does rule out relying on our own self efforts.

James 4:16 (NIV)

As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

Boasting about self-efforts and our anticipated successes in this world system defines godlessness.

1 John 2:16 (ESV) NO/OH

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Any plan confidently made outside God's will and not discerned through prayer is not just foolish it is evil. It is evil because it is an arrogant disregard for God. It is evil, because it robs God of his rightful honor as sovereign and exalts a mere human as if they were God. God says, include HIM in our plans. Now that we know what is right; if we fail to do it, we are sinning.

James 4:17 (NIV)

If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Certainly, this applies to all our decisions. However, in context, this deals primarily with business type secular decisions. James is saying to businessmen and women, godliness should be applied in our business decisions. If not, it is sin. James in chapter 5 warns against the temptation of evil business practices of wealthy unbelievers.

James 5:5 (NIV) - summary -

You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

God does not want us to be like the animals that were fed until the day they were slaughtered. God, therefore, instructs us to consult HIM in our planning. When we do, God will provide all things for us.

Philippians 4:19 (NIV)

My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

John 3:16 – God died for us and desires to provide all things for us. Put HIM first.