

Enlightened:Part 8-Life in God's Perspective

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- 1.What simple thing still blows your mind?
- 2.What`s a new habit or practice you're trying to cultivate?

WORD

James 4:13-17 (NIV84)

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

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

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If this is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

16 As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

In verse 13, "Now listen, you who says, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money."

James is reprimanding some folks here - perhaps the views of life or perspective in life - but it is stated very broadly so as to include virtually anyone, "Now listen, you who says. Anyone who does what? Five things:

- First, they plan to set out on a trip today or tomorrow: "Today or tomorrow we will go . . ."
- Second, they plan to arrive at a destination: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city."
- Third, they plan to spend a certain amount of time there: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there."
- Fourth, they plan to engage in business and carry through a plan of action while they are in that city: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there, and engage in business."
- Fifth, they plan for the business to have certain results: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there, and engage in business, and make a profit."

What's the problem here? Is this wrong? To plan and intend to go places and do things? No, not per se.

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

Proverbs 19:21 NIV

DISCUSSION

Do you have a mission statement in life? Do you have goals? Have you schedule a time to pray for all your goals? Share.

WORD

James 4:14 (NIV84)

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

Life is uncertain - *you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.*

Life is short - *You are a mist that appears for a little while.*

Life has end - *then vanishes.*

James might be saying "No, you don't stop planning. You don't drop out of society. You don't become a hermit, waiting for your little vapor of life to disappear."

*What is hermit??? ***“One that retires from society and lives in solitude especially for religious reasons.”***

Our mindset matters. How we talk about our plans matters.

Believing that our life is a vapor may make no practical, bottom-line difference in whether we plan to do business in a place for one month or one year or ten years. But, in James' mind - and he speaks for God - it makes a difference how you think about it and talk about it. "Come now you who say . . ."

Why? Why does that matter? Because God created us not just to do things and go places with our bodies, but to have certain attitudes and convictions and verbal descriptions that reflect the truth - a true view of life and God. God means for the truth about himself and about life to be known and felt and spoken as part of our reason for being. You weren't just created to go to Calgary and do business and have better life; you are and you were made to go to Calgary with thoughts and attitudes and words that reflect a right view of life and God.

DISCUSSION

Have you ever planned things in your life without involving God? What was the result and what lessons did you learn?

WORD

James 4:15-17 (NIV84)

15 *Instead, you ought to say, "If this is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."*

16 *As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.*

17 *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

If this is the Lord's Will, We Will Live

First, when he says, "If the Lord's will, we will live," he teaches us that the duration of our lives is in the hands of God. Or: God governs how long we will live. Or: God is ultimately in control of life and death.

We may not know how long our vapor-like life will linger in the air, but God knows, because God decides how long we will live: "If the Lord wills we will live." And James is saying: If this is a true view of life and God, then it should shape our mindset and shape our way of talking.

In Acts 18:21, Paul left Ephesus and said, "I will return to you again if God wills." In 1 Corinthians 4:19 he writes, "I will come to you soon, if the Lord's will."

For most of his life he did not know if the next town might be his burial place. That was in the hands of God. And so are our lives. God will decide how long we live and when we die.

DISCUSSION

Where is the right balance between thinking about life is a vapor versus not becoming morbid and depressed?

LIFE APPLICATION

Let us shape our mindset and our attitude and our words with the truth (word of God). He means for that truth to be known and be spoken about. He means for it to be a part of the substance of our conversation. God means for a true view of himself to be known and believed and embraced and cherished and kept in mind and spoken of. "Instead you ought to say . . ."

If this is the Lord's Will, we will do this or that.

Now, there is another truth about God in verse 15: When he says, "If God's will we will . . . do this or that," he teaches us that the activities and accomplishments of our lives are in God's hands. God governs what we accomplish. Not only are our lives in his hands, our success is in his hands. "Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord's will, we will live and also do this or that.'" "If the Lord's will . . . we will do this or that." And if the Lord does not will, we will not do this or that. Whether we do this or that on our business trip is in the hands of God.

Let us not stop in making plans and let us allow God to be part of the plans.

VERSE TO MEDITATE ON

11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

PRAYER

Share your prayer request and answered prayer. Pray for one another and throughout this week.



