

Faith in Action - James

James 4:11-17 – “If the Lord wills” – Oct. 25, 2020



Introduction

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. And yet in a world that tells us to live for ourselves – to put ourselves first - it's easy to assume the chief end of man is me – to live for my comfort, my glory, and my desire. As James continues to help us squash pride, he does so by showing us an accurate view of the self and of God.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use Psalm 119:33-40 as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

James helps us see ourselves (and God) accurately...

- I. To cure our proud speech (4:11-12)
- II. To cure us of proud planning (4:13-17)

Read & Discuss

1) Read 4:11-12

To 'speak evil against' another is speech that's motivated by *envy* and *selfish ambition*. In other words, it's speech that has the aim of making ourselves look superior and bringing others down a notch (gossip, slander, criticism, blame-shifting, grumbling). What is the law that James has in mind when he talks about someone who 'judges the law' (see 2:8)? In what way is this person assuming the position of God in their speaking evil?

Our culture loves to misquote Jesus from Matthew 7 as if to say we should never judge because each person's morality is a private choice. But that is to argue the *opposite* of what James is saying (and of what Jesus meant in Matthew 7). When is it appropriate for a Christian to 'judge' another believer? What does Jesus assume about our *tone* (Matt 7:1-4)? What does the New Testament assume about the *standard* by which we judge (James 5:19-20).

In contentious time when people often hold their opinions on disputable matters as *law* or a hill to die on, James' instruction is crucial for us. A parallel text to consider is Paul's teaching in Romans 14:1-12. Take some time to read it and consider what Paul's saying. We did a teaching on this text with application on the election and COVID-19, so if you prefer, you can listen to it here: "[Fellowship and Disputable Matters.](#)"

2) Read 4:13-17

After addressing proud speech, James turns to proud, presumptuous planning in vv13-17. Planning or making a profit is not wrong (Prov. 20:8, 21:5) – but making plans that ignore God or forget that He is our sovereign King is not only foolish – it's arrogant and evil. To the person who forgets who they are in their presumptuous planning, James reminds them who we are: we are 'a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.' How does this truth about us humble us in our planning, our successes, and our failures? How does accepting the fact that God is God and we are not help us to have gratitude for the blessings we have and trust God in the hard times?

Additional Reading: Isaiah 46:9-10, Ecclesiastes 3:9-22, Proverbs 16:1-3

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to James 5:1-6 "Laying up treasures in heaven"
