



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

PRESUMPTION...LIVING INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD- PART 2- JAMES 4:13-14

COLORADO

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Presumption is a sin that comes from a wrong understanding of Who governs our lives and pursuits. We can live as though God doesn't exist believing that destiny is in our hands and totally rely on ourselves. That's ignoring the truth of God's providence and living independently of God. We can live life knowing that God exists but refuse to submit to Him or His will. This only demonstrates that our desires are valued greater than God's purpose and will for our lives. We ignore His sovereignty. That's living independently of God. And we can live as though we acknowledge God and His will are supreme yet still disregard it. Many Christians can so easily live in this mindset. They acknowledge by words and apparent understanding that they affirm God's will, yet by their life and planning, they disregard it. That's living independently of God. When we live and plan our lives without regard to God and His will, we sin. So James addresses this critical issue as he looks at a businessman's strategy which at first glance appears wise, but actually disregards God and His will in planning.

PRESUMPTION: LIVING INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD- JAMES 4:13-14

James 4:13-14: "(13) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." (14) Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

Here in these verses, James addresses the self-ambitious, presumptuous attitude of living and planning without regard to God and His Providence. This stands in direct contrast to living dependently upon the Lord and making decisions with regard to His will and purpose for our life.

I. WHY PRESUMPTION IS SIN- JAMES 4:14

James 4:14: "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

James offers two reasons why presumption in life is a sin. First, we don't know what our life will even be like tomorrow. And second, our lives are just a vapor. Let see what James means by these two factors.

A. "YOU DON'T KNOW"- JAMES 4:14A

James 4:14a: "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow."

James makes an emphatic statement that rebukes those who seek to plan their life independently of God. James says, "You don't know". You who plan for your future without regard to God, do not even know what will happen tomorrow, let alone today. We are not in control and ignorant of the future.

%ou don't know+Greek **%ouk epistasthe,**" a verb that refers to our ignorance, no sure or accurate knowledge.

James is saying, you who are busy laying out your plans for the next year assuming that you know and can control the future, you who are planning independently without regard to the only One Who knows the future and is sovereignly in control of the future, act as though you are in control. But, we are ignorant of the future and we have no control over the course of life's events. God is the only One Who knows all things and He alone knows the future...we do not. God is sovereignly in control of everything that happens in our lives. And not only does He know everything, but He is all powerful and will weave out His perfect plan in our lives each day for our good and His glory. (Romans 8:28) No one can know what will happen tomorrow with any certainty, yet we act as though we are in charge when we live and plan presumptuously without regards to God and His will. We ignore His providence and walk independently of God. How foolish is that for we have no sure or accurate knowledge about tomorrow. This fact alone should cause us to live acknowledging God and His will as supreme and live dependent on Him alone. Why in the world would we live independently of Him in our planning and living?

What we need is a proper understanding of our place in the world. God created us and all things. He has the right and authority to rule. For us to plan without regards to God is so foolish because we cannot be certain about anything. Moo asks, "How can you being the creature you are, presume to dictate the course of future events?"¹ Contrast that with a believer who lives dependently on God. He has a genuine faith that's real and can accept the unknown future with confident trust in God and calm reliance on God as the only source of security in this life.

James exposes presumption as sin first because we are not in control nor do we know the future. We can't even know what will happen tomorrow and so planning without regard to God Who knows the future and is in control of the future is not only foolish, but it is sin because of the arrogant attitude of self- sufficiency in disregard to God. This ignores His providence and His sovereignty. To depend on ourselves instead of Him is crazy.

David wrote in Psalm 27:1, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." Solomon wisely wrote in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." This is how we are called to live: not leaning on our own understanding, but depending on and acknowledging the Lord in all our planning and living.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0107

Colorado

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B. YOU ARE JUST A VAPOR- JAMES 4:14B

James 4:14: "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

The second reason why James calls us to always regard God in our planning is because life is frail and short. James centers on our life personally by saying, "You are a vapor".

vapor+Greek **atmis**" means a puff of smoke, vapor, breath that appears momentarily in the cold air or steam from a hot pan.

Our life is like a vapor, a mist. James focuses on the fact of the frailty and brevity of life. A puff of smoke is here one moment and gone the next, visible only for a brief period of time. That is why James says that we are like a vapor "that appears for a little while". James speaks in the present tense emphasizing this as a regular, ongoing event. Our life is a vapor visible for a brief time, a little while.

But what happens? James says "and then", marking out an event that is sure to follow. What happens to this vapor, this mist? It vanishes away.

vanishes+Greek **aphonizomene**" means to disappear fully from sight.

James instructs in this verse that life is frail and brief. We are here today and gone tomorrow. Scripture points to this same message as well. In Job 7:6 we are reminded that our days are swifter than a weavers shuttle; Job 7:7 that life is a breath; Job 7:9 that life is a cloud that vanishes and is gone; Job 14:1-2 that life is short lived; Psalm 39:5-6 that life is a breath; Psalm 102:11 that our days are like a lengthened shadow; and Psalm 103:15 that our days are like. What is the point? What is James trying to say? Because life is so brief and frail and we don't know the future, we are foolish to ignore God's will.²

But instead we overlook our frailty that we are merely a vapor. We ignore the fact that all life is in the hand of God and we plan and live independently without regards to God. Since life is transitory and as fleeting as a wisp of vapor, how foolish to ignore the unchanging God and proudly go about planning for your life without regard for God.³

We must live in light of the truth that God is sovereignly in control and we are not...we must trust Him, seek His will, make our plans wisely with regards to His desire, purpose and plan for our life. We must seek to serve Him, seek to please Him and plan...holding all things loosely for may His will be done and not mine!

We must commit ourselves to be decisively submitted to God, not living by the presumption of man but only with the permission of God. John Calvin

said, "We read everywhere in Scripture that the holy servants of God spoke unconditionally of future things, when yet they had it as a fixed principle in their mind that they could do nothing without the permission of God."⁴

Presumption seeks to take into our own hands the reins of planning.

Presumption sees life itself as a continuing right rather than as a daily mercy.⁵

James is not saying don't plan and be wise. He is saying, don't plan without regard to God and His will because that reflects an arrogant attitude of self-sufficiency in disregard to God, ignoring His providence and sovereignty.

- » Are you busy planning without regard to God? Be honest.
- » Do you acknowledge by words and apparent understanding that you affirm God's will and sovereignty in your life; yet by how you live and plan, do you in fact disregard it?
- » Do you exclude God in planning the daily affairs of your life? He cares how you spend your every moment. You are called to His purpose and glory.
- » Do you live as though you are in charge? Remember, only God is. Life is frail. How does this affect how you live today and plan for tomorrow?
- » Do you have a proper understanding of your place in this world when you remember the truth about Who is in control?
- » God is in control. He controls all things; every event, every circumstance of our lives and He weaves His perfect plan out for His glory and our good. Does this keep you humble and decisively submitted to Him?

*"For He Himself knows our frame;
He is mindful that we are but dust.
As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
When the wind has passed over it, it is no more;
And its place acknowledges it no longer.
But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children,
To those who keep His covenant,
And who remember His precepts to do them."
Psalm 103:14-18*

¹Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.203.

²MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.233.

³Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 253.

⁴Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.161.

⁵Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.162.