

## **“Planning”**

***James 4:13-17***

### **Introduction**

When general contractors build a house, they are responsible for managing all aspects of the project from groundbreaking to completion. They schedule the build, order the materials, follow the blueprints and oversee the labor. The project requires an enormous amount of planning. Suppose the homeowners want something done differently than what's on the initial plan. In that case, because the general contractor does not own the home - they must be willing to change the plans to satisfy the owners; the contractor does not control the outcome. In the same way, we do not own the plan for our lives because we are not in control. We must bring God into our plans because He is sovereign.

God expects and commands us to plan and set forth an orderly way of living. But in our planning process, we must recognize our human limitations. We can plan, but we cannot control the outcome because life is uncertain. We must acknowledge the brevity of life by not wasting time living randomly or acting as if life will never end because it will. We need to rely entirely on God for His wisdom and guidance. So, although we can make plans, we must acknowledge that they are not final until we consult God about them. Our approach to planning should be one of humility, not independent self-confidence. To avoid arrogance, we should acknowledge that our proposals will only happen “if the Lord wills.” (James 4:15)

Planning must be done in submission to God’s providence, will and sovereignty. God’s sovereignty means He controls the outcome. God’s providence refers to the hidden ways He brings things to pass to achieve His will and His goal. Submitting our plans to God requires us to leave room for God to adjust or reverse those plans. When our designs do not align with God’s will, we must relinquish our desires to His will and allow Him to change the blueprints. It is sinful and evil to dismiss God from the planning process as though we are sovereign. To plan in a way that pleases God, we must include Him in the process, allowing uncertainties and leaving things open for Him to interject. In doing so, we will flow in concert with God’s will.

### **Getting Started**

1. What are some jobs that require a lot of planning?
2. When have you made plans that did not work out the way you wanted?

### **Let’s Get Personal**

1. How have you lacked planning and perhaps been living randomly or wasting time?
2. When have you been arrogant and unwilling to allow God to change your plans?
3. How have you seen God's sovereignty and providence make something beautiful out of a bad situation in your life?

### Take the Next Step

1. What plans and decisions do you need to submit to God today? How can you humbly allow God to change your plans throughout the week?
2. How can you begin to communicate your plans differently so others can see you acknowledge that God is in control and you are not?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to examine the following passages: 1 Corinthians 7:21; Philippians 3:19-20; John 3:6-7; John 17:4; Psalm 39:5, 11; Proverbs 16:3, 9; Acts 18:21; Proverbs 27:1; Proverbs 3:5-6; Luke 12:13-21; 1 Corinthians 16:7; Psalm 90:5, 6, 10.

### Renew Your Mind

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

*James 4:14-15*

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