

January 3, 2021  
*The Bridge Bible Fellowship*  
Pastor Paul S. Brown  
James 4:13-17

“Deo Volente”

**XI. Do Not Plan Presumptuously OR Stop Living Like Practical Atheists (4:13-17)**

**A. What You Shouldn't Say (13-14)** – <sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, “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.” <sup>14</sup> 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.

**B. What You Should Say (15-16)** – <sup>15</sup> Instead, *you ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

**C. Why You Should Say It (17)** – <sup>17</sup> Therefore, to one who knows *the* right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

**So What?**

## Discussion & Application:

1. James 4:13 looks like a good business plan. Is James saying that we shouldn't plan for the future? What passages of Scripture give examples and/or exhortations to us to plan for the future? If that isn't James' main point, is he somehow saying we shouldn't be concerned about making money? Or as some have said, is he saying that Capitalism is wrong?
2. If neither of those are James' main point in this text, then what is he saying?
3. What is "presumption?" What are the two reasons James gives for not making presumptuous plans in verse 14? What analogies does he use for the brevity of our lives? James often quotes or says similar things to his older brother, Jesus. What did Jesus say about this in the Gospels? (List passages)
4. What is it we are supposed to say when we are making our plans? What are the two specific things we need to take into account when we say it (v. 15)? Regarding the first of the two, if we really believed it, what would be the first thought going through our minds when we wake up in the morning? Do you think that when you wake up? Do you thank God? What difference would this make in your attitude as you approach the new day?
5. What do the Latin words "**Deo Volente**" mean? Why were those words important to certain religious groups in history? Do you ever say the English equivalent? Why or why not? Why do you think those words aren't spoken as much as they used to be?
6. Share your own definition of a practical atheist? How does that concept apply to the passage in James 4:13-17? Do you ever act like a practical atheist? Are there specific areas of your life where you do so more frequently than others? Why do you think that is? What can you begin to do about it this week?
7. Many people quote "The Lord's Prayer" like some kind of mantra or magic spell that forces God to answer them (the very thing Jesus said prayer should not be – "vain repetition" – Mt. 6:6-8). What can we do to avoid saying words like Deo Volente in a vain repetitious way?
8. Why does James equate not saying Deo Volente (or English equivalent) with boasting in our arrogance? Remember that James often reflects the wisdom literature that speaks of two roads (two ways; two paths – see Psalm 1 or the book of Proverbs). What are the two roads he is describing in James 4:13-17? What is the connection with what he said in James 3:13-18? Why is this such a big deal that he would say it is evil?
9. How is James 4:17 starts with the word "therefore." How is it connected to what he just said in verses 13-16? What right thing (in context) is he speaking about?
10. People often describe what James says in verse 17 as the "sin of omission." What is the sin of omission? What is the other category of sin? What other passages of Scripture point to the sin of omission? See some of Jesus' parables to get started – i.e., Mt. 25 and then list as many as you can find.
11. What does the word "confession" mean? Do you frequently confess your sins? Do you more frequently confess your sins of commission or your sins of omission? Why? What could you do to become more sensitive to sins of omission and become a more obedient follower of Jesus?
12. Memorize James 4:13-17. Recite it every day. Make it a new habit to say the words, "Deo Volente," or "God willing," or "If the Lord wills" whenever you discuss the future. Prov. 3:5-6.