

James: Putting Our Faith Into Action

Lesson 7 - Including God

Warm up –

1. Everybody makes plans. What kinds of things do you plan for?

- what I'm going to have for lunch
- who I'm going to ask to the senior prom next year
- what I'm going to major in
- how to explain why I'm going to be home an hour past my curfew
- how many kids I'm going to have what I'm doing during Spring Break
- other :

2. Think of a decision you've recently had to make. It could be something major, like choosing which parent live with after a divorce. Or it could be something more ordinary, like choosing to join your friends for a late movie even though you know you'll be home way too late. How did you decide what to do?

3. How does God speak wisdom to us?

Lesson –

Have you ever had this conversation with yourself (or someone else?) "Hmmm. maybe I'll be a teacher, or maybe I'll go into business." Or perhaps this conversation: "I think I'll try out for the school play and then maybe I'll also get a part-time job." Or even this one: "School gets out early tomorrow. I think I'll go to the mall." These are some pretty normal conversations we have about planning our lives. But notice that they all lack one component. They don't include God.

James got fairly upset with the Christian business folk of his day when they talked of doing this or that and didn't bother asking themselves what God would have them do. It wasn't that James

was against making money or moving around, he just was way upset about people thinking they had so much control of their lives that they could do whatever they wanted, and God would bless them no matter what.

The problem with such grandiose thinking is that we begin to believe we're really in charge. Wrong, says James. You think you're such hot stuff. Don't you realize that you're really nothing but a bit of a fog, here today and gone tomorrow?

Much better if we pray about our decisions and mean it when we say, "If it is God's will, I'll do this or that." We should not only keep God in our plans, we should seek out God's will about what we should do. And pursuing God's will rather than our own brings not only security, but adventure too. Because with God in charge, we'll be able to do things we couldn't even dream of on our own.

Read James 4: 13-17

1. As you read this passage, guess what kind of mood James was in as he wrote. What clues do you have for deciding?
2. What kind of activities were business folk planning? Is there anything wrong with these?
3. "As it is, you boast and brag." What is James saying these people are boasting and bragging about?
4. What does James imply when he says our lives are a mist? Does that make you feel comforted or helpless? Why?
5. Is God really interested in all of our plans? What parts of our lives don't you think we need to include God in? Give some examples.
6. How do you tell what God wants you to do with your life? How will you figure out God's will for a decision you need to make this week?

7. The Bible tells us to pray continually (1 Thess. 5:17) And Psalm 1 called the person who meditates on the law of the Lord day and night "blessed." Is there a relationship between doing these two things and clueing God in on everything we do?

8. If God cares about everyday things like what movies you watch or how you dress or whom you date, how do you decide what choices to make? Can you be sure you're making the right decisions?