

**JAMES/LIVE LIKE IT P. 9 – “HOW TO CHOOSE A BETTER FUTURE” – JAMES 4:16 – JAMES 5:6**

**KNOW:** God controls the future, not us. Better to put your faith in God and His plans vs your plans. Wealth is temporary and makes a poor idol.

**Do:** Focus on God’s will and do it. Trust in Him vs ourselves. Discover His will vs living to accumulate wealth at the expense of finding and doing His best.

**\*INTRO. FOREST HOME AND COLLEGE BRIEFING CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS LABOR DAY WEEKEND. ALWAYS A SELL OUT CROWD. ONE YEAR AT THE LAST MINUTE ONE OF OUR GIRLS REALLY WANTED TO GO, SO I GAVE UP MY SPOT AND GAVE HER THE MONEY TO GET ME THE TAPES (YES CASSETTES)**

**\*THAT IS WHERE I GOT THE “TITLES VS TESTIMONY” STORY YOU HAVE HEARD ME DO IN THE PAST.**

**(TELL STORY)**

**I. TIES IN W. OUR NEXT SECTION IN THE BOOK OF JAMES – JAMES 4:13-17. Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. 17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.**

**A. MORE THAN JUST SAYING, “LORD WILLING WE WILL GO. . .” THIS IS ABOUT OUR PLANS VS GOD’S PLANS.**

**\*WE LIKE TO QUOTE JEREMIAH 29:11 (read together)11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.**

**B. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK – *GOD HAS PLANS FOR YOU* – RESULT = HAVING A GOOD FUTURE AND A HOPE EVEN WHEN WE ENCOUNTER SET BACKS.**

**\*BUT WE THINK WE HAVE A BETTER PLAN AND CENTER OUR LIVES AROUND THE GOAL OF PERSONAL HAPPINESS. (What would make me happy vs pleasing God first) IN DOING SO WE CAN MISS DOING THE MOST GOOD W. HOW GOD HAS WIRED US (which does bring joy and fulfillment).**

**C. COMBINE WHAT WE JUST READ W. **EPHESIANS 2:10** For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. – GOD CREATED US FOR GOOD WORKS. . ."IN CHRIST". NOT JUST GOOD WORKS, BUT GOOD WORKS. . ."IN CHRIST". DON'T MISS THAT. God prepares in advance, good works for us to do *IN CHRIST. (why I love Samaritans Purse for Hurricane Harvey relief - see our Facebook page)***

**\*WE TELL OUR KIDS, WE WANT YOU TO LEAVE THE NEST AND "DO SOMETHING WITH YOUR LIFE." OFTEN EXACTLY WHAT THEY DO. . .SOME "THING".**

**D. IF WE AREN'T CAREFUL WE CAN ALL MAKE GREAT PLANS WITHOUT EVER SEEKING GOD'S WILL WHILE CLAIMING TO BE CHRIST FOLLOWERS. IN OTHER WORDS. . .**

**We can claim to be Christ followers without following Christ!**

**\*IN THIS PASSAGE IN JAMES, HE USES A CONTEMPORARY PIC HIS READERS WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH. THE SURROUNDING CULTURE WAS IN A PERIOD OF FOUNDING NEW CITIES – JEWISH TRADERS IN THE AREA WERE READILY OFFERED CITIZENSHIP TO BRING IN COMMERCE AND TRADE.**

**\*JAMES PICTURES A GROUP OF BUSINESS GUYS GATHERED AROUND MAPS OF THESE NEW CITIES, STRATEGIZING ON HOW TO GET IN ON THE “GROUND FLOOR” AND BUILD A “SECURE FUTURE” FOR THEMSELVES. NOTHING WRONG WITH PLANNING AHEAD AND BEING STRATEGIC TO PROVIDE FOR YOUR FAMILY, BUT JAMES IS WRITING TO CHRISTIAN BUSINESS OWNERS WHO WERE. . .**  
***Planning ahead without ever considering God’s will.***

**HIS POINT AND WARNING IN THIS PASSAGE =**  
***God controls the future not us.***

**\*\*2008 SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT US THAT WE CAN’T COUNT ON OUR PLANS TO KEEP US SECURE.**

**\*\*WE THINK PROPERTY IS A SURE INVESTMENT, BUT THE FLOOD PICS OF THIS LAST WEEK CAN BE HAUNTING. (SHOW PICS)**

DOESN'T MEAN WE WON'T HAVE SETBACKS EVEN WHEN WE DO COUNT ON GOD, BUT WHEN FOCUSED ON HIS PURPOSES *FIRST* WE HAVE THE PROMISE OF **ROMANS 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to *his* purpose. WHO IS THIS PROMISED TO? IT IS AN "IF/THEN" PROMISE. **Where God guides He provides. He supports HIS purposes.**

**E. OUR FUTURE PLANS CAN ALSO FILL US WITH ANXIETY. A LOT OF "WHAT IF"S. GOD OFFERS THE OPPOSITE OF WORRY WHEN WE SEEK *HIS* PURPOSES FOR OUR LIVES FIRST.**

**MATTHEW 6:31-34.** So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the *pagans* run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**JESUS SAID IF WE SEEK HIM FIRST AND HIS RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER AND PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES IN ALL OF OUR ENDEAVORS, WE WON'T NEED TO SPEND SO MUCH OF OUR TIME WORRYING ABOUT LOSING WHAT WE GAIN.**

**\*MORE WE HAVE, THE MORE WE TEND TO WORRY OVER IT AND SPEND OUR TIME MAINTAINING IT, EARNING EXTRA TO PAY IT OFF – IN THE PROCESS GIVE UP QUALITY OF LIFE FOR STUFF.**

**(JAMES TALKS ABOUT FUTILITY OF LIVING LIKE THIS IN **JAMES 1:9-11**. Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.)**

**\*ILLUS. - FAMILY - TROUBLE W. MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE DAUGHTER - WANTED TO BUY A NEW YUKON TO TAKE THE FAMILY PLACES, BUT HAD TO WORK SO HARD TO PAY FOR IT, THEY RARELY HAD ANY FAMILY TIME TO SPEND. CAN YOU RELATE TO THIS?**

**\*\*LEADS US INTO NEXT DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 5, BUT BEFORE WE LEAVE THIS SECTION OF JAMES HE REMINDS US IN 4:17 THAT KNOWING GOD'S WILL IS ONLY PART OF THE EQUATION. DOING IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART.**

## **F. HOW CAN WE KNOW IT?**

- 1. Go to God's Word – His general will – 2 Timothy 3:16-17. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 "so that" the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."**
- 2. Be in prayer on a regular basis – James 1:5**
- 3. Look at the advantages and disadvantages based on what you know about God and His priorities**
- 4. Seek advice from more experienced Christians.**
- 5. Pay attention to open and shut doors**

**THEN IF WE KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS, AND WE DON'T DO IT, WE FALL INTO THE SIN OF *OMISSION VS COMMISSION.***

**\*LIKE LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD AND LEAVING UNCHANGED! ANY OF US DO THAT ON A REGULAR BASIS??**

**\*JAMES GIVES EXAMPLES OF SINS OF OMISSION NEXT WHEN TALKING ABOUT RICH OPPRESSORS. . .**

- II. JAMES 5:1-6 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.[a] 6 You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you. (good Labor Day verse)**
- CHAPTER 1 REFERS TO RICH ROMANS WERE ABUSING BELIEVERS WHO WERE POOR. IN**



**THEIR CULTURE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR WAS EXTREME.**

**\*HERE HE WRITES TO WEALTHY BELIEVERS – YOU MAY THINK THAT WEALTH GUARANTEES A GREAT FUTURE, BUT IF YOU DEPEND ON WEALTH TO SAVE YOU AND IGNORE GOD, YOU ARE LOOKING AT JUDGEMENT. CAN'T BUY YOUR WAY INTO HEAVEN!**

**\*VIVID WORDS IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE – “WAIL” = GK. “OLOLUZEIN” – LIT. SHRIEK, HOWL IN MISERY**

**\*\*IF HELL IS REAL – LACK OF LOVE NOT TO BRING IT UP AND WARN PEOPLE.**

**3 MAIN SOURCES OF WEALTH THAT PEOPLE COUNTED ON FOR A SECURE FUTURE IN JAME'S DAY:**

- 1. Corn and grain – that's the wealth that can grow “rotten”.**
- 2. Garments – changes of garments (you can see why these were coveted with no deodorant) Samson in Judges 14 offers to those who can solve his riddle. Moths could destroy!**
- 3. Gold and silver – rust/corrode - but don't rust**

**(MY Gold WEDDING RING) – POINT = EVEN WHAT WE CONSIDER MOST VALUABLE AND INDESTRUCTIBLE IN THIS LIFE = STILL DOOMED TO NOT LAST FOREVER.**

**\*YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU. IT WON'T PLEASE AND SATISFY LONG TERM BECAUSE. . .**

**Things don't change, but we do.**

**LUKE 12:16-21. And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'**

**18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"**

**20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'**

**21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”**

**RICH, BUT NOT RICH TOWARD GOD.**

**A. JAMES SPEAKS TO SELFISH RICH VS GENEROUS WHO DONATE MORE AS GOD GIVES MORE AS A RESULT OF FOLLOWING HIM.**

**REMEMBER THE FOCUS IN THIS PASSAGE IS PUTTING GOD FIRST INSTEAD OF LAST WHEN IT COMES TO HOW WE USE WEALTH.**

**\*HE IS SPEAKING TO WEALTHY LAND OWNERS *HERE* WHO GET RICH FROM HOLDING BACK THE WAGES OF THEIR WORKERS.**

**\*DAY LABORER IN PALESTINE – LIVED ON THE EDGE OF STARVATION – IF THEIR WAGE WAS WITHHELD EVEN FOR A DAY, HIS FAMILY SIMPLY COULD NOT EAT.**

**\*WHY GOD GAVE MERCIFUL LAWS IN O.T. SCRIPTURE LIKE **DEUTERONOMY 24:14-15. Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. 15 Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are****

**poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.;**

**PROVERBS 3:27-28. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,**

**when it is in your power to act.**

**28 Do not say to your neighbor,**

**“Come back tomorrow and I’ll give it to you” —**

**when you already have it with you.**

- **LUXURY – GK. – COMES FROM ROOT, “TO BREAK DOWN”. SOFT LIVING, THOUGH NICE ON A VACATION, AS A LIFESTYLE CAN SAP A PERSON’S MORAL FIBRE.**

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- **WANTONNESS (self-indulgence) = GK. “SPATALAN” – FOCUS ON SATISFYING LUSTS AND FORGETTING THEIR FELLOW MAN. (THOSE WHO ENSLAVE FOR PLEASURE OR GAIN – IE, LAND GRABBING, HUMAN TRAFFICKING)**

**\*JESUS WORDS TO ALL OF US = "WHAT DOES IT PROFIT TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, BUT FORFEIT OUR SOUL?"**

**JAMES 5:6 You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you. – COULD**

**REFER TO CHRIST – WHEN WE HAVE NOT DONE IT TO THE LEAST OF THESE.**

**CONCLUSION:**

**SO YOU SAY - LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT - YOU WANT ME TO PLAN MY FUTURE AROUND GOD AND HIS PURPOSES VS MINE? SOMETHING I CAN'T SEE?**

**\*\* YOU ARE DOING EXACTLY THAT WHEN YOU PLAN YOUR LIFE AROUND A *FUTURE* YOU CAN'T SEE! BOTH ARE A STEP OF FAITH. WITH JUST YOUR PLAN, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN VS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE WHO TRANSCENDS TIME AND SPACE AND KNOWS THE FUTURE! (SEE THE PROPHECIES ABOUT CHRIST AND ISRAEL MADE HUNDREDS AND EVEN THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE THEY HAPPENED IN DETAIL.)**

**ISRAEL IS WHO JEREMIAH 29:11 WAS WRITTEN TO AND SHE STILL STANDS DESPITE ALL OF HER ENEMIES ATTEMPTS TO ANNIHILATE HER!**

**\*\*AT THE END OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WILL PEOPLE REMEMBER ABOUT YOU. YOUR TITLES OR YOUR TESTIMONY OF WHAT CHRIST DID IN YOUR LIFE**

**THAT WILL GO ON FOREVER AND EFFECT FUTURE GENERATIONS?\***

**- GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN YOU GIFTS TO USE FOR GOOD – DISCOVER THEM – WE CAN HELP!**

**- GOD HAS GIVEN YOU TALENTS AND ABILITIES – DEVELOP AND USE TO MAKE AN ETERNAL DIFFERENCE**

**- GOD IS USING YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE FOR GOOD**

**- HE HAS MADE AN INCREDIBLE INVESTMENT IN YOU TO DO SOMETHING GREAT FOR HIM! LUKE 12:43 (it will be good for the servant who God finds faithful when the Master returns)**

**\*THE PEOPLE WHO WENT TO HOUSTON AND FORMED HUMAN CHAINS TO HELP RESCUE MOTHERS IN LABOR OR WITH SMALL BABIES STUCK IN THEIR CARS, THE PIZZA HUT WORKERS WHO DELIVERED IN KAYAKS TO FAMILIES WAITING TO BE RESCUED, THE FIREMAN AND NATIONAL GUARD WHO SAVED PEOPLE STRANDED IN THEIR CARS AND ON ROOF TOPS, THE SWAT GUYS WHO STOPPED LOOTERS AND RESCUED THE STRANDED, THE HELICOPTERS THAT PICKED UP PEOPLE IN OLD FOLKS HOMES WAIST DEEP IN WATER – I'LL BET WERE MORE ELATED AT THE END OF THE DAY THAN**

**WATCHING HOW THEIR 401 K's PERFORMED THIS PAST WEEK!**

**\*\*YOUNG GIRL IN MY YOUTH GROUP WHO WENT TO "COLLEGE BRIEFING CONFERENCE" IN MY PLACE HEARD THE "TITLE OR TESTIMONY" STORY FROM THE SPEAKER FIRST HAND. SHE WAS PRETTY SELFISH AND REBELLIOUS UP TO THAT POINT. THE FAMILY PRODIGAL. SHARON HAD HER AS A ROOMMATE IN COLLEGE FOR A WHILE. THE SPEAKER OFFERED AN INNER CITY MISSION TRIP FOR THE NEXT SUMMER IN PHILADELPHIA, SLEEPING ON THE FLOOR EATING TUNA SANDWICHES FOR MEALS – BUT CHANGING KID'S LIVES FOREVER. SHE RESPONDED, SPENT THE SUMMER THERE AND IT CHANGED THE DIRECTION OF HER LIFE FOREVER. STILL MARRIED TO A YOUTH PASTOR, RAISED HER CHILDREN IN THE LORD, ONE SPECIAL NEEDS, REACHED OUT TO OTHER CHILDREN. MARRIED OVER 30 YEARS AND IS STILL CHANGING LIVES. GAVE UP HER PLANS OF COMFORT, AND LUXURY AND EXPERIENCED GOD'S BEST.**

**YOU WANT YOUR LIFE TO COUNT? Do you want God's best? . . .HIS PLAN AND GOOD WORKS HE HAS PREPARED FOR YOU TO DO? YOU WON'T EXPERIENCE THE JOY, UNTIL YOU STEP OUT AND DO IT!**

**DON'T MISS IT FOR SOMETHING LESS!!**

**PRAY**