



Pointers and questions on the book of
James

Session 7

4:13-17

Boasting about tomorrow

Summary

- 4:13** Travel in NT times was difficult and therefore far less common than it is today. People mostly travelled for business purposes—to ‘make money’.
- 4:14** Business and money-making can give us an exaggerated idea of our own importance. But in the great universal scheme of things we are of minor significance.
- 4:15-16** Godly humility needs to touch this area of our lives. When we realise our dependence on God and his will, boasting about our plans and projects becomes inappropriate.
- 4:17** Failure to depend on God and submit to his will is as much a sin as actively doing something wrong.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Is it always wrong to make plans for the future? (v13)
2. What about pension and retirement plans, saving up for a child's college education or putting something away for emergencies? Should we forget all that and just trust God if the need arises?
3. What is the *root* issue that James is condemning here?
4. While it is true (v14) that we are very small in the universal scheme of things, it is also true, in another way, that we are important in it. Look at these twin truths in Psalm 8:3-4 (we are small) and 5-8 (we are important).
5. Some teach that to say ‘If it is the Lord’s will’ shows a lack of faith. What do you think of that view? (v15)
6. Verse 16 is the key to this passage. What is it saying is the attitude we need to correct?
7. What is the connection between v17 and the rest of the passage?
8. Verse 17 teaches that there are sins of omission (things we ought to do but don’t) as well as sins of commission (thing we do that we ought not to). Are you guilty of some of the former kind? What are you going to do about it?
9. People with a terminal illness say that their condition sharpens their awareness of the priorities of life. In one sense we are all in a terminal condition—we will all die unless Jesus returns first. In the light of this, what are your priorities?

