

Twelve Lessons

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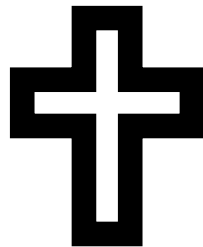
The Book of James III

Compiled and Written

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PRESUMPTUOUS SINNING – LESSON 1

James 4:13-17

Introduction: We make a fatal mistake when we make our plans, business or otherwise, and forget to include God in them. James calls that presumptuous sinning. Our plans for the future should be governed by the realization that life is uncertain and that God is still the sovereign ruler of the universe. It is the Christian's duty to refer everything to "the will of God", in the light of life's uncertainties.

Lesson Goals:

1. Reveal the error of assuming that one can accomplish success in Christian living apart from Divine influence.
2. Identify common mistakes many believers make which lead to failure.
3. Emphasize the brevity of life and the responsibility of the believer to fulfill the will of God in the time that God has granted.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Presumption – Blind or headstrong confidence; unreasonable adventurousness; a venturing to undertake something without reasonable prospect of success, or against the usual probabilities of safety; presumptuousness; arrogance; unreasonable confidence in divine favor
2. Negligence – Neglect; omission to do; more generally; habitual omission of that which ought to be done, or a habit of omitting to do things, either from carelessness or design.
3. Consideration – The act of considering; mental view; regard; notice; mature thought; serious deliberation; contemplation; meditation; some degree of importance; claim to notice, or regard; a moderate degree of respectability; that which is considered; motive of action; influence; ground of conduct; reason; that which induces to a determination.

I. NEGLIGENCE: A COMMON SIN

A. Negligence concerning God

1. The common sin of many believers is that of practical atheism. It is planning without taking God into account. Many plan as if their own wills were final and supreme.
2. Verse 13 – *"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain."*
3. James is speaking about folks making future plans, thinking only of tomorrow's gain, instead of eternal gain. They were thinking ahead one year, not knowing what tomorrow may bring forth.
4. Proverbs 27:1 – *"Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."*
5. We would do well to heed the proverb: "He worked as if he would live forever. He lived as if he would die tomorrow." Daily decisions lead to future success or failure.
6. "Negligence is usually the child of sloth or laziness, and the parent of disorders in business, often of poverty."

B. Negligence concerning Life

1. Verse 14 – *"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a "little time", and then vanisheth away."*
2. This is one of life's most profound questions. No adequate scientific or philosophical answer has yet been given to this question. But one thing is certain, life is brief!
3. The brevity of life and the certainty of death is illustrated many times in the Bible.
 - a. Psalms 102:3 – *"For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth."*
 - b. Job 7:6 – *"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope."* (The more days we have had; the less we have.)
 - c. Job 9:25-26 – *"Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: As the eagle that hasteth to his prey."*
 - d. Job 14:2 – *"He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."*
4. It is possible that because of the brevity of life that Jesus said, *"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."* Matthew 6:34
5. It is foolish to be anxious concerning the unknown. While none of us know what the future holds, we

can know the One who holds the future in His hands!

II. NEEDED: A CONSIDERATE SAINT

A. Consider the Duration of Life

1. We should take into account the short duration of life. We have no lease on life. We have no guarantee that we will be among the living tomorrow. Thousands die every 24 hours.
2. James says that, "Our lives are like the morning mist that appears for a few moments, and then vanisheth away."
3. We are dying people, we don't know what moment our earthly pilgrimage will cease. Yesterday others lived, Today we live, Tomorrow another will live!
4. Jesus spoke of the rich man who sought great riches in order that he might spend his years in ease. But in his plans he left God out entirely.
5. Luke 12:20 – *"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"*
6. Such a person may be a wise planner and a clever schemer in the eyes of the world, but God calls him a fool.

B. Consider the Will of God in our Lives

1. The fact of life's uncertainty and our ignorance of what the future holds should move us to consider the will of God in all of our ways.
2. Verse 15 – *"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."*
3. The will of God was the desire of Paul's life and should be of ours.
 - a. Acts 18:21 – *"But I will return again unto you, if God will."*
 - b. I Corinthians 4:19 – *"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will."*
4. The will of God is always best for His children. In Romans 12:2, Paul calls it the, *"Good... acceptable ...perfect will of God."*
5. Only a few folks prefer God's will. I confess to you, I would not want this whole world in my grasp and be outside of God's will.
6. I John 2:17 – *"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

C. Consider our Desires in Life

1. Our desires should be only those things that God desires for us.
2. Psalms 37:4 – *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."*
3. If our desires draw us toward God, then we shall be satisfied, but if they lead us away from God because they are sinful, we must expect disappointment.
4. The will of God is doubtless the secret to victory in Christian living and power in service.
5. This chapter closes with one of the most significant and searching definitions of sin found anywhere in the Bible! Verse 17 – *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*
6. It is possible that folks sitting here right now are guilty of committing sin as you sit in the worship service. You may not be chargeable for committing what God has forbidden, but you might be guilty of neglecting what He commanded!
7. Our knowledge of what is right makes us guilty of sin if we do not do it. Jesus said: *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."* John 13:17
8. We must not only leave off doing wrong, we must also strive to do what we know is right.
9. I am afraid many folks will miss Jesus' commendation: *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* Matthew 25:21