

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." 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. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. James 4:13-17 (NIV)

Ask The Question

You are a planner. You like to think and dream big. You like to think about all the possibilities of life. You see things and wonder how they could be changed and made better. You're always wondering what you could do differently. It's hard for you to sit still. You like to be on the move. You want your life to count for something. You want your life to have made a difference in this world. Yes Lord, you are describing me quite well. That shouldn't be too hard for me because I made you. I enjoy seeing all these qualities at work in your life. You are who I have made you to be. But there is something more that you want to talk to me about, isn't there? Yes, there is.

What do you want to say to me? **There is a question that I always want you to have front and center in your heart and mind. It is a great question that I want you to ask me at the start, in the middle, and at the end of your thought process when you are planning to do something. If you don't ask me this question, your plans will not succeed. Ask me, "is this your will?" You will need to know my answer before you proceed. You have a lot of energy and you can become very enthusiastic and excited about a plan or project you are working on. Your natural energy and excitement might carry you off in the wrong direction to attempt to do what is not my will for you. You may have the right plan or project but the wrong timing. I want you to really involve me in your thinking and planning. Don't come up with your great plan and ask me to bless it at the very end. I want to bless the work of your hands by guiding you to do what I have always planned for you to do for me. I do have a purpose and plan for your life. Ask me what that plan and purpose is. Do you think that I will hide my purposes and plans from you? No, there is no chance of that. If you don't know my purposes and plans, what do you think the problem might be? I think that I probably haven't asked you and then waited for your answer. Yes, I want you to keep asking me to reveal my purposes and plans for you. What will you do as you continue to ask me? I will continue to serve you where I am and wait until I have an answer from you. Yes, asking and waiting is exactly what I want you to do. I will show you when, where, and how to act. Then you will bear an abundance of fruit for me.**

Lord, I have raced off in a thousand different directions all based on my thoughts and plans. I have made so many mistakes. No more. Help me to rely on your for your wisdom. I want you to guide my life according to your will. Amen

Wisdom*If It Is The Lord's Will*

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." 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. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

NIV

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wants Us To*

Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." Otherwise you are boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil. Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

NLT

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wishes*

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

NRSV

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Is Willing*

Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city and spend a year there and carry on our business and make money. Yet you do not know [the least thing] about what may happen tomorrow. What is the nature of your life? You are [really] but a wisp of vapor (a puff of smoke, a mist) that is visible for a little while and then disappears [into thin air]. You ought instead to say, If the Lord is willing, we shall live and we shall do this or that [thing]. But as it is, you boast [falsely] in your presumption and your self-conceit. All such boasting is wrong. So any person who knows what is right to do but does not do it, to him it is sin.

AMP

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wills*

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." 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. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

NASB

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wills*

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

ESV

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wills*

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

NKJV

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Master Wills*

And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today—at the latest, tomorrow—we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that." As it is, you are full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil.

MSG

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wants Us To*

Look here, you people who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to such and such a town, stay there a year, and open up a profitable business." How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is as uncertain as the morning fog—now you see it; soon it is gone. What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we shall live and do this or that." Otherwise you will be bragging about your own plans, and such self-confidence never pleases God. Remember, too, that knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin.

TLB

James 4:13-17

Wisdom*If The Lord Wants*

Some of you say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to some city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money." But you do not know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a mist. You can see it for a short time, but then it goes away. So you should say, "If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that." But now you are proud and you brag. All of this bragging is wrong. Anyone who knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, is sinning.

NCV

James 4:13-17

If It Is The Lord's Will

Year _____ Week _____ Day _____ Date _____

Wisdom – James 4:13-17

In Context: Read James 4

Begin With Prayer:

Here I am Lord. I Am Listening.

Meditating On God's Word: ***(What is God speaking to your heart?)***

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." 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. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. James 4:13-17

Considering The Words: ***(What words speak to your heart?)***

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." | 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. | Instead, | you ought | to say, | "If it is | the Lord's will, | we will | live and do | this or that." | As it is, | you boast | and | brag. | All such boasting | is evil. | Anyone, | then, | who knows | the good | he ought | to do | and | doesn't do it, | sins. James 4:13-17

Praying The Scripture: ***(What prayer from your heart will you write?)***

Lord, I have raced off in a thousand different directions all based on my thoughts and plans. I have made so many mistakes. No more. Help me to rely on you for your wisdom. I want you to guide my life according to your will. Amen

What It Means: ***(What questions speak to your heart?)*** *(Suggested questions for small group discussion are in bold)*

When have you made plans without trying to receive God's wisdom or understand His will for your life?

When have you talked yourself into a course of action that was clearly unwise and not the Lord's will?

How have you suffered because you chose your unwise plans over what the Lord had in mind for you?

Why does the shortness of life make it even more important for you to know God's wisdom and do His will?

What are some of the ways that the Lord has given you wisdom and made His will known to you?

How have you taken the time and made an effort to receive God's wisdom and confirm His will for your life?

What is the Lord guiding you to do right now and how is it your delight to do all that He asks of you?

Living It Out: ***(What action step is God guiding your heart to take?)***

Rely on the Lord to give you His wisdom and provide His direction for your life.

Seeing It Happen: ***(What are you trusting God for in your heart?)***

Have faith that the Lord will give you His wisdom and make known His will to you.

Get Ready To Share: ***(What can you share with others from your heart?)***

Share with another person or your small group how God has given you His wisdom so that you can know His will.

Close With Prayer:

Quiet Yourself Before The Lord

Pause And Offer Prayers Of...

With An Attitude Of Faith Listen To What The Lord Wants To Say To You

Adoration...

Thanksgiving...

Confession...

Intercession...

Petition...

Journal

As You Quiet Yourself Before The Lord

What Do You Want To Say To Me Lord?

What Prayers Are You Praying Today?

Prayer Of Blessing

(What Prayer Of Blessing Can You Pray For Another?)

May you take the time and make the effort to receive God's wisdom and know His will for your life.

Prayer To Carry

(What Prayer Would You Like To Carry Throughout Your Day?)

Lord, help me to both desire and take delight in knowing and doing your will according to your plans.

What Do You Want To Remember About Today?

A Question To Ask God

(What Would You Like To Ask God?)

Lord, what do you want me to know about your will today?
