

James 4:13-15 *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."*

How appropriate are those verses for the season of life we're in?! They were written by James, the half-brother of Jesus.

They're meant to warn us about playing God in our own lives – you know, the final authority being ours as to how we live. The implied question is, do we shelter-in-place the one true God of the universe? Do we quarantine God in a cubicle of our life and keep Him there until we've tried everything else?

Now, most Christians I know wouldn't admit to impounding God in a back room. Instead, what we do is allow Him sovereignty over certain tasks that are meant to benefit us, while keeping the everyday personal stuff for ourselves. Consequently, God becomes the supervisor over the everyday and mundane routines. We make that His specialty. We'll handle things like finances, relationships, life decisions, and moral matters – those things God doesn't care about as long as He has our heart.

Back to our verses; there's nothing wrong with planning ahead, nothing bad about having a schedule, nothing immoral about business negotiations, and nothing sinful about making a profit. That's essentially the "old norm" for everyday life. *And that's exactly the point James is making.*

Because God is our sovereign Lord, we're to invite His will into every part of our lives. As finite humans, we have no clue what the future will bring. We can't predict what will happen today, much less what the next week or the next 365 days will look like. Each one of us is one heartbeat away from death.

Playing God with our own lives is risky because we have no guarantee of a long life. James describes our lives as a *mist* that appears suddenly and is gone quickly. This morning as I headed out for my run, when I exhaled, I could see my breath for a moment – and then it vanished. Gone. That's life – for anyone at any age. Time flies. As I clean out my office desk I'm reading and seeing memories of decades past – where did the time go? Before you know it – poof! – the *mist* of life dissolves. One person wrote, "About the time your face clears up, your mind gets fuzzy."

So James writes, *If the Lord wills*, which reflects an attitude and positioning toward life. It means humbly surrendering to the will of the one true God who is entitled to be Lord of all things in our lives, not just a few things we can't be bothered with. It means deleting that space between what belongs to God and what belongs to us. It's all His.

We can so easily become occupied with the "busy-ness" of living that we miss God when we start charting our future.

As we ride out this coronavirus roller coaster, instead of complaining about what we aren't able to do, let's make it our intention to find out what the Lord's will is for us in the moment . . . and live that out.

As Pastor Josh encouraged us yesterday, "Be a good do-be."