



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Real Faith. Real Life.

Part 12: The Best Laid Plans

James 4:13–17 | Tim Badal | April 2, 2017

We've been looking at the first-century letter written by James, the half-brother of Jesus, who wrote to a group of Christians who had been dispersed all over the known world. This very practical book has been called "The Book of Proverbs in the New Testament." It's chock full of wisdom and insights into how to live as followers of Jesus Christ.

It hasn't been an easy book to study, but we're seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. There are over 60 different imperatives, or commands, for Christ-followers to live out—and some of them aren't easy. Some of them go against the very fabric of our human natures, especially as we're distracted and tempted by the things of the world. We are called to live counter-culturally when we apply the book of James to our lives.

We've also seen how James is a book of contrasts. On one side, he describes worldliness—what the world offers in a life apart from God. This becomes the focus of our lives if we choose to allow worldly wisdom to guide our choices. On the other side James speaks of godliness, by which we invite God and His Word into our lives so that we might live according to what it teaches. But we can't do that unless we push the worldliness out of our lives. Today we're going to see how worldliness affects not only the decisions of today, but also our future plans. We can plan with only ourselves in mind, or we can plan with God and His Kingdom in mind.

James has written his letter to a couple different groups of people. First, he wrote to a group who claimed to have a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ but did nothing to show it. He calls their faith a "dead faith." He tells them they can't say they walk with God if they never show any fruit. In fact, he tells them they have no faith at all.

The second group he addresses is one in which I think most of us would land: those who want to have a vibrant walk with God. We strive for this and for the most part we're obeying God's commands. Nevertheless, we're tempted and distracted by the things of this world. We need to be changed by the example of James and his brother Jesus, and by applying the truth of the Word of God to our lives, becoming doers of it.

James will use the example of one group to teach the other group. Today's example, addressing the issue of planning, gives an example of a guy whose faith is dead. James wants those Christ-followers who are striving to have a vibrant walk with God and who are resting in His salvation to learn from this man. So we'll be looking at James 4:13–17:

¹³ 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"—¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

This last week our family had the privilege of visiting family in northern California. We saw the sights of San Francisco and Sacramento, and had a phenomenal time. As we were flying back, I found myself rehearsing some of the events of the week. I smiled to myself as I reminisced about the wonderful week we had experienced. The planes were on time, the flights had zero turbulence—both rides were quite awesome. When we arrived in California, the rental car was ready for us, and they even gave us an upgrade, which doesn't always happen. The hotels were also ready and were exactly what he had desired. Our family was



ready to receive us and did a phenomenal job of caring for and providing for us. We always had things to do. We had the greatest of food and fellowship.

As I sat back in my undersized Southwest Airlines seat, I felt like Hannibal Smith from the A-Team show. At the end of each A-Team episode, Hannibal, who led the A-Team, would light up a cigar and say, "I love it when a plan comes together." As I basked in the afterglow of a vacation that went really, really well, I realized we'd made it there, we had a grand time, we made it back, and our family didn't want to kill each other. That's an A-plus in our vacation book.

I'm not trying to make you believe that everything always goes well in the Badal home. If you've been around here for any length of time, you know that's usually not the case. In fact, some years ago we went on a trip and nothing went right! The kids all got sick. It rained every day. I don't mean just a little—I mean inches upon inches of rain. So we were soaking wet within the first five minutes of every activity we did. Our car broke down and it took days to repair, costing thousands of dollars. Nothing went right.

I want you to know that during that vacation I had the joy of having my mother-in-law tag along for the ride. Under her watchful eye I heard, "Really, son-in-law, you don't know you're not going to be able to do this? Really, son-in-law, you can't make it not rain? Really, son-in-law, you don't know when the car's going to break down?" I mean, I love my mother-in-law, but I was not looking very good in her eyes during that trip.

Here's the amazing thing. For both of those vacations, plans and preparations were made, yet the outcome was very different. It wasn't like we approached one with diligence and the other with a lackluster heart. No, we were ready and prepared both times for what we believed would be a vacation of our dreams. Last week was a great week. The other was more of a nightmare.

In many ways, that's a picture of our lives. We plan. We prepare. And sometimes everything goes just as we want. Yet other times we plan and prepare, then everything falls apart. That's the way life goes. James tells us that life is going to bring us good times and bad. What we as Christ-followers need to do is invite God into our planning. The world tempts us to believe we will do just as well if we leave God out of our planning. But when we do, that leaves us on our own.

James calls this decision to leave God out boastful and arrogant. Why? Well, when plans go really well, I could easily tell everyone that it was because I did a really good job planning. All my ducks were in a row. Amanda and I had everything thoroughly prepared. Look at how great we are. But if things don't go well, I have the option of blaming everyone else for why that happened. I can blame the airline or the rental car or the hotel—or my family for all they did to mess up my plans.

But when I invite God into the mix, humility comes. So when we have a great trip I can say, "Wow, everything could have gone wrong. The plane could have been delayed—or worse, it could have gone down. The car might not have been there, or we might have gotten a little compact car I wouldn't fit into. We could have gone to a hotel filled with issues. We could have found our family ill-prepared for us. Any number of things could have gone wrong." But I realize with humility and gratitude that God had allowed things to go the way I had hoped they would.

Of course, if they hadn't gone well, instead of losing my temper, I would realize I live in a fallen world. I would choose to rest in God, relying on His grace and mercy. I wouldn't get angry at others, because I know that in all of life—the good, the bad and the ugly—God works everything for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

James wants us to plan with God in mind. He tells us, "If you want the best-laid plans in your lives, bring God to the center." And he goes on to explain why this needs to be done. Let's look at three things James tells us about planning.

1. Presumption must be avoided.

James is not saying that planning our days is wrong. Nowhere does Scripture condemn planning. But James does say certain plans can contradict God and His Word. We know that God knows the future—and that we don't know it. Still we should plan based on what we do know. So it's never wrong to save for the future, or to plan for retirement. It's not a mistake to watch economy trends in order to make business decisions or money-management choices in light of those predictors or indicators.

Rather, James warns against getting in the driver's seat and relegating God to either the backseat or outside the car altogether. He wants us to consider how we can make good plans that God supports and blesses. How do we put Him at the center of our decisions? Look at James 4:13: "*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.'*" James seems to be using some actual words spoken by someone in his community regarding their plans. It's a man who calls himself a Christian, but James uses his words as a bad example to follow, not a good one.

This man is something of a first-century wheeler and dealer. In his own eyes, he's a successful businessman, but in God's eyes he's a failure. What's the difference? The man is motivated by materialism and the desire for a profit. He's guided by greed. But that drive for money is not his greater sin. Rather, he's living without God in his life. He has no thought of what God may want him to do.

This is what we would call the sin of presumption. The Bible clearly defines presumption as arrogant, atheistic living. James says this approach to life results in boasting. This man is saying, "I have such control over the circumstances and details of my life that I can see exactly what the future holds a year from now." That's arrogance. James reminds us that no one knows what tomorrow will bring. So if we say, "I know what's going to happen; I know what I'm going to do; I know how much money I'll make"—that's arrogant boasting.

In addition to this attitude being arrogant, it's also atheistic. It comes from a non-belief in God, which James calls evil. By boasting, this man has erased God from the equation. God does not exist in his plans. Nothing in verse 13—in either the English or the Greek—mentions God. The man has not given any consideration to what God might think about his next 365 days. He's thinking he'll go to a certain town, trade there and make a profit.

James says this is a sin. Any time we erase God from the equation, we sin. We need to acknowledge that God is at the center of our universe, the center of our galaxy and the center of our lives. Any time He is not allowed to reign on His throne in the world, or in our lives, we sin. Any time we elevate someone or something to take His place—even ourselves—we sin.

This sin involves a certain attitude.

James says sin begins with an arrogant attitude. We learned earlier that this prideful attitude comes from the world. We read in James 3 that worldly wisdom causes us to boastfully think higher of ourselves than we ought to think. This leads us to put ourselves on God's throne—and the world lives by this attitude. Worldly wisdom believes there is a god—and it's you. That means you get to make the plans and set the standards. The world will go by your standards and dreams. But godly wisdom says there is a God—and it's not you. So you must live by His plans. God is going to lead and guide you. However, this is not the attitude of this man.

Let me reiterate his situation, because it's important. He has everything planned out. He has his iPhone and tablets out. He's looking at his calendar. He says, "For the next 365 days, we're going to head to the city, we'll do this amount of business, and we're going to make lots of money."

Now, let's ask a few questions. Is James saying making a profit is bad? Many of you know I run a catering business. My sales rep will come in each week and we do a little dance. I'll say, "What's such and such running right now?" And he'll give me a price. "Oh my, that's terrible! What a brutal price." Then I ask him, "Is that the best deal you can give me?" And he'll always respond, "Listen, brother. Profit's not a bad word." I answer, "Well, it is when it's on my back." I do recognize that profit isn't a bad word. It's a good thing when a company makes a profit. If I don't produce a profit in my catering business, I'm not going to keep the business. I have to see a profit to stay in business. James is not saying profit is bad.

Second, is it wrong to make plans? Some of you have some very detailed plans for what you're going to do—what you're looking forward to in the future. You might be planning for retirement. You might be planning for your kids' education. Is James saying that's bad? Absolutely not. The Bible tells us that planning is something wise people do, especially to prepare for tough times.

So what is James' issue in this situation? James is concerned that this man has left God out of his planning. God is not on the throne in this man's life. Rather, the man believes he himself is all-sufficient without any need for God. He's got it all figured out. He'll go to town for a set time. He's so smart that he knows business is going to be good. He knows people are going to want what he's selling. He knows interest rates will be low and the economy will be strong. He knows he's going to gain riches hand over fist. He's got it all figured out.

But God says through His Word, "This guy is a fool." He doesn't think there will be any competition. He assumes his health will stay intact for 365 days. He's so wise that he knows there won't be any robbers—which actually were prevalent in his day. He's got it all figured out. His greatest problem isn't his desire for gain; it's his lack of desire for God. Some of us right now are also falling prey to the idea that we can safely make plans and dream dreams without God at the center. James says, "Be careful."

This sin impacts all aspects of life.

Notice this kind of thinking bears on every aspect of life. We can't have worldly wisdom in one part of our lives and not have it affect all other areas. That's because worldliness essentially says, "I'm God, and God is not." But when I launch from that starting point, everything in my life is impacted. All my thinking will be skewed. James' example of planning is only one aspect of a life that's directed by worldly wisdom.

Next week we'll talk about materialism and that worldly wisdom says we should have all of life, when we want it and how we want it. And if someone keeps us from what we want, we should rob and steal until we get it. But on his point today, James says planning is one part of our lives where worldliness can affect the believer.

Recognize that we are small and God is sovereign.

So what's the solution? If it's something we need to avoid, then the solution is first to remember that God is sovereign and we are small. Especially when we're young, we can be fooled into thinking we're a lot bigger and smarter than we really are.

In my mid-20s, life was going pretty well. I had a growing business. I was on the leadership of a growing church here at Village Bible Church. Everything was going really, really well. I had concluded in my mind that God had supernaturally made me wiser and greater than everybody else. Now, my thinking was subtle, and I hope it didn't come out that openly, but that was at times at the heart of my thinking. I couldn't imagine a problem that I was unable to solve. I couldn't imagine a project on which I was unable to hit a home run.

When you're 20, you think you can take over the world. But then life started to hit. There were issues in the church I didn't have answers for. The economic downturn happened and my customers started canceling their events. There was nothing in my wisdom that could tell me whether I could keep my employees.

Then kids came along. If you ever think you're wise, have some kids. They'll change everything! I didn't know how to solve the dilemmas they brought into my life. Then Amanda went through her health scare with cancer. I remember sitting in the medical office realizing I had no answers. I didn't know what I would do if she was not with me. I didn't know how to deal with her suffering.

Life shows us over and over again that we are small. But the gospel tells us, "Because you're small and insignificant, you must run to Jesus. He has the answers. He is wisdom incarnate. He is your hope in a fallen world."

As I've gotten older, I've learned I'm smaller and more finite. I've learned I'm far less wise than I used to think I was. Some of us need to learn that. When we grow smaller, God grows bigger. He becomes more sovereign in our lives. It wasn't that He wasn't sovereign or supreme before; we just didn't have the right vantage point. As God began to humble me, He became bigger to me. I began to acknowledge Isaiah 55:8, "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.*" His wisdom surpasses ours. He is greater than we are. Last night Amanda and I and one of our boys were listening to the song that says, "There is no equal to our God." We need to factor that into our planning. We're small, God is sovereign, and the sooner we learn that the better off we'll be.

Reject the separation syndrome.

Some of you might tell me, "Tim, I don't struggle with thinking I'm too big. I know God is supreme." But even if we don't reduce God in His infinite might and power, some of us still may consign Him to a certain portion of our lives. We acknowledge that He's sovereign and wise and infinite—but only on Sundays. We go to church and worship Him as God. We hear His sovereignty being preached and gladly say amen. But then we forget He's also the God of Monday through Saturday. He needs to be part of our decisions every day.

We also have a tendency to consign God only to "spiritual" matters. "How do I serve in the church? How much should I give? What Bible study should I join? What church should I attend?" Those are the decisions we bring to Him. What we don't include Him in are decisions like the house we're going to buy, the car we're going to purchase, how we're going to raise our kids, the friends we're going to have, how we manage our money or time. Those are our decisions, and we don't need Him to get involved. We don't ask Him where we should vacation, or even if we should. Those we see as our decisions, not His.

But we must be careful not to separate the sacred from the secular. There's no such distinction in Scripture. That's why we're calling this series, "Real Faith for Real Life." James is teaching us the practical truth that the same faith we have in the worship setting is

the faith we should have in the workplace. The same faith we have when we study the Scripture in our small groups is what we should live out in our neighborhoods and communities. Our faith is not to be separated into a Sunday faith and a Monday-through-Saturday life. There is no division between the sacred and the secular.

Coram deo literally means “before the face of God.” That means that every decision we make should be made with God in mind. “God, what would You have me do in this situation? What is the wise decision regarding this fork in the road? I know the way that seems right to me usually ends in destruction. I want to go Your way, not my way.”

2. Principles must be affirmed.

James wants us to see how small and insignificant we really are. In James 4:14, he goes on a little tangent: “*You do not know what tomorrow will bring.*” He asks a profound question: “*What is your life?*” He answers: “*For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*” God is not all that impressed by us as human beings. He’s not all that impressed with you or me.

The complexity of life.

We struggle with life, first, because of its complexity. The man in our text thinks he has it all figured out. He knows what he is going to accomplish today. He knows what he is going to accomplish tomorrow. He knows what he is going to accomplish 365 days from now. He’s going to buy, sell and make a profit. But in every step of his plan there is the possibility of great disappointment. It does not dawn on him that there might not be a buyer. There could be a competitive price war so his goods would bring no profit. How could he presume to know the outcome in this very complex world? We might think we have the future figured out and we start counting our chickens before they hatch. That kind of sinful attitude can get us into real trouble.

One commentator shared this story that reflects our inability to know the future:

Thirty years ago, futurists—peering into their crystal balls—predicted that one of the biggest problems for the coming generation would be what to do with our abundant spare time. I remember hearing this prediction often. In 1967, there was a senate subcommittee testimony that claimed that by 1985 people would work only 22 hours a week. They would work only 27 weeks in a year. And they would retire by the age of 38. In 1985, that’s what our senate heard predicted about our times today.

Why? It was because technology and our ability to get smarter and faster would result in our getting bored, not knowing what to do with our time. Yet a recent Harris survey reported the following: “The amount of leisure time enjoyed by the average American has decreased 37% since 1973.” We have less time to do what we want. Over that same period, the average work week—including commuting—has jumped up from 41 hours to nearly 47 hours. We’re not working less—we’re working more.

You see, no matter how hard we try, we can never comprehend the complexities that life might bring. We have enough technology on our phones to land a man on the moon. Yet we find ourselves with less time to do what we really want to do because life today is more complex than it was 40 years ago. James says, “Stop planning—thinking you have it all figured out—because you don’t.”

The uncertainty of life.

Besides the complexity of life, what about the uncertainty of life? James goes on to say we’re “*a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*” He asks, “*What is your life?*” He says, “*You do not know what tomorrow will bring.*” None of us knows what next week will look like. This last week we’ve learned a lot we didn’t know the week before. As people, we’re pretty impressive, right? We split atoms. We build amazing skyscrapers.

On our recent trip, our family was on the Golden Gate Bridge—a mile and a half long bridge made of tons upon tons upon tons of iron, suspended by cables over the Pacific Ocean. We marveled at the masterful feat of engineering. We also marvel at what is done in operating rooms. We create incredible technology. Things we could never have dreamed of before now are at our fingertips. We’ve landed men on the moon.

But here’s what we’re terrible at: we don’t know the future. Jesus said the following and His half-brother repeated it: “No one knows what the day might bring.” There’s uncertainty. We’re not ready for the diagnosis that may be coming. We’re not ready for the pink slip that may be coming. We’re unaware of unforeseen breakdowns or the bad news a spouse may bring. Just to put it in perspective, this week alone more than a thousand people in our country will get in their cars, say goodbye to their families, and never return because they’ll die in a car accident. A thousand people—this week. Life is uncertain. Another 48,000 people will not die in a car accident, but they’ll be injured so severely in those accidents that their lives will be dramatically impacted.

Another 31,000 people will be diagnosed with cancer in the next seven days. You ask how I know that. It's because 31,000 were diagnosed this last week. And 17,000 marriages will end in divorce this week. And I want you to know that these thousands upon thousands of people went into their week not thinking these terrible things were going to happen. This is the uncertainty of life.

We've seen it as a nation. On September 11, 2001, we saw the uncertainty that comes from living in a world of enemies. We saw it in 2008 and 2009 when we thought our houses were only going to continue to appreciate, that our 401Ks were going to continue to grow, that we were going to make money all the time. But 2008 and 2009 proved there is no certainty in our finances. Life is uncertain. No one knows what tomorrow might bring. So don't plan like you do. James says, "Don't plan like that, because that kind of certainty in life is ungodly. Only God knows what will come tomorrow."

The brevity of life.

Finally, James speaks of the brevity of life. He uses the metaphor of a mist that appears for a little while—just a small span of time. That phrase "a little while" or "a little time" is literally a Greek word that means miniscule. You're a blip on a screen. You're here today and gone tomorrow. The brevity of life is seen in the Scriptures over and over again. In fact, in the Bible there are 18 different metaphors that express the brevity and uncertainty of our lives.

In the book of Job we find these images:

- Job 7:7 — *"Remember that my life is a breath."*
- Job 7:9 — *"As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up."*
- Job 8:9 — *"For we are but of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are a shadow."*
- Job 9:25–26 — *"My days are swifter than a runner; they flee away; they see no good. They go by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle swooping on the prey."*
- Job 14:1–2 — *"Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not."*

I ran across a poem this week called "Time's Paces" by Henry Twells, which captures the way life slips away in a manner similar to Scripture:

When as a child I laughed and wept,
Time crept.
When as a youth I waxed more bold,
Time *strolled*.
When I became a full grown man,
Time RAN.
When older still I daily grew,
Time **FLEW**.
Soon I shall find, in passing on,
Time *gone*.
O Christ! Wilt Thou have saved me then?

Isn't that true? Time goes slowly when we're kids.

You see, time moves faster than we want it to. I learned this truth this past week. We were in San Francisco, as I shared. It wasn't the first time we'd been there; we have family in Sacramento so we fly into San Francisco and take in the sights and beauty of that incredible city. Thirteen years ago, Amanda, our first-born son, Noah, and I went with our family to the Ghirardelli Square where the chocolate factory is. We enjoyed some ice cream and chocolate, then took a family photo in front of a fountain in that square. Noah was a year and a half old and as a young man in my mid- to late 20s, I was thinking, "This is never going to end. This kid's never going to grow up. These late-night struggles? Man, life is going so slowly."

Then 13 years later we're in front of that same fountain, and I think, "Where did the time go?" Amanda still looks beautiful. But Noah? That kid isn't a toddler anymore. Where did those 13 years go? It's like a snap of the fingers. Amanda and I were lamenting that we have maybe four vacations left with the whole family before Noah heads off to college and goes on to his adult life. Life's going fast.

I want you to know in the brevity, complexity and uncertainty of life, don't make plans apart from God. That's James' point. Invite God into the center of your plans. Don't ever make a plan without Him.

3. Practices must be activated.

How do we make God the center? I'm going to list the practices we need to activate quickly, one right after the other. They shouldn't require expounding but should stand by themselves.

Initiate repentance.

Far too many of us—including the one preaching here—have made too many business plans and too many church plans and too many family plans that haven't had God at their center. Sadly, I've experienced the heartbreak when my plans don't work out. But one thing I need to do after reading a passage like this is say, "God, I know You're supposed to be at the center. I know You're the One Who should direct me. I know I should be more patient and wait on You. But I haven't—and for that, I confess my sin before You."

Some of us need to follow suit and say, "I've done it wrong. God, I'm sorry. Please forgive me." Some of you have never bowed the knee to Jesus Christ and you've lived your life without Him. James is proclaiming there's a different way to live, with God at the center moving and directing your life. You need to say, "God, I've gone my own way and I'm sorry. By Your grace and mercy You've shown me a new way and I want to follow Your leading." Some of us need to stop and repent now.

Investigate godly sources of counsel.

What do we need to investigate? We need to find sources of godly counsel and godly wisdom. How are we to make plans? How are we to know which way to go? We've got a lot of plans—as families, as a church—but how do we know which way is wise? Here are some things we need to do:

1. We go to the Scriptures. That's our first source of counsel. We ask God to show us what His Word has to say. And we must be careful to not just apply what we read to "spiritual" things but not to our temporal life things. No, we need to see what His Word says about all aspects of our lives. The Bible is said to be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path" (Psalm 119:105). We're walking the path of life, and we have to make decisions. We need a lamp to guide and direct our steps.

2. We need to seek a multiplicity of counselors. The Bible says wisdom is found when we seek out multiple counselors (Proverbs 11:14), people who know the Word and understand the will and plans of God. We should take them our concerns and questions, without presuming that we're the only one who knows what to do. I've made a rule that in any major decision—which I consider to be \$500 or more—I will seek the advice of other people. I don't want to presume that I know how to spend my money wisely. I'll ask others what they think and they'll ask me questions. They're not as excited as I am about the particular purchase. So they ask me, "Have you thought about this? Have you thought about that?" I've always been thankful when I've done that and I'm usually disappointed when I haven't. So seek godly counsel. Ask others how they might see the Word of God played out in your life.

3. We need to pray. If there's any place we lack wisdom, it's in our decision-making for the future. James 1:5 says when we lack wisdom we should go to God Who will give us wisdom without finding fault. Some of us need to pray, "God, I don't know what to do. I've got two really great opportunities here and I need to know Your will and plan." Then give God time to answer your prayer before you make your decision.

Invite God into all your plans.

James 4:15 states, *"Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'"* Now, this isn't supposed to be a cliché. This is to be a pattern of life. We're middle management and we don't move a step forward without inviting God into our decisions. Our life positioning should be this: "God, I don't want to do anything outside Your will or plans, so lead me and guide me."

Then as I'm led and guided by the principles of Scripture and am following the examples of Jesus, I will be living out God's will. And when a major issue or decision comes into my life, I stop and invite God to be with me. I don't take one step until I have clear direction from Him. That will save a whole lot of heartache and pain. That includes inviting God into our jobs, our parenting, our moving decisions, home purchases, car selections, grocery trips, vacations, money and time management—the sky is the limit on where we should request His guidance.

Imitate the example of Christ.

While the life of Christ on earth isn't described in the book of James, it is the perfect picture of how Jesus never did anything outside the will and plan of His Father. He often told people He was only living out God's unique and predetermined plan for Him. We too need to have the attitude He had in the garden: "Not my will, but Your will be done. And even though I may not like Your plans, God, I'm going to follow them, because that's the better choice" (Luke 22:39–46).

Invest more in heaven than on earth.

James 4:17 says, *"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."* The Bible is clear that we're to be hearers and doers of the Word. Jesus told us to seek the Kingdom of God. We know the greatest commandment is to love God and love our neighbors (Matthew 22:36–40). We know the right things to do, investing more in heaven's agenda than in our own.

We saw at the beginning of our text today an example of a man's agenda that didn't include God. Some of us may be living by our agenda instead of His. God wants us to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33), instead of seeking things for ourselves. When we know the right thing to do and don't do it, that's called "the sin of omission." And it's still a sin.

Rather, God wants to give us wisdom—wisdom to plan, wisdom to approach our decisions differently, wisdom not only for today but for the rest of our tomorrows. So my prayer is that you would invite Him into your plans and decisions, accepting the outcome from a God Who loves you and Who has a plan for your life. What is our life? We're but a mist, a vapor. And God, by His grace, has given us His wisdom and His plan so we can live according to it. In doing this, we will find blessing and protection all the days of our lives.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.net).