

“Steadfast Part 8: Time well Spent” (3-12-23)

Series Overview: We are called to be Steadfast (endure) which produces Maturity and Wholeness

Review: Hearing & Doing, Law of Love, Living Faith, Power of our Words, A Divided Heart, Peacemakers

Introduction:

James 4:13-17 (ESV)

(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.

1) Consider your life

James 4:13-14 (ESV)

(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.

Note: James is calling us to slow down & consider - He’s getting philosophical . . .

vs. 14 - What is your life?

- **Life is Uncertain** - “you do not know what tomorrow will bring”
- **Life is Fragile** - “you are a mist, that quickly vanishes”
- **Life is Short** - “you appear for a little time”

vs. 13 - This is how we often deal with the reality of life: We try to put life in terms we can deal with and control in order to have a sense of order and success.

Pause & Consider:

- Who runs your life?
- What’s your aim (purpose)?
- How do you manage your time and activity?
- What’s your daily mind set?

What we ought to do when pondering the reality of life is this . . .

James 4:15 (ESV)

Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

Note: In the face of the uncertainties of life - it should cause us to look up to God for help & direction.

However the warning James gives us suggests we often aren’t actually doing this. Consider Babel . . .

Genesis 11:1-4 (ESV)

(1) Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. (2) And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. (3) And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. (4) Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

2) Manage your life

• James - Warning against arrogance . . .

James 4:16-17 (ESV)

(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.

boast (verb): to glory (with reason or without), to boast, glory, exult (used in both a good & bad sense)

arrogance (noun): boasting, pride (used twice in NT - see 1 John 2:16 for the other)

1 John 2:16 - John warns against 3 primary sins: Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and “pride of life”

1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)

(15) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Note: I’m gonna get out of the world what I can while I can - Living for myself apart from God is a form of boasting / pride - whether I pause and consider it or not - it puts me in the place of King/Lord

James says all such boasting like this is evil (vs. 16) . . .

evil: (a) a bad nature or condition (in a physical sense - blind or diseased, in an ethical sense - bad or wicked)
(b) full of labors, annoyances, hardships

- Sin / Evil - we usually think of vices, things I’m doing wrong (lust flesh / lust eyes)
- But sin is also the omission of doing what’s right . . .

James 4:17 (ESV)

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Note: Pride says I know what’s right and it justifies itself. The reason we need this warning is because pride is blinding - We need to regularly and honestly consider - **who is running my life?**

• Jesus - Warning against anxiety . . . (whole passage Matthew 6:25-34)

Matthew 6:25-27 (ESV)

(25) “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (27) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”

Note: Many in our day aren’t struggling with **arrogance**, but instead a deep sense of **fear** or **anxiety**.

Many of us have considered how small and fragile we are in this world, but we stopped there - only looking at ourselves and our circumstances.

James didn’t just tell us to consider our life only - remember he told us to look up!

3) Surrender your life

James offers a solution . . .

James 4:15 (ESV)

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

This affirms Jesus' solution as well . . .

Matthew 6:33-34 (ESV)

(33) "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

(34) Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

This is about walking (living) in the **Fear of the Lord** - Revere, Rely, Reference

a) **Revere** - fear, awe, reverence - worship God

- This will humble my pride
- This will calm my fear

b) **Rely** - this is an active trust or reliance upon Him - for the big picture & the day-to-day

Romans 5:2-5 (ESV)

(2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we **rejoice** in hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we **rejoice** in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Note: This is how we rely on Him - we stand in his grace & we can face anything that comes our way!

When I **rejoice** in Hope, then I can even **rejoice** in trouble - because God is working to redeem. I am able to take life as it comes - the highs aren't too high, the lows aren't too low.

c) **Reference** - learn to reference the Lord when making decisions

- We can use the term Lord when describing God, but living it out means allowing Him to lead and guide.
- Do you seek Him in Prayer & seek guidance through His Word as you make daily & big picture decisions?

Conclusion: Read the words of Ecclesiastes . . .

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (ESV)

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.