

DISCUSS

- Did you ever have plans that got waylaid by a completely unforeseen circumstance? How did you react to that interruption or ruination of your plans? Share a time...
- Is making plans the problem James is pointing out? If not, what is the real issue that James is getting at?
- To live out James' word here, is it necessary or even practical to tack on the phrase 'If the Lord wills...' to everything? What does James word look like in practice?
- Why do you believe James particularly targets this word about those involved in business? Is business and profit wrong or is it something else? But still, why business?
- How do you feel about your life being compared to a passing fog or mist? Does it change how you live?
- From the sermon this week, recount some of the rewards or benefits of living consciously in submission to God's control. Which benefit struck you the most? Explain.

APPLY

- The book of James emphasizes the active side of faith. What is one way this week you can apply this text to life?
- As you consider plans for the future, find a wise Christian friend to consult with. Pray with them and ask their advice. What is one thing you need God's direction on right now?

GROUP PRAYER FOCUS

- What plans do you have for your life, your family, your home, your business, your church? Talk with God about these, and then listen. What does He think about all this? If your plans involve others, get them in on the praying, too.
- Is there something God has been nudging you about? Ask for prayer to help you do it.

Making FAITH + WORK

Book of James

9

Week 9: Live Life Under God's Control

Key Text: James 4:13-17

OPEN

The night before Jesus went to the cross, he prayed, *"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine"* (Lk. 22:42). That is what this week's passage from James is about – embracing and trusting in God's sovereign plan instead of our own. James writes to remind believers not to be self-confident but God-confident in going about life, knowing that ultimately God is sovereignly in control. This is the same message we read in the apostle Paul's letters: "[Jesus Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). A true Christ follower consciously lives life under God's control, reaping rewards in character, mental health, and living with eternal purpose.

REFLECT

- In v. 13, James says his words in this text are directed toward a certain approach to life not compatible with the call to follow Christ. In your words, what is that approach?
- In v. 14, what is the basis for James challenging this kind of approach to life? What is James' logic here about this?
- In the same verse, our current life is compared to fog or mist that soon vanishes. From this, what should be a Christian view on life? How is that different than culture?
- Why do you think James calls boasting evil? Why such a strong term? What makes boasting so bad that it is evil?