

James Lesson 4

James Chapter 4

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Memory verses for this week: *James 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

Introduction: In chapter 3, we studied how the tongue is a small member, but it can cause us great trouble. It says that if we can learn to control our tongue, we are growing unto a more perfect walk with the Lord and can bring the whole body under subjection. At the end of the chapter, we are told to seek peace with our fellow man. Strife and confusion is not of the Lord, and he desires us to walk in harmony, and to have the same mind, which is the mind of Christ.

I. Lust of the Flesh Causes Strife

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

From these verses, it appears that the people to whom James was writing were quarreling among themselves. Where do these wars and fightings come from? It is from the lust of the flesh. When we suffer from sins of the flesh, we tend to have pride and want to be the best, or we are envious of someone else.

Perhaps that person has greater talents, or they have used what God has given to them more effectively. Sometimes the lust is to have something owned by another person. Whatever the type of lust, it is of the flesh and not pleasing to God. The tenth commandment expressly commands that we covet not after another man's possessions.

Exo 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

James explains in verse 2 that the reason that they have not is because they did not ask properly in prayer. Jesus told the people of his day that all that ask shall receive.

Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 11:11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Luke 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Jesus points out in this discourse in Luke that if evil people know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more does our Heavenly Father know how to give good gifts to us.

James asks, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" Though the words translated as wars (polemov polemos) and fightings (mach mache) can have that sense, they also have a more everyday sense. The thought of polemos is where the English word polemics derives. It also can have the thought of simply 'arguing.'

The thought in mache is whence the English word machinations derives. It also has a more everyday sense of 'quarreling' or 'contention.' Here, James is dealing with everyday quarrels in life. He answers his own question, "come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"

The word translated as members (melov melos) can refer to the various parts of the human body. However, it may also refer to members of a church.

Where do arguing and quarreling among us come from? Selfishness and stubbornness are usually at the root of most quarrels.

In verse 2, James continues "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."

A man may covet and have not. He may envy and desire to have, yet cannot obtain. Moreover, he has not because asked not.

Rather than carnal bickering, coveting, and envying, they should instead have asked God to provide. Yet, these carnal Christians never considered that.

James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

One of the reasons we may not receive an answer to our prayer, may be that we are asking for the wrong thing. We are warned to ask properly, and to not seek after things of the flesh. It does not hurt to pray for our daily provisions... we are commanded to do that. But we can get so wrapped up sometimes in wants that we go beyond our needs and ask God for things that might hurt us in our relationship with the Lord. Our desire should

be to acquire that we might glorify God with our lives. We should never ask to simply please our fleshly desires. God certainly knows what we need, and most of the time gives us far more than we ask.

Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

In the church, James determined that there were some who did in fact pray selfishly to God.

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

The word translated as amiss (kakwv kakos) has the sense of ‘improperly’ or ‘in an evil fashion.’ James touches upon why God does not answer selfish prayers. When we pray from a purely selfish motive, asking God to give us what we want in distinction to what we need, He likely will not honor such prayer.

II. Friendship of the World is Enmity with God

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

We are commanded to not love the world both here and in I John Chapter 2. God wants us to be people who are just pilgrims passing through this old wicked world.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any

man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1 John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

We cannot walk hand in hand with the things of this world and expect to be in fellowship with the Lord. James puts it bluntly when he asks if they think the scripture asks this in vain. It was not asked in vain, and neither does the Holy Spirit lust to envying. If envy is found, it is from the Natural man. The Holy Spirit, Christ, and the Heavenly Father are all in perfect harmony, and direct our paths to good in all things.

In verse 4, James shifts to a very strong truth. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

The inspired writer is driving at the evil of conformity to and fellowship by God's people with the world. Throughout the Old Testament prophets, as Israel fooled around with idolatry, God likened her to a spiritual adulteress. (See Isaiah 57:2-5, Jeremiah 3:8, Ezekiel 16:32.)

Isa 57:2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

Isa 57:3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

Isa 57:4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

Isa 57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

That is the thought here. For New Testament Christians to intermingle with the world is spiritual adultery. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 11:2 that he had espoused the church to one husband, Jesus Christ. To thereafter flirt and consort with the world is the same as a wife getting involved with another man. It is spiritual adultery. See also Romans 12:2, I John 2:15-17, and II Corinthians 6:17-18.

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Cor 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

James concludes, “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” There is no hidden meaning. The thought is as direct as words can make it. A Christian who is friends with the world makes himself the enemy of God. Sober indeed is that warning. It behooves us to put as much distance between ourselves and the world as is humanly possible.

In verse 5, the sacred writer here by Gods divine leadership interjects an enigmatic statement.

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”

This does not seem to be a direct quotation of any Old Testament passage. Some have suggested it might summarize the thought of Deuteronomy 32, Genesis 6:3-5, or perhaps Exodus 20:5.

Others have suggested it might actually be a fore view of the thought coming in James 4:6. The thought may be, ‘The Spirit that God hath placed within us desires us jealously.’

In the immediate context, James likely is addressing that God (as our great spiritual husband) is jealous that we should not get involved with the world. He is jealous of us as a spouse will be of one’s mate.

III. God Gives Grace to the Christian to Overcome the Devil

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

We are told in Hebrews to come to God boldly, right to the throne of grace, to obtain help and mercy when we have a need.

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Paul in his life learned to be content in whatsoever state he found himself in, and to rely totally upon God’s grace. He knew that was sufficient to see him through each day.

2 Cor 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Cor 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I

strong.

It seems that the more humble we are, the more grace gives to us.

Psa 138:6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Prov 3:32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

Prov 3:33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

Prov 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Concluding this thought, the Bible says, "But he giveth more grace." The thought may be that God in turn gives more grace to His people to overcome the temptations of the world.

The thought seems to return to where the chapter began and that which has been a theme throughout the epistle—humility rather than bickering.

Here, he quotes from Proverbs 3:34, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Rather than quarrel, bicker, and shoot off our mouths, James counsels that God gives grace to those who will humble themselves.

J. Vernon McGee said this about the grace God gives to us.

I have said this again and again: God is overloaded with grace. You and I just don't know how gracious He is. He has an abundance of grace. *Grace* has been defined as unmerited favor, but I call it love in action. God didn't save us by love. He gave His Son, and it is by His grace that we are saved. He has so much of it. You may say, "Oh, I am so wrong on the inside, so sinful." Go to Him and tell Him you are wrong on the inside, and ask Him for grace to overcome it. He will give you grace. He is the living Christ, interceding at God's right hand for you.

Now some may doubt the surplus of His grace. May I say to you, all the medicine in the world cannot cure the sick; the remedy *must be taken*. Likewise, God has the grace, my friend; lay hold of it! It is possible for a man to die of thirst with a pure spring of water right before him. He has to drink of it; he has to appropriate it before it can save his life. You don't blame soap and water for the fact that there are dirty people in the world, do you? There is plenty of soap and water to clean you up, my friend. "God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble." This is the kind of container that the grace of God must be carried in; it must be carried in an humble individual.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Since we have the promise that God gives grace to the humble, we should submit ourselves to Him. And as we draw nigh unto God, we are to resist Satan. Since these two are on opposite ends of the spectrum, we can not draw nigh unto God and serve Satan. We read a couple of weeks ago that a man cannot serve two masters. We are either on God's side or on Satan's side. The promise we have here is that not only can we resist the devil, but when we do, we turn him to flight.

1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

1 Pet 5:9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

2 Cor 2:9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

2 Cor 2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;

2 Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

It is crucial that the child of God realize that Satan is not some mythical character. He is just as real as you and I, and he is out to destroy us. He would love nothing more than to destroy our relationship with God and eliminate our testimony. And we are against much more than flesh... he knows our weaknesses and uses them against us.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The agency of the evil one and conflict with him is here touched upon. Even as Jesus did on the mount of temptation, James directs, "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Clearly implied is that submission to God (His will and His way) opens the channels for His grace. To submit to God is one clear way of humbling ourselves before Him. He, in turn, imparts needed grace to resist the world and the devil. An important principle regarding dealing with Satan's temptation is set forth.

James simply counseled, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The word translated as resist (anyisthmi anthistemi) is also rendered as ‘withstand.’ The thought is that in resisting the wiles of the devil, he will go away seeking easier prey. Satan looks for easy conquests. If one withstands his temptation, he will go elsewhere. As we submit to God and resist the devil, God gives the added grace to continue to withstand.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

James 4:9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Verse 8 says that we can draw nigh unto God. God wants people with pure hearts to serve him with total dedication. David in the Psalms said that it was good for him when he drew near to God.

Psa 73:28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

I love the fact that we have a promise from the Lord that HE WILL draw nigh to us when we make the effort to come unto him. For us to be able to do that, we must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. When we humbly come to the Lord and seek forgiveness, God will give it to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, in today’s world we do not see many mourning and weeping.

Psa 126:6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Here the Bible declares “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” As we seek to get close to God, He will draw close to us. What a wonderful promise. God is always willing to come into proximity with us as we first seek Him. However, He requires for us to first initiate such action. It is called repentance.

In that regard, James sets forth necessary requirements to draw near to God.

“Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”

The thought is of purifying ourselves of physical sin (sins of the body) as well as spiritual sin (sins of the heart.) The word translated as double minded (diqucov dipsuchos), in this context, likely has the sense of being ‘two faced,’ or ‘hypocritical.’

The thought probably is of those who on the one hand sought fellowship with God while at the same time were flirting with the world and otherwise dabbling in

sin.

If one is to draw near to God, he must first purify himself of such hypocrisy. In verse 9, James enjoins us to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep:

“let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.”

The simple thought is of godly sorrow for sin in our lives. It is godly sorrow which leads to true repentance.

2 Cor 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

2 Cor 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

God is looking for Christians to weep over their sin rather than seeking frivolity and empty entertainment.

Verse 10 tells us to humble ourselves, and when we do, God will lift us up.

Luke 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Matthew Henry had these comments about drawing nigh to God with humility

We have great encouragement to act thus towards God: He will draw nigh to those that draw nigh to him (v. 8), and he will lift up those who humble themselves in his sight, v. 10. Those that draw nigh to God in a way of duty shall find God drawing nigh to them in

a way of mercy. Draw nigh to him in faith, and trust, and obedience, and he will draw nigh to you for your deliverance. If there be not a close communion between God and us, it is our fault, and not his. He shall lift up the humble. Thus much our Lord himself declared, He that shall humble himself shall be exalted, Mt. 23:12.

If we be truly penitent and humble under the marks of God's displeasure, we shall in a little time know the advantages of his favour; he will lift us up out of trouble, or he will lift us up in our spirits and comforts under trouble; he will lift us up to honour and safety in the world, or he will lift us up in our way to heaven, so as to raise our hearts and affections above the world. God will revive the spirit of the humble (Isa. 57:15), He will hear the desire of the humble (Ps. 10:17), and he will at last lift them up to glory. Before honour is humility. The highest honour in heaven will be the reward of the greatest humility on earth.

James concludes this section with a simple truth and instruction.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

It is not until or unless we are willing to truly humble ourselves before God, in Godly sorrow over sin, that God will in turn exalt us. See Matthew 23:12 and 1 Peter 5:6.

Mat 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

IV. Judge Not One Another

James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

This is a serious matter about speaking evil of a brother. It says that we do that, we are in effect speaking evil of the law. Christ freed those that are saved, and we should not seek out fault in our fellow man. That is not to say we should ignore open sin, but we are to love one another and exhort and encourage, rather than judge. Jesus is the ultimate judge, and we should let him do the judging. All of us are just sinners. Some are saved sinners, some are lost. But we have nothing in ourselves to boast. We are to be doers of the law, not judges of it.

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Rom 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Rom 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Rom 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Verse 12 points out that there is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy, and that is of course Jesus Christ.

Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Heb 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Heb 7:23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

Heb 7:24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Heb 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The instruction now shifts gears and returns to the thought at the beginning of the chapter, woven throughout the epistle. That is of trouble caused by the tongue.

The injunction is clear and it says we should stop criticizing each other. The thought is he that is criticizing and condemning a brother is actually being critical of the law.

Some have suggested that the law mentioned is the royal law of love spoken of in James 2:8.

It more likely refers to Leviticus 19:16 wherein God forbade His people to gossip or speak behind another's back.

Lev 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

To be critical of others is to sit in judgment of God's Law. We then shift from being a doer of the Word (James 1:22- 23) to the thin ice of being a judge thereof.

In verse 12, James concludes this section by noting, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" The one lawgiver is God. He is also the final judge. Who then are we to sit in judgment of another.

The sacred writer undoubtedly is dealing with a persistent problem in the churches to which he wrote. That was of arguing, bickering, abusing the tongue, and being critical of others. It all bespeaks carnality and spiritual immaturity in his readership.

V. Seek God's Will Before Making Future Plans

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

James 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

Have you ever met Christians that tell you of all their big plans about leaving their home and taking a big job in another city? When you ask them if they prayed about it, they look at you like you are half crazy. If it is more money, it has to be God's will, right?

That is the opinion of the world, but it is not necessarily God's will for your life. We are warned here to be sure to seek out God's face before you make any hasty plans. If you desire to move to a new location to take a job, we should ask ourselves some basic questions.

1. Can I serve God in this new place?
2. Is there a church in that area that stands for the truth that I can join?
3. Will my plans interfere with my ability to serve God?

Verse 14 warns us that we do not really know what tomorrow holds. I doubt that many of those people who perished in the World Trade Centers in September 2001 ever doubted that they would be alive on Wednesday when they left for work. And that person who died could just as easily have been you or I. Have you not flown in a plane in the last few years? If not, I'm sure you've driven down the highway. One stop sign ignored is all it would take for us to be going out into eternity. If your time comes today, will you be ready?

If you don't know Jesus as your personal savior, you are not prepared. I like the way James relates our life to being a vapour. It's here... we see it, and then it just vanishes away. We may live 10 years, or we may live a 100. But in the span of eternity, even a 100 years is like a little bump in the road. Those that put off getting ready to die many times die unprepared. Don't be one with no hope. Turn to Christ, repent of your sins, and HE will save you.

Life here is short, and it is full of trouble as Job tells us. We ought to say, "If the Lord wills, I will do this or that." I will in our own words is very much like the words Satan used when he decided to overtake God and ascend above His throne.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Job 14:2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Isa 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Isa 14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

The thought now shifts to another matter of concern. That was of making significant decisions in life without seeking God's will in the matter. James confronts these. "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain."

The phrase translated as go to (age age) has the sense of 'come now' or even 'come on.' In the preceding two verses, presumptive judgment of others has been dealt with. Now, the thought turns to presumptive decisions.

James writes about Christians who sensed an opportunity to make more money in another city. They therefore without regard to God's will in the matter decided to up and move there in pursuit of increased income.

There is nothing wrong in making a profit in a business. There is nothing wrong with getting an increase of income. However, making major decisions without regard to God's will such as moving elsewhere for monetary gain is wrong for a Christian.

James warns, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth

away.”

Truly, we have no idea of what will happen tomorrow. Furthermore, our lives are fragile and transitory. Like morning fog in comparison to eternity, we are here for a short time and then are gone. Life is short. Eternity is long. We had best make decisions in life based upon God’s will.

In Verse 15, James points out the correct view in all matters of life

“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

The proper way is to seek God’s will in any decision of life. If it is God’s clear will to move elsewhere, then do so. But to make such a decision merely based upon greater profit or better income is wrong. It may not be God’s will.

James 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

The thought at hand is in the immediate preceding context. “But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.” The thought is of Christians boasting of moving elsewhere to make more money. For God’s people, such bragging is evil.

The sin of omission clearly is at hand as is taught in verse 17.

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

Though failing to do as we ought as a principle certainly is sin, to fail to seek God’s will for decisions in our lives is knowing to do good and doing it not. To fail to seek God’s will for impending decisions is sin.

When we know to do good and fail to do it, we have sinned. When we know we should get up and come to church, and we stay in bed, we have failed God, and that is a sin. We know it is God’s will for us to pray, to study the Bible, and to witness to the lost. When we know to do it and fail, we sin. God help us to really live for the Lord in this upcoming year, and make a difference. It begins with a humble desire, clean hands, and a pure heart.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.