

Future Perspective

PASTOR MIKE YODER • JAMES 4:13–17

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.”

James 4:13

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

James 4:14

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

James 4:15

As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

James 4:16

If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

James 4:17

Our Typical Boast (4:13)

What James rebukes here is any kind of planning for the future that stems from human arrogance in our ability to determine the course of future events.

Our Foolish Assumption (4:14)

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

Proverbs 27:1

And He told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.”

Luke 12:16

“He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’”

Luke 12:17

“Then He said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.’”

Luke 12:18

“‘And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’””

Luke 12:19

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

Luke 12:20



My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.

Psalm 102:11

For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.

Psalm 102:3

You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before You. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.

Psalm 39:5

The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;

Psalm 103:15

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

Matthew 6:25

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

Matthew 6:31

“For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”

Matthew 6:32

“But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:34

Worry about the future is not simply a character tic, it is the sin of unbelief, an indication that our hearts are not resting in the promises of God...distrust in the goodness and sovereignty of God.

Kevin DeYoung

The Better Perspective (4:15)

Recognition of our dependence upon God for the future is not an excuse for inactivity, nor should it discourage planning for the future.

D. Edmund Hiebert

Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

We must live our lives believing that all of our plans and strategies are subject to the immutable will of God. Therefore, we should be humble in looking to the future because we don't control it; God does.

Kevin DeYoung

When the plans change, your heart will reveal whether you are trusting in Him.

Gary Webb

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

Proverbs 16:9

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:12



Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.

Corrie Ten Boom

God's Candid Evaluation (4:16)



Both arrogance and fear are ungodly responses to how we view the future.

We cannot control future events. We have neither the wisdom to see the future nor the power to control the future. For us to boast is sin; it is making ourselves God.

Warren Wiersbe

God's Righteous Expectation (4:17)

One hundred percent of people are humanists and
ninety-eight percent believe in God.

Walker Percy

For most people, God simply is not a part of daily life. They change Augustine's "Love God and do as you please" to "Do as you please and say that you love God."

R. Kent Hughes

**Life is precarious. Don't presume.
Plan with God's sovereignty in mind.**