

James the Just: Today Is The Day

Planning plays a big role in success. The most successful people that I know are great planners. Most successful businesses have planning meetings to discuss what to do next and how. They are trying to sustain success. You can “run into” success by to sustain it, you must plan...

At different stages of life, you plan different things.

In high school, you plan for what kind of career you hope to spend your life doing. You may plan to go to a certain college or university.

As a young adult you plan for what kind of family you’d like to have, how many kids, where you want to live, what your dream house looks like.

When you get married and have kids, you have to plan for time with your spouse, the crazy family schedule with ball practice, piano lessons, work schedules, school functions. You begin planning for your children's future (saving for college), you are planning for your future (retirement investments)

Planning is a good thing, and in many instances it’s unavoidable. Even for the procrastinator, even for the spontaneous people. You eventually learn that your life has to have a certain amount of planning to succeed.

But planning can be a bad thing.....most people live their life for the future. Some people worry so much about tomorrow that they miss opportunities today. Some people are so focused on what they will be doing that what they can’t see what they are supposed to be doing NOW.

James 4:13-17 (HCSB)

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” 14 You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

15 Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn’t do it.

I’ve heard this text used to say that you should say that planning is bad, that’s just not true. I’ve also heard it used to teach you should say “if the Lord wills” or “Lord willing” anytime you are saying you are going to do something. I say those things on occasion.

James' point is not really about what you say though. The point is are you doing what you want or what God wants? Are you following your plans or His plans?

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail, and if you leave God out of your plans, you still plan to fail.

James 4:13 (HCSB)

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit."

Travel - poreuō - To pursue a journey, to depart from life. When you in your own wisdom, make plans for you like, you are departing from the life that God has planned for you. You are stepping out of His will and plan to pursue your own journey.

This is the issue that James is teaching. Why do you make your own plans without seeking the Lord's plan for you? Remember there is that narrow path that HE guides us down?

James 4:14 (HCSB)

14 You don't even know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

Why make plans that may not even amount to anything? A disorder that people have is thinking that they know what's best for their lives. Says who? Do you not think that the God of all of creation just might know a little more about what's best for you?

Proverbs 27:1 (HCSB)

1 Don't boast about tomorrow,
for you don't know what a day might bring.

We make a lot of assumptions based on the patterns of life. We can say what we "know" will happen, but it's really just speculation, a guess.....maybe an educated guess, but it's still a guess!

How many of you know what you are doing today after church? The truth is no one! You don't even know what this day might bring!

You might have plans for this afternoon.....but any number of things can happen to disrupt your plans. We don't really KNOW what we will do today, tomorrow, or beyond. How many of you have planned to do things and then it just didn't work out?

Planning is good.....but we have got to seek the Lord. We have got to ask Him to show us HIS plan. We should daily, multiple times a day, ask "Lord what would you have me do today"

Your plans are never guaranteed. Your time on this earth isn't even guaranteed. It is like a smoke or a vapor that appears then vanishes. You don't know how long you will be here, or how many

more opportunities you will have. This is why it's so important not to waste the time you have, whatever you do, do it for Jesus!

Colossians 3:17 (HCSB)

17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

We must pursue His will. When we make plans without seeking God's guidance we may be heading for trouble. Even what we pray is important. You shouldn't be praying for "your will, in Jesus name". Pray "Lord, your will be done on this earth as it is in heaven, show me your way"

We have got to remember how limited we really are. Our knowledge is limited and life is full of uncertainty. But what is certain, is my God is all powerful, and all knowing, in HIM I must trust. He is good and wants only good for me!

Even when I am down, He is up. When I am up, He's still up! No matter what we have planned or how we feel, seeking Him is what we need today and in the future!

2 Corinthians 4:16 (HCSB)

16 Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day.

Let the Lord be your guide, in all matters, today and tomorrow...

Anonymous quote: "He who provides for this life, but takes no care for eternity, is wise for a moment, but a fool forever."

James 4:15-16 (HCSB)

15 Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

Boasting usually means bragging, but here it is the Greek word *kauchaomai* (cow-how-my) meaning to glory in a thing, so to praise or admire.

The word arrogance is from *alazoneia* (alazo-naya) meaning to trust in it's own power and resources.

When people pursue their own plans saying "I will do this or that" without seeking the Lord, they are praising or admiring their trust in themselves, their power. This is the way of the world! We have been called to be different. We are not our own, we are holy, set apart....

Colossians 3:1-3 (HCSB)

1 So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God.

C. S. Lewis wrote: "If you read history you will find out that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next."

God has things for you to do.....TODAY! And tomorrow!

1 Corinthians 15:58 (HCSB)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Ephesians 2:10 (HCSB)

10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

Psalms 39:4-5 (HCSB)

4 "Lord, reveal to me the end of my life
and the number of my days.

Let me know how short-lived I am.

5 You, indeed, have made my days short in length,
and my life span as nothing in Your sight.

Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor. Selah

Today is the day to live for God! Then, no matter when our lives end, we will have fulfilled God's plans for us.

The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin ~ W.M. Lewis

- One of the beauties about seeking God first in our life is that we may not know what tomorrow holds, but he does.
- We may not know what will happen next week, but God does.
- We don't know how long we will be here, but God does.
- If we want a future that is certain then we must put our lives in God's hands and depend on him for everything.

Our plans should be evaluated by God's standards and goals, and they should be prayed over with time spent listening for God's advice.

If you get tired of your plans not panning out....maybe it's time to seek His plan. Even if your plans are going as you designed. Do not glory in your arrogance and think that you have this thing figured out. God's will never loses out, it never fails....

Proverbs 19:21 (HCSB)

21 Many plans are in a man's heart,
but the Lord's decree will prevail.

Proverbs 3:6 (HCSB)

6 think about Him in all your ways,
and He will guide you on the right paths.

James wraps this text up with this statement:

James 4:17 (HCSB)

17 So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn't do it.

We tend to limit sins to specific acts....doing wrong....sins of commission. But James tells us that sin is also not doing what is right.....sins of omission.

It is a sin to lie; it can also be a sin to know the truth and not tell it.

It is a sin to speak evil of someone; it is also a sin to avoid that person when you know he needs your friendship.

It is a sin to disobey God; it is also a sin to act without seeking his guidance.

We often ask God for too little. We know what we need....a yes or no answer to a simple question. Or perhaps a road sign. Something quick and easy to point the way. What we really ought to have is the Guide himself. Maps and road signs can be helpful, but infinitely better is someone who has been there before and knows the way.

To make a decision without seeking God's will is sin.

To fail to seek God's will because you're afraid his answer will be "No," is sin.

To know that God's answer is no and do it anyway is sin.

The wages of sin is death!

We are not called death but to LIFE

2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV)

9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Because we are called to a holy life, seeking His will and purpose....

1 Corinthians 10:31 (HCSB)

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory.

God has more for you than you think. He desires to use you. He desires to be close to you. He desires to lead you. And He desires to burn IN you!

Today is Pentecost Sunday! This is the day we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming to men and women, to lead them, to guide them, to burn within them....this was the promise of the Father. This was the reason Jesus had to go after His death and resurrection. He went so the Father could send His Spirit to be with all who believed in His Son!

Luke 3:16 (HCSB)

16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Church what we need is to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire! To be baptized means to be dipped, immersed, but also to make clean and to overwhelm.

We need to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. We need to be made clean by His leading toward sanctification. And we need to be overwhelmed by Him, let Him overpower us and take control!

We need the FIRE of God in us today! Today is the Day!