

James: Who Holds Tomorrow?

(James 4:3-17)

Boastful Plans (v. 13-16)

- James warns of how we plan our futures
- Plans that are based on our human efforts and understanding have no guarantee of success
 - We have no way of predicting the future, much less controlling it
- James reminds us of the fleeting nature of our mortal existence
- The rebuke is not against plans in general, but rather, the grip in which we hold them
 - We must hold our plans loosely
 - We must submit our plans to God's will (Pro 16:3)
 - Failure to do so is arrogance

The Sin of Omission (v. 17)

- James reminds us that failing to do what we know is right is sinful
 - This reflects Jesus' teaching (Luke 19:11-27; Matt 25:31-46)
- Both our planning & our omissions reflect the condition of our hearts (Pro 16:1-2)

So What?

- Do we hold our plans with an open hand, letting God lead us?
- What are some sins of omission of which we need to repent?

Meditation Verse: *Proverbs 16:2-3*

James: Tearing Down or Building Up?

(James 4:11-12)

The Sin of Criticism (v. 11)

- James returns to a milder address with his audience: From “adulterous people” (v. 4) to “brothers & sisters” (v. 11)
- He commands them to stop _____ one another
 - “_____” (*katalaleite*)
- Slander is a manifestation of the _____ that God opposes (4:6; cf. Pro 3:34)
 - It is often connected to _____ & _____ (3:14-16; cf. 2 Cor 12:20; 1 Pet 2:1)
 - Along with _____ (4:1) and _____ (4:8)
- Slander can take on many forms:
 - Questioning legitimate _____
 - Like when the people of Israel “spoke against God and against Moses” (Num 21:5)
 - Slandering someone in _____ (Ps 101:5)
 - Bringing _____ (1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16)
- The reference to the Law is likely to Lev 19:16a
 - By slandering others, we are violating a central principle of God’s Law: _____ for our _____ (Lev 19:18b; cf. Jas 2:8)

The Rightful Judge (v. 12)

- When we speak against others, we take on the role of _____
- This is _____ job, not ours (Isa 33:22)
- Instead, we are to avoid _____ others because we do not want to be _____ by others (Jas 4:4; Matt 7:1-5)

A Better Way

- Words are _____
- Rather than tearing down others with our words, we are called to _____ them ____ (Eph 4:29)
- _____ is one of the most effective ways to show someone we _____ them and is desperately needed (1 Thess 5:11)
 - Words of Encouragement

So What?

- Are we tearing down or building up with our words?
- Are we loving others through our words?

Meditation Verse: *Ephesians 4:29*