

Series – Part 17: How to Live as a Christian:

# Acknowledge the Lord's Control!

James 4:13-17 NAS

Sunday, August 18 at 9:00; Monday, August 19 at 7 PM

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost / 12<sup>th</sup> After Trinity – 2013

Next Sunday, 8/25 is our Final Summer Schedule

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, what are YOUR plans this week? Today: lunch, family, taking it easy; M-F: the grind of getting up, eating, working, sleeping.

- Do YOU have the ability to make those things happen?
- What if we lose our electricity for 24 hours?
- What if we are injured or sick to the point where we are hospitalized?
- What if we have another day like 9/11/2001?

This is the point: We *can* and *should* plan, but we really don't know what is coming in the future; therefore, the LORD is calling us to acknowledge His control over our lives.

1. **Can WE Really Make It Happen?**<sup>13</sup> **Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."** // James wrote about what we "say," which comes from our heart. Jesus said: *The mouth speaks from that which fills the heart* (Luke 6:45). Therefore, those who SAY or BRAG that they will ♦go to a certain place, ♦do a certain thing, and ♦benefit in a certain way are either *unaware of or*

*not acknowledging* the LORD's control. Even Solomon wrote: "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Pro 27:1 NAS).

2. **Do We REALLY Know About Tomorrow?**<sup>14</sup> **Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.** // Our lives on earth may seem long, but they are super-short – *like a vapor* – in comparison to eternity! But what about tomorrow, *that should be easy enough to figure out*; yet James wrote: "...you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow." Is that true? **Yes!**
  - a. My life years ago: My work routine followed a regular schedule of *what I did* and *when I did it*. Then, one day, *as I drove back from Michigan*, I memorized James 4:14. As I did so I believed what it said, *but I really did not take it to heart*. As I drove I thought my regular routine would continue for at least two more years, but, when I arrived at my destination, *I was shocked to learn about some very significant changes in my life!*
  - b. Last Wednesday and last Friday: A letter arrived and a phone call was answered; both have added even more *to my plate that was already full*.
3. **How SHOULD Believers Proceed?**<sup>15</sup> **Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that."** // That type of statement is proper: It does express our plans, but it also acknowledges that

*the follow through is up to the LORD!* Here are some Bible examples:

- a. We pray in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:10 NAS).
  - b. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane: "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it [*referring to Jesus' death on the cross to remove our sins*], your will be done" (Mat 26:42 ESV).
  - c. Paul wrote to the believers in Rome: "...without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you" (Rom 1:9-10 ESV).
  - d. Peter wrote about God's will: "...it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil" (1 Peter 3:17 ESV).
  - e. Paul made this statement about God: "In him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28 ESV) That implies that *without God* ☹️ we do not live, ☹️ we do not move, and ☹️ we do not exist!
4. **Let Us CHANGE**: <sup>16</sup> **But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.** // Arrogance says: "I can do it *without* God, *regardless* of God, *in spite of* God! Thinking or saying such things are even more than wrong, *they are evil!*"
5. **Let Us DO RIGHT**: <sup>17</sup> **Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.** // So boasting about tomorrow is sin, but here, in general

– *whenever we know what is right, but do not do it, that is also sin!* So how should we function as believers in Jesus?

- a. We should acknowledge the LORD's control over all things (Lam. 3:37-38)!
- b. We should prayerfully seek His will in every circumstance!
- c. We should take action to do whatever is right in every circumstance!

**Conclusion**: The LORD is the Almighty God; He created; then, *when the time was right*, He stepped into this world to remove our sins and open heaven. Therefore, *no matter how OR how much we have fallen short of His will*, we – *by grace through faith* – have His forgiveness!

Therefore, let us **+**be sorry for our sins, **+**gladly acknowledge Him in every circumstance, **+**trust Him in every way, and **+**live unto His glory every day!

And all God's people said: **Amen!**