

# Making Life Count (Part III)

## James 4:13-17

**Purpose of series:** The purpose of this series is to assist you in taking off the limits of God's expression through you and in your life and His blessing on your life. The book of James reveals many practical duties and activities of Christian, that if not heeded will hinder God's expression through them and blessings on them, especially during difficult seasons of our life. This series will provide us with a practical view of how to live a life of spiritual impact and personal fullness in a difficult world under pressure.

**Purpose of this message:** Today's message is to bring it home. We have been able to see the truth of God's word when it comes to addressing upheaval and unpredictable times such as ours. I do not believe that this is a time for fear but it is absolutely a time for faith. You cannot ignore the times that we are living. You cannot turn your head and wish that it would go away. It's here! And we are left with the question, "What are we going to do about it?" I strongly urge you today to hear this word today and put it deep in your heart because I believe it will become more and more relevant for each one of us as the days are approaching. Remember, as we turn our heart toward God, He will not turn away, He desires that our heart would turn toward Him. Celebrate that He is your Father and knows what we are in need of. Be blessed as you make your life count by submitting to what is good and riding yourself of sin that so easily entraps us. Be free in the Lord as you give Him every opportunity to reveal His truth to you by His Word.

### Last Week

*"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.' 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. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."*

### James 4:13-17

Last week I had mentioned two misinterpretations of these scriptures,

#### 1. God Doesn't Approve of Us Making Plans.

There are many scriptures that tell us to plan, planning is not the issues, God in the plans are.

#### 2. Whatever, The Lord's Will Be.

This ultimately leads us us to the first Big Mistake described by James found in these verses, James 4:13-17

#### 1. **First Big Mistake, Planning Your Life Without God**

As James describes this individual, you do not find anywhere of him mentioning God in his business plan. This guy never considers, "What does God think of my plan?"

**We need to stop excusing our lack of participation in serving God with, "the**

**Lord's will be..." and start exerting our activity with "the Lord's will is..."**

**There are three basic responses that we can respond to God's will:**

1. **I acknowledge it.** I need to admit that God has a will and it is available to me.
2. **I accept it.** I really want God's will and I accept it into my life.
3. **I anticipate it.** I now look for it. I anticipate it and not dread it but deeply desire it.

**Planning our life without God is the first BIG mistake we can make.**

## 2. **The Second Big Mistake, Assuming Life Will Never Change**

Many people do not understand that the decisions they make today make them tomorrow. It is easy to take for granted that we will live forever and I've got the rest of my life to straighten up, to live for God or make right choices.

*"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

*"As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil."*

James 4:16

**Three Facts to consider when making our life count:**

1. **Life Is Unpredictable-** Look what James says, "...you don't even know..." In all reality, we really don't know what's going to happen.
2. **Life Is Brief-** Look again what James is saying, "**You are a mist...**" I talked about how Jesus says in Matthew 24, that as it was in the days of Noah, "...**so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.**" One of the ways it was in Noah's time was, "**The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.**" (Genesis 6:6)

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 1 how a nation falls into this obscurity with God,

1. They knew God, (Vs. 21),
2. They do not honor God or give thanks for His blessings (Vs. 21)
3. They turn away from His wisdom, wallowed in their own futile thoughts (Vs. 21, 22)
4. They deify man, who is mortal and corruptible (Vs. 23)
5. They deify animals and nature, and serve "the creature, rather than the Creator" (Vs. 23, 25)
6. Lust becomes central to their culture and no limit to sexual impurity (Vs. 24, 26)
7. Homosexuality becomes rampant. Women begin to do what is unnatural and men burn in their desire toward one another- "men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (Vs. 26-27)
8. God gives them over "to a depraved mind" (Vs. 28).

It has only taken America 200 hundred years to fall into this pattern. And there is a depraved mind, believing that we, as a nation, became so powerful and prosperous without God's help. Now we stand on the brink of decline and

destruction and we must make a choice as a nation. Do we arrogantly progress down this road or will we turn back to the one who made us great? When Israel was given the opportunity to cross over into their promise land God gave them Deuteronomy 28, a chapter of blessings and curses, it is our choice as well.

## See, there are two Big Mistakes

1. **Planning Your Life Without God**
2. **Assuming Life Will Not Change**

- **Life Is Unpredictable**
- **Life Is Brief**

3. **Life Is Eternal-** History as we know it is about to be challenged by the prophetic Word of God. I believe that we are living in a time that will end history as we know it. You can call it the end days or the end times, it doesn't really matter what you call it, just do miss it. I believe that we are living in the time that Jesus spoke about that all of these things will occur and He will return for His bride, His church.

There are some things that are happening in our world that has simply not happened before.

### Jeremiah

In Jeremiah 24, the prophet Jeremiah had a vision. Some of the people from Jerusalem were carried off into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. What Jeremiah saw in the vision were two baskets of figs that were placed in front of the temple of the Lord. One basket had very good figs and the other poor, uneatable figs. (Vs. 1-2)

5 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. 6 My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. 7 I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 24:5-7

Now it's important here to take note that what is said and what is not said. The good exile, (figs) are sent away to Babylon. Now what is not said is that those taken into captivity will turn around and come back to Jerusalem, which some of them did come back under the approval of Cyrus, king of Persia and king Artaxerxes. You can read about it in Ezra and Nehemiah.

8 " *'But like the poor figs, which are so bad they cannot be eaten,' says the LORD, 'so will I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, **his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem**, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt. 9 I will make them abhorrent and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a byword, an object of ridicule and cursing, wherever I banish them. 10 I will send the sword, famine and plague against them until they are destroyed from the land I gave to them and their fathers.'* "

Jeremiah 24:8-10

Now notice that the officials and survivors from Jerusalem would ultimately be destroyed and totally banished until they are destroyed from the land. Very few remained after the exile from Jerusalem. But they did remain, and Ezra and Nehemiah both had opportunity to go back and help restore the city of Jerusalem and it progressed, slowly over time, 400 years, Jerusalem became the busy community that we read about in the Gospels. It was revived because there was always a remnant.

**Jerusalem/Jewish-Roman War-** But the full destruction of Israel did not come until 70 A.D. When the future Roman emperor, Titus, lead his Roman forces to kill over 1,000,000 people during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish and 97,000 were captured and enslaved. (Josephus, The Wars of the Jews VI.9.3)



**Masada**, 73 A.D. The last to survive had held up in a fortress at Masada, where the Romans finally broke in, only to find that the 936 inhabitants had set all the buildings and food storerooms ablaze and committed mass suicide rather than face certain capture, defeat, slavery or execution by their enemies. It was over. They were wiped out. Jeremiah's prophecy had finally been fulfilled. Now the good figs were out there somewhere waiting to return to Jerusalem...May 14,1948!

***“He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.”***

**Isaiah 11:12**

God says, that He will assemble the exiles of Israel back together from the four quarters of the earth, from all the nations and He will make them their own nation. For almost 2000 years Israel had been scattered throughout this earth, banish, ruined and destroyed, just like Jeremiah had said.

***“Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.”***

**Isaiah 66:8**

Never has a nation or a language been re-established in a nation that had lay dormant after so many years. And Israel became a nation just as the Bible said. Today, some clear and prophetic verses found in God's Word are becoming true in our life time. And many more are about to come true within a few days, months or years from now!

### **Prophetic Scriptures**

About 25-30% of the Bible is prophetic and much of that has to do with how the end of the world occurs. There is a surmountable amount of proof that points that the time we are presently living could be the final times for this world. Of all the things that I have read and all that I have heard on this teaching, this is the best of all times for Jesus to return. If I am wrong, then I am wrong and we haven't lost anything. But if I am right and didn't tell you, I'm not sure how prepared you would be for the next few weeks, months and maybe years.

Many people have said, "Well, there have always been signs like those the Bible talks about; earth quakes, floods, wars, etc." There is a big question as to where is the United States in Bible prophecy? Honestly, the United States is not mentioned specifically by name in Bible prophecy. There are some general statements that would include the United States, like those that say all nations will be judged (Isaiah 34:2-3) and all nations will cease to exist except the nation of Israel (Jeremiah 30:11 and 46:28). In all my studies, the U.S. is not mentioned in end time prophecy and one of the reasons is because we will suddenly cease to be a world power, that could be the very activity of what we are seeing now and in the past few weeks.

We are absolutely watching world powers reformat the worlds governmental lines. I think one of three things could take place to put us in this situation, one, we could face a total collapse financially leaving us bankrupt, unable to defend ourselves and become nothing more than a third world country. Second, we could be attacked and weakened until we are no threat. Since we are the only country in the world that would possibly come to Israel's defense, if it were attacked, it would make sense to knock us out of the way so other countries can take their fate to attack Israel, (which could easily follow the financial disruption of our economy.) And thirdly, we could be bailed out by an Asian or European country or the Euro and simply become a puppet to the European powers that be as we are assimilated into the European world market.

Just a few days ago The Washington Times had a bold headline (October 1, 2008), reading, "**Foreign Economists Urge 'Global Plan.'**" The story went on to say, "Leaders and economists from Western Europe to East Asia urged that America go beyond reviving a failed domestic bailout and start working on a *new global financial system*. The next U.S. president should immediately call for a second 'Bretton Woods' conference to devise a new doctrine of international finance.'"

Bretton Woods is a town in New Hampshire where 44 leaders of the Allied nations that won World War II gathered to establish a postwar global monetary and financial order. It was aimed at preventing a repeat of the economic dislocations of the 1930s.

There is no peace but global financial panic.

- The wealthiest American, Warren Buffet, mentioned that he has never seen such fear.
- Newt Gingrich declared, "We're also far from out of danger. If we do not create an economic recovery program, we will be facing another bailout next year."
- French President Sarkozy is looking to Europe and the European Union to solve the crisis.

Today, as you probably already know that the Russian's submarines carries more fire power than all the bombs dropped in World War II. A surprise attack on either coast of the United States would only allow us seven minutes warning, not even enough time to launch a counter attack.

I have heard over and over in the news that we are looking for peace. If things continue to decline there will be a vacuum for a charismatic European political personality, energized by Satan, who will present a wonderful proposal for world peace. So much is happening right now, it is time to sit up and listen to what is going

on. Most of the prophecy in the New Testament is trying to get us ready for the second coming of Christ and the crisis that we call the end of the world.

## **Rapture Letters**

On September 25, 2008, according to five letters left on the front doors of Hutchinson Elementary Schools, later labeled "Rapture Letters," the world will end on September 30th, or October 1st. The letters begin like this,

"Soon, millions of people are going to vanish from earth. This will include all children under a certain age. This experience is known to people in the evangelical as the rapture."

Here are some comments of people who heard about the letters:

- "Personally, I thought it was crazy," said Ryan Collum, the parent of an Avenue A student.
- "I don't think we should take it really seriously," said Mary Janet Marquez, a parent of 6 Avenue A students."
- "I don't know, if that's their religious beliefs, that's fine. But don't take it to our schools, it's not right." Patricia Murray, a parent of two elementary schoolers

Police believe a man dropped them all off. He is described as a white man between the ages of 60 and 70. Officers do not think the man poses any threat; however, they want to talk to him to be sure. They think he was "**simply delivering a message based on his spiritual beliefs.**"

## **I Thessalonians**

The book of I Thessalonians is very important because every chapter talks about the return of Jesus. The book of II Thessalonians is very important because it was specifically written concerning the end of time and Jesus Christ return.

*"Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape."*

I Thessalonians 5:1-3

*"But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. **You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.** So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled."*

I Thessalonians 5:4-6

There was a lot of tension at the church at Thessalonica because their world was being turned upside down and all kinds of rumors were going around. Actually II Thessalonians was written addressing rumors that were stirring around the church that Jesus had already returned and they had been left behind. You can imagine the frustration with this rumor that these people who are serving God with all their heart and Jesus comes and for some reason doesn't touch base with those who are fully committed to Him.

You can see Paul's writing here as an encouragement to those deceitful rumors, "You are all sons of the light and sons of the day, He didn't leave you behind. There is nothing wrong with you, Jesus didn't come back yet.

When we study Bible prophecy it is very encouraging because God tells us what is going to happen in the end times. What stands out more than anything when you read Bible prophecy is that "We Win!" God takes all! There are some exciting things that are happening to a troubled world that you and I are living in.

### **Ezekiel 37**

You can almost see the roadmap that God gives us in Ezekiel 37 so we can see where we are in the end time process. Some of this I believe is happening right now. Here are some thoughts on end time prophecy.

- Some people believe that end time prophecy unravels over a three to four hundred, maybe a thousand year timeline. But that's not what Jesus said,

*"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."*

**Matthew 24:34**

Jesus was saying here that when end time events happen, they will happen in one generation.

*"The length of our days is seventy years— or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away."*

**Psalms 90:10**

A generation in the Bible is thought to be 70 years. Here is why this is so important. I am just reading you the Bible and I am coming from much study from well known scholars, believe that the end time prophecy began in 1948 when Israel was born as a nation. That was the one even that had to be there for end time prophecy to take place. You really can't separate end times from Israel, and Israel hadn't existed in over 1900 years. Other scriptures, Isaiah 11, 66; Ezekiel 37; Matthew 24; Luke 21 and other scripture that supports the idea that there will be turmoil on this earth before Christ comes back and Israel is scattered among the nations.

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land."*

**Ezekiel 37:21**

There are many scriptures in the Bible that says that Israel will be scattered around the world and be regathered in the homeland in the end times. Many have seen that occur in their life time and many Bible scholars and end time scholars agree that end time prophecy began sixty years ago. Israel was born in May 1948 and they just celebrated their sixty year anniversary because this is 2008.

I remember my dad telling me the story of what he thought when he was twenty-three years old and heard in 1948 that Israel had become a nation. He was not a believer. He had never heard any teaching on Biblical prophecy or did he know any scripture

that could have made him think this. But when the news reported of Israel being established as a nation he immediately started thinking the world would not be around long and God was going to do something big in the world. Now this was after WWII, and that was incredibly big.

Jesus said that when you began seeing these things happen, that generation will not pass until all of it happens.

*"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

Luke 21:28

You may have thought, "Oh, when some of these things start happening, they could go on for years and years, maybe hundreds of years." But that's not what Jesus said. He said that once it begins, it will continue to finish out in one generation.

### **Years Of Tribulation**

The last seven years on this earth are called the Years of Tribulation. It is unparalleled in any other time in history. There will be natural catastrophes, unusual weather patterns and world wars like none ever seen. There are different views of when Jesus Christ comes back for His people to take them away to a home He has prepared for them, (John 14:2). One of the views is that He comes back for them at the beginning of the seven years, this is called the pre-wrath rapture or pre-trib, pre-tribulation rapture of the church. Another view is that in the middle of the seven years of tribulation there will be a transition and rapture of the church, this is called mid-trib by many. And the last view is that the church will be taken at the end of the tribulation.

If Jesus comes at the beginning of the seven years, that means the church will not be here for those seven years. If you take one generation, 70 years and subtract the seven years, that gives us 63 years. Israel just celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary as a nation, the time we consider when this prophecy started being fulfilled. That leaves us with 3 years...or if a generation is 80 years we have 13 years. Whatever, if this means of interpreting the Bible is correct, we have 3 to 13 years before Christ comes back for His church. I am not setting dates as much as I am as reading scripture.

You and I are living in a time where the Bible declares some incredible events that this world has never seen before.

**Invasion of Israel:** There will be an invasion of Israel which will involve an Islamic coalition of nations in relationship with Russia which was recorded by the prophet Ezekiel 2600 years ago. God takes Ezekiel by the Spirit, as recorded in Ezekiel 37, and places him in the middle of a valley of dry, dead and scattered bones which represent the condition of Israel. And God asks Ezekiel a question.

*"He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'"*

Ezekiel 37:3

"Son of man, can these bones live?" Now it's important to know that when you are talking to God, He always has the answers. God asks, "...can these bones live?"

Ezekiel replies, "Oh Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

When you hear what God told Ezekiel to say at that moment it does something to you. As I read it, my faith just goes up a few notches. My passion

*"Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"*

Ezekiel 37:4-6

Ezekiel began to prophesy over the bones, (vs. 7-8), there was some noise and some rattling going on. This bone moved over to that bone and that bone moved over to that bone. All of this clicking sound and then tendons started attaching itself to the bones and muscle and finally the flesh covered the who body, but there they were, lifeless with no breath. There were hundreds of them laying on the ground, complete as beings. Potential warriors, complete in physical component but they lacked breath. They lacked life. They lacked the capability to raise themselves off the ground and become the army that God had given them being for.

Again, God tells Ezekiel to prophecy breath to enter the bodies that were once dry bones. The four winds of the earth came and breathed into each one of these slain warriors. They caught their breath and stood to there feet, and there was a vast army! Wow, what an incredible look...talk about Sci-fi!

God tells Ezekiel in verse 11 that these bones are the "whole house of Israel." They were non-existent, hopeless and cut off. And the last thing that Ezekiel prophesies is that the Lord will bring them back to Israel and the Jews will settle and inhabit their own land. I find this very important and it cannot be ignored. When you see this happen, what happen? When you see Israel coming back to Israel as a nation, God tells Ezekiel,

*"I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD."*

Ezekiel 37:14

When you see this, you will know that it is not a coincident. This didn't just happen, it could only happen by the hand of God and God is saying when you see it, it is God's doing. "Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it..."

Why do I make this a point right here? Because there are some who want to ignore Israels presence in the present day existence and say it has no prophetic substance. They also say that the Bible was talking figuratively about Israel and not about the present day Israel. This is not what Ezekiel 37 is saying. He is saying, "Ezekiel, prophesy, and prophesy in a way that you can't get confused. Israel is a nation that is scattered all over the world, hopeless, separated and without life. But I will do a miracle. I will allow My Spirit to draw them from all over the world and breath into them again, to come home, not figuratively, but actually. When you see this, "THEN YOU

WILL KNOW..." What does that mean? It means there will be no doubt, no argument, no question, no other interpretation of what this can mean other than God has spoken and He has done it and it is a way for us to measure what Biblical season we are in. It is not something that some theologian has made up. How can you say that? Ha! God Himself says, "I didn't it," why would you ever say that some Biblical scholar has made this up?

There are memories to make today. There are things to do today. Don't do life without God and don't make the big mistake of thinking life will never change. The only time you actually have is now. Now is the only time you can influence someone for the Kingdom of God. Now is the only real time you have to tell a loved one how special they are to you. Now is the only real time you have to let Jesus Christ become Lord of your heart and life. I need to learn to live today, now, one day at a time!

David said in Psalm 35:15 **"Lord, my days are in your hands."** Commitment toward God, that's what James was talking about. Don't make the mistake of planning without God and don't make the mistake of life will always stay the same.

### 3. A Third Big Mistake, Putting Off Doing Good

**"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."**  
James 4:17

James is talking about delayed obedience. It is doing what you know you should do now instead of piling them up to some time later. It is so difficult to work with someone who is "getting around to it." You are depending on them to help you get the job done but time after time you find that they keep dragging their heels. When is obedience going to become your priority?

**Do you realize that God does not distinguish the difference between procrastination and disobedience? (Ouch!) My lack of responding to His Word and His will is "sin," not, "I'm getting around to that, in fact, I'll do that tomorrow."**

When we put off what we know we should do, James says that's a sin. You know the right thing to do, but you don't do it...that's sin. How do you define sin? Maybe we put it in terms of the legal system, if it will get you thrown in jail, well that's sin! Maybe one of the bad things people do, that evil stuff, that's sin. **But look at what James is saying, you measure sin but the "good" you avoid not by the "bad" you do.**

In my negligence I can sin because there are things I should be obeying God in and I'm doing nothing. You can have a legalistic religious attitude, "I don't do this or that..." But the sin James is talking about is not one of **commission**, the acting out, but one of **omission**, the one without acting. Christianity is not all about not sinning, it is all about being obedient, doing good. The people that James was talking to were people who were convinced that they were going to heaven because they had said all the right prayers and did the right religious responses. But they were disconnected from that affecting how they lived. They were not in touch with the community that they lived in and it did not affect how they talked and thought about people. They knew the right way to live, they simply didn't feel compelled to do so, and that was a sin.

Like I said, **God does not distinguish the difference between procrastination and disobedience.** "I'll get that done one of these days." "I'll get serious about God and really jump in one of these days." God says that you don't have any guarantee of tomorrow.

*"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow' -- when you now have it with you."*

**Proverbs 3:27-28**

**There are three things you can do with your life:**

1. Spend it,
2. Waste it,
3. Invest it.

You can waste your life, your time, your money, life. Or you can spend it. You can spend your life trying to acquire things: fame, pleasure. Or you can invest your life. The best use of life is to invest it on something that is going to outlast it.

**"He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose."** -- Jim Elliot.

What's going to last forever? God, God's Word and the souls of men and women. People will spend their life in one of two places for eternity after this life is over. Where I spend my time now may determine where I'll spend eternity. Invest your life in things that will last – pursue God, dive into the Word of God and love people.

I need for my life to count. I can't waste it on non-essential things that are not going to count in the long run. James tells us that we are to make our life count -- do it now, don't waste it!

### **The Talents**

Jesus teaches us a story about the three men who were give talents, money in this case. One man was given one, one man five and one man ten. He came back years later to see what the men had done with the talents that He had given them. Two of the men had doubled their money by investing it. The third man, the one who only received only one talent was full of fear. He hid what he had because he didn't think he could do much with it. He was holding on instead of pressing on.

I'm assuming that many of you have already heard this story, but look at the one whom the master came back and rebuked, it was the man with the least. The master said that at least you could have invested it in some kind of money market of some sort. Why did you let it set there? And then He calls him a "wicked" servant. Why? What had he done? Nothing. That's wickedness. Doing nothing with your life is bad. Make your life count.

### **Just Do It**

Actually Niki did not originate that slogan, James did. Whatever you intend to do for God, **JUST DO IT!** Don't wait for another time of ministry to compel you to do it. Do wait for another week, month or year. Do it now! If God has moved your heart to serve

by teaching a class or serving at this church or to get involved in a Life Group, Just Do It! Are you thinking about starting to tithe and giving, do it now. Has God dealt with your heart about touching someone else's life? Do it now!

Paul writes the Corinthians and he tells them this,

*"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."*

II Corinthians 6:2b

### **The Foolish Man**

Jesus teaches us a story in Luke 12 about a man who is very successful in life but foolish in God's eyes. He made the mistakes James tells us about, all three big mistakes.

- He planned his life without God
- He assumed that life would never change
- He put off doing good

*"And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'"*

Luke 12:16-17

*"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"*

Luke 12:18-19

*"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?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."*

Luke 12:20-21

God calls this man a fool. Can you imagine that for all eternity, the only pleasure you get is what you obtained here on this earth. James says our life is like a vapor, here and then gone. All that you believe you are struggling with, to lay down for God is a passing thought in comparison to eternity. This foolish man was consumed with all that he could obtain here without considering that there was eternity. This man had no idea that his life was going to be taken from him.

I remember going into the operation room before Carol, my wife's dad went into surgery. He was 48 years old. I asked him about his stance with God, he prayed with me, I believe the prayer of faith to save his soul. He had great peace on his heart that day. But that was the last day of his life here on this earth. I remember when Carol and I went to see him after the operation had failed. He lay there, peaceful. We were confident we knew where he was.

### **What about you?**

What about your life? Are you waisting it? Are you spending it? Are you investing it? Do you know about your life tomorrow? I invite you to give your life to Christ today, not because you are going to die tonight but because you are more than likely going to live tomorrow, and you can live it with new hope and great purpose! We don't know what

tomorrow holds but we can know these three things,

1. **I Can Plan My Life With God**
2. **I Don't Have To Assume Life Will Never Change**
3. **I Don't Have To Put Off Doing Good**

*"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."*

**II Corinthians 6:2b**

This may be your day to say yes to God! Today, not tomorrow. Not next week or the following week. God has a plan for your life, you are not here by accident. There is more to life than getting up in the morning, going to work, coming home, watching TV, going to bed and getting up the next day to do the same thing. You were not created to just take up space on this earth, God has a purpose for you. God wants to become your personal manager and life trainer. This begins when you establish a relationship with Him.

### **Repentance**

I don't think that it is unusual that a common theme that God seems to be placing on many hearts here at our church comes in one word, "Repent!" This week the Lord reminded me that as we have taken the last few weeks to learn how to be "Limitless" throughout our study of James that He has taught us to serve one another and our community. I saw how the harvest from our ministry field was brought into our sanctuary week after week challenged us to stop being so self occupied and to take a few moments of our day to take some food to those in need and live like Jesus openly to our community. He spoke to me that we needed week after week to break down a selfishness in us so we could get the full impact of a servants heart that it is not based upon a united "event" but that it was part of our everyday character.

This week God shared with me that we will need to repent again and again. And He explained to me why. We are not needing to repent again and again for the reason that we are so sinful and that we are such a disappointment to Him, or that He is so hard to please. But we are in need to repent and repent again for the sake of understanding, getting a full revelation of what "repentance" is. He spoke to my heart about the limitation of my understanding of repentance; that repentance is a means of releasing the pressure of a guilty heart. But He was saying it was much deeper. It is more than saying that I am sorry. It is venturing to a level of humility that challenges all of our self sufficiency, our prideful pockets and prejudices and independence and causes us not to feel sorry for the past actions but those that remain indignant and stiff necked toward God. I believe this revelation can only come as we verbally repent to God, simply saying, "I repent of anything that does not Glorify your Name or that is out of step with your Spirit."

*"[There is] therefore now no **condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit.**"*

**Romans 8:1 (KJV)**

Repentance is a means of walking after the Spirit. By saying the word, "Repent," I am making a confession of my being repulsed at my walk after the flesh, not just a mistake or some guilt feeling that I have. **Repentance dissolves condemnation.** *"There is*

*NOW NO Condemnation...who walk...after the Spirit.*" So, we repent, not for our humanness, there is no way we could ever repent enough for that short coming. But we repent, so that the Spirit of God can start working in our mind, our "depraved" mind, (Romans 1:28), that can't see sin because we are limited without the spirit, nor does it since any danger or wrong in our sin. Now you may be saying, "Man, I don't need any more help feeling bad about the sin I have done or am in bondage to. Why would I want to be more more aware of my short comings even more?" The reason is, because it goes much deeper. It goes beyond the act of your behavior, it goes down deep within the trappings of your Spirit. It is not about feeling guilty more, it is about being being limited less, about hearing God intimately where condemnation can't continue to trip you and depress you and distort God to you.

Condemnation is an accuser who stands constantly looking over your shoulder, nit-picking everything you do, questioning your motives, grading your performance and attacking your efforts. But repentance, real repentance, opens the door to the awareness of the devils schemes. For example, imagine with me playing a game with your kids. Your children are not as aware of sight and sounds as you are. Let's say that they have a squirt gun. They have gone to another room with the intent of surprising you and dousing you with their water surprise, but they cannot hold back their anticipation and the moment gives them away, they are either in the line of sight, their foot is exposed behind the door, or they snicker in the background. For whatever reason, children don't know how to hide all the way and often give themselves away.

When I am walking in the Spirit and condemnation attempts to surprise me I am now more aware of the devil's schemes. I am more in tune to the sounds and sights, the feet if you will, that are exposed behind the door. Instead of reacting I look in amazement at the exposure of a manipulating enemy who is constantly trying to spray cold water down my back. I don't have to react to them, I look at it and say, "I see you and you are not going to do anything to me." I become aware of the attempts and schemes of the enemy.

I noticed the other day that our sprinkler system was on in our yard. I hadn't realized that all summer when one section of the system came on, one of the heads sprayed directly into our dog house. How I found this out was while I was looking out the window one day, the sprinklers came on and my dog came running out of her house getting soaked in the process. Now go with me on this one. Every day this Summer, I would go in the back yard and my dog would come up wanting to play or get petted. She loves me. But she has no idea that I was making her life miserable. As I was thinking about this I was thinking, I wonder what she would do if she knew I was responsible for her getting soaked every time the sprinkler system came on? Would she bite my leg? Would she stay on the side of the yard with broken trust in her heart? But she's a dog, they can't understand those sorts of things.

But the devil has schemes too. He has things that absolutely bring upheaval in our lives and we don't even realize it. In our "fleshly" estate we are incapable of connecting the dots between the reality of some of the events in our life and the one causing it. There is no telling how many things that we have snuggled up to that is the same culprit creating the chaos in our life. But it is this spirit walk that allows us to realize who turned on the water. Repentance allows us to become aware, to connect

the dots and realize that the one who we thought was bringing so much comfort was the one who had instituted so much pain. I now refuse to allow myself to be “comforted” again by that agent of deception. I bow before God in repentance, a repentance of sorrow and guilt, yes, but more. I repent of my own efforts to protect myself with my own intelligence and insight. I repent of holding God back, limited of His personal attributes in my life. To repent is to cease from my own labor and efforts to please God and totally rely on His will, no matter how simple the direction from above might be. This is true rest in the Lord, birthed through the repentance of ceasing from my own labor. His yoke is truly easy and His burden light. This does not mean less action, it means less distraction, more focused effort on things that God pinpoints as of most importance no matter how insignificant it seems; a phone call, an hour early in the morning just to watch the sun rise, an hour later to weep before Him, meditating on one scripture that seems to have no appeal. Sometimes God rewards the obedience, sometimes He delays the full revelation of your actions, sometimes He pours more truth in you than you believe you can really hold. Oh, repented soul, how fresh He makes Himself known. What journey awaits you, what jewels of revelation, experience, miracles and truths await you. Fall on your face, in repentance. Learn of it. Keep asking for the full revelation of it. Repent my friend, for in it is the joy of surrender.

Are you in dialog with God? Have you run your calendar by Him? Are you filling out your days, marking your calendar, scheduling appointments and then asking God to bless it? Does God have any priority in your life's planning? James says for us to check in with God first, then lay out the plans. Consult Him first.

Are you taking tomorrow for granted? Do you think life will never change? Your kids will not get older, they will always be around. Your health will always be with you, you can mistreat it. Your job will always be there, you can bank on it. But you are not assured of that. God wants you to live a life right now that counts.

Are you obedient to God...right now? Are you attempting to be a procrastinator with the things that God said must stop, or must not be? You are lingering, waiting on things that you know God is urging you to do in your life but you keep putting them off. Have you already remembered today something that you had put off that God had laid on your heart and you never got around to it? Just do it! Do it now. Don't wait. Don't put off right now for something as temporary as this life. Do miss the benefits of eternity for one vapor of pleasure here! Make the change, respond to God!

***“I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.”***

**II Corinthians 6:2b**