



Week 21 – May 26, 2013

Timeline: Status Updates

James 4:11-17

¹¹ Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹² God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

¹³ Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. ¹⁵ What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ Otherwise you are boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil.

¹⁷ Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

Morning Fog

A few years ago I ran in the California International Marathon in Sacramento. It was a beautiful city. We would go for a walk in the morning—around the capitol and through the downtown. Each morning we would start in the fog and end in the sunshine. The fog was predictable. It existed every morning. Some days a little longer than others. And it would always disappear.

James likens the morning fog to our lives. Here a little while and then it's gone. (verse 14) I can relate. Tomorrow, Amber and I will be married seventeen years. It seems crazy that the little boy who was born on our fifth anniversary is going to be twelve years old. It doesn't seem like twelve years or seventeen years. Here today and gone tomorrow.

James was a realist. Even after a declaration to Christ or a submission to God's grace—life can be and often is filled with challenges and difficulties. Humans can plan (verse 13), but life is unpredictable (verse 14).

James writes in opposition to the secularism that was prevalent during his time: If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that. (verse 15) James contends that humanity is not at the center of life. God is. James fully contrasts the secular life that moves God to the fringe and the sacred life that places God in the center and constructs life around God. The former operates from a human vantage point and the latter operates with the view of eternity.

Questions for Reflection

1. Does life seem like it is passing by too fast? If you could have the last ten years back and could do them over again, what would you change? What would you do the same?

2. Do you tend to think of your life more from a secular worldview (you are the center) or a sacred worldview (God is the center)? Think about some steps you can take to help you shift from a secular worldview to a sacred worldview. What, if anything, is preventing you from taking these steps?

3. Are you a planner? What are the advantages of planning? How do you respond when things you plan don't turn out the way you planned? How is God involved in your planning?

4. What steps are you taking to determine, embrace, and live out God's will in your life?

5. How does knowing that life on earth is short and life with God is eternal affect your planning?

6. Do you tend to ask God to join what you are doing / want to do or are you more likely to ask God how you can join what He is up to?

This Week's Prayer Focus - A Prayer to Get the Most out of Life.

Pray this prayer daily during the week. Spend additional time focusing on a short section of the prayer. Spend a few moments in silence listening to God and being attentive to the ways God is speaking to you.

Dear God,

I thank you for my life. It is a gift.

Help me live my life so that my life is a gift to You and to others.

Do something great in me so that You can do even greater things through me.

I confess the times I have taken life for granted.

I confess the times I have done my will and not Your will.

Forgive me. Purify me. Give me a heart and a mind to follow You.

Sometimes it seems like life is going by so fast.

I want to experience greater fulfillment in this journey with others.

I want to experience greater joy as I travel with You.

Let me discover how valuable and precious life is.

Make my life sacred and holy and centered on You.

Help me not to waste a single moment.

When challenges come my way bless me with Your presence.

When difficulties are present provide me Your power.

Give me the ability to continue and not to quit.

I pray that Your will be done in my life.

I pray that more and more You live in me and through me.

Allow my life to be a reflection of Your life.

Give me the desire to pray and connect to You

Bless me with faith to believe You and trust Your promises

And bless me with the courage and wisdom to act on Your behalf

At the end of my days let me celebrate a legacy of love with You and others.

Bless others that you have made the world a little better through me.

And let me rejoice that I will be together forever with You.

Amen.

This Week's Bible Memory Verse

What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." -James 4:15

This Week's Resources

The Christian Atheist: Believing in God but Living As If He Doesn't Exist by Craig Groeschel

Living Still by Abby Lewis

Immortal Diamond: The Search of Our True Self by Richard Rohr

This Week's Challenge

Spend some time thinking and praying about the questions for reflection. Write down an action plan thinking about one or two steps you can take in the next week. Implement this plan.

Next Week – Shhh... Things We Don't Like to Talk About