

Jewels from James - Part Eight

James 4:10-17

February 21, 2010

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“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He, who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” 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. Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

INTRO

Verse 10 James begins this section with one more statement about humility. “Humble yourself before the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

The key is humility:

“The way up is down”

“The lowly one becomes the lifted one”

“There is a marked advantage to humility-eventually it brings honor.”

To “slander and judge one another”: Is totally opposite to the humble spirit God desires

Verse 12 James asks another of his penetrating rhetorical questions:

“But you-who are you to judge your brother?”

A humble, not haughty attitude: Is essential for spiritual growth.

In addition to conflict and a judgmental spirit, bragging was also apparently prevalent.

This next section is entitled: “Turn boasting into belief”

Verses 13-17

James gave an example of a boastful statement by a fairly typical businessman who makes plans without consulting God.

He is self assertive in his travel plans: “We will go to this or that city.”

Self-confident in his time schedule: “Spend a year there.”

Self-centered in his business relationships: “Carry on business and make money.”

James’ response to this lifestyle: “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.”

Our plans are always tentative.

Our plans are not our own.

Our time is not our own.

In fact, our life is not our own.

The key to avoiding boasting is to have a godly perspective.

Instead of making plans on our own, we should be including God in our plans.

Instead of vain boasting we should be saying: "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

Verse 15

These aren't just "Christian" words we say but a realistic attitude that affects all of our behavior.

Just to make sure his readers understood, James reiterated that:

"To boast and brag.....is evil"

Verse 16

James' closing sentence, "Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." is not only referring to boasting but to everything he has said so far in this letter.

To mature spiritually, a believer must do the good he knows.

CONCLUSION

To summarize what James has taught in the first 4 chapters:

A believer must:

Serve compassionately without favoritism.

Speak carefully with a controlled tongue and wise thoughts.

Submit to God with a humble spirit and a trusting heart

He must:

Be what God wants him to be.

Do what God wants him to do.

Speak as God wants him to speak

Sense as God wants him to sense

Next Week James 5:1-12