

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

James 4:14

“What is your life?” It is a probing question that we need to think about from time to time. The expression is found in a context about planning. James 4:13-17 describes how in our plans we need to remember God. One of the reasons given is the uncertainty of life. So with that in mind, tonight I want to visit this question.

I. Your life is a gift from God

- a. Genesis 2:7 – reminds us that God created man from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.
- b. Psalm 139:14 – I am fearfully and wonderfully made
- c. Not only do we have life, we are also, as humans, created in the image of God – Genesis 1:26-27. Think about what makes man different, even from animals – the ability to reason and formulate coherent and exact thoughts, our ability to philosophize, to calculate and understand the laws of nature and to use those laws to develop technology that can improve our quality of life, our ability to appreciate beauty, and our ability to worship. Our depth of intelligence, feelings for one another, etc. I am convinced ALL OF THESE are part of how we are created in His image.
- d. Are we thankful for the life we have?

II. Your life is a vapor

- a. Our very text indicates this and is the warning. The point is clearly that our time here is temporary.
- b. This has also been the prevailing thought of the book of Ecclesiastes that we have examined.
- c. IT is also a prevailing thought throughout scripture.
 - i. James 1:11 describes our life as a flower of the field that will pass away.
 - ii. Hebrews 9:27 tells us we are appointed to die.
 - iii. Job 14:1-2 indicates the same thing –
 - iv. Psalm 39:5 - *Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah*
- d. Clearly life is uncertain. Odds are that if you are in good health, you will live another day, but we all know that such is temporary. And that is simply something we need to continually be aware of.

III. Your life is preparing for eternity

- a. Amos 4:12, as Amos warns of impending judgment against both Israel and Judah (as well as surrounding nations), he gives this warning, to Israel especially He says, “prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”
- b. We may not like to think about it, but God is watching everything we do. There is no place we can hide from Him (Psalm 139:7-13). He sees all things and knows all things. He knows our actions, words and even our thoughts. He knows the things we do in secret. No wonder we read, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31)
- c. Hebrews 9:27b notes that after we die there will be a judgment.
- d. We will be judged according to our actions – 2 Corinthians 5:10, cf. Revelation 20:11-12, etc.
- e. One more thing about that day, **we do NOT know WHEN it will be** – whether it be the culmination of our life on earth, OR His return – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 warns us that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Matthew 25:1-13 tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. It is a parable about preparing for God’s judgment. And in that parable, 5 virgins were prepared, and 5 were not. Jesus concluded with the warning, “*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*” (vs. 13)

- f. So, what do we need to do? Prepare for that day. It is NOT an exaggeration to say, that our purpose in this life is to prepare for the next! Nothing is more crucial (cf. Matthew 16:26).

IV. Your life is the target of the devil

- a. While you are striving to prepare for eternity, Satan is hard at work trying to stop you. And he has been from the very beginning. Where did the first temptation come from? Satan in the Garden – Genesis 3:1-6. And he has been behind every temptation since.
- b. He knows your weaknesses and will exploit them if you let him.
- c. Consider 1 Peter 5:8. He walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
- d. BUT notice also vs. 9, *Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.* See also James 4:7, you CAN resist him.
- e. Concerning him, we are also told to be sober (alert) and vigilant (carefully watchful). Paul warned the Corinthians to act in such a way that Satan not take advantage of us, “for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11).

V. Your life is according to God’s will –

- a. We must never forget that God is in control – always. God has plans and NOTHING will stop Him from accomplishing His plans. And that includes YOU and ME!
 - i. Romans 8:28 tells us that all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose. Contextually this is speaking of HIS purposes.
 - ii. Isaiah 46:9-10, *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’*
Isaiah 55:11, *So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*
 - iii. Acts 5:39, even Gamaliel, giving advice concerning the apostles realized this.
- b. While we certainly have been given freewill, that does not change that fact! You may do what whatever in this life but realize that a day of accounting is coming. God will bring everything into judgment, including every secret thing (Ecclesiastes 12:14)
That is what the rich fool learned (Luke 12:16-21 – the parable of the rich fool).
- c. James 4:15 – in our text, we learn a valuable lesson about this. We must always say, “*If the Lord wills*”.

VI. Your life SHOULD be what God wants it to be – will you obey Him?

- a. Finally, when we consider all these things it ought to move us to continually ask, “What do I need to do?” How can I prepare for eternity? How can I protect myself against Satan? How can I know that I am doing God’s will?
- b. The answer is by obeying His word! Hebrews 5:9 tells us that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.
- c. Consider our opening context. James 4:17 concludes, *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
- d. We need to be like:
 - i. Samuel who said: Speak Lord, your servant hears – 1 Samuel 3:9
 - ii. Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus – Acts 9:6, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”
 - iii. Paul who said: I am crucified with Christ... Galatians 2:20
 - iv. Even Jesus, in the Garden – Matthew 26:39 – even He in prayer submitted to the Father saying, “Not as I will, but as You will.”

As we have seen in this lesson, your life is what it is. Some of these you have no control over, but others you do, and as we consider these, you must realize that your life is what YOU make of it. What are you making of your life? Think about it!