



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide

James 4:13-17 | November 2, 2025

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week, James confronts one of the most common assumptions of modern life: that we are in control. He challenges the attitude of self-sufficiency that plans and boasts as if the future were ours to command. Life, he reminds us, is like a mist—fragile, fleeting, and fully dependent on God’s will.

This passage isn’t condemning planning or business itself but the posture of the heart that forgets who truly governs our lives. Wisdom, then, means living with humble awareness that every breath, every opportunity, and every tomorrow belongs to God.

II. Connecting with One Another

When have your plans gone completely differently than expected?

How did that experience shape your sense of control—or dependence on God?

III. Study the Text

Read James 4:13–17

- Where do you see this “I’m in control” attitude show up in your own life or in our culture?
- When has something unexpected reminded you that you’re not ultimately in charge?
- How might remembering the shortness of life change your priorities?
- What does it really mean to live with an “If the Lord wills” mindset?
- How can we move beyond simply saying “Lord willing” to actually living it?



- What decisions or plans in your life right now might need to be surrendered to God's direction?
- What might "boasting" look like today—not just in words, but in attitude or social media posts?
- When have you known the right thing to do but hesitated or ignored it? What got in the way?
- How does trusting God's control free us to act with courage and generosity instead of fear or self-protection?
- What might obedience look like for you this week in an area where you've been holding back?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Ask God to reveal where you've been living as if you're in charge.
- Pray for the humility to trust God's timing and direction in your plans.
- Thank God for the gift of each day and ask for wisdom to use it well.

V. Digging Deeper

Read Luke 12:16–21 (the parable of the rich fool).

- What similarities do you notice between Jesus' story and James' warning?
- In what ways do modern messages about success, control, and "self-determination" echo the same false narrative?
- What might it look like to live "rich toward God" in your stage of life?

Read Proverbs 27:1 and 1 Corinthians 4:19, 16:7.

- How do these verses help us frame our plans with humility and dependence?
- What would it look like to include God not just in our words ("Lord willing") but in our actual decision-making?

