

James | The Peril of Wealth (4.13-5.6)

Outline

Introduction

- Money is important and necessary and it drives us in a lot of ways
- James challenges how we think about money, possessions and pursuing wealth

Context

- Audience: Merchant and wealthy landowners, and those working the land
- 90% of people depended on money and couldn't eat if they didn't make money for THAT day
- Last week: James encourages the people to pursue humility and submission to God

Main Idea: James provides us with a vivid warning regarding the spiritual dangers of pursuing or possessing wealth.

The Liability of Pursuing Wealth: The Allure of Autonomy (4:13-17)

- His audience: Those who are making plans to accumulate wealth
- A little perspective: Remember who you are
- So what you should do: Recognize God's sovereignty in your planning
- What they are doing: boasting in their self-confidence
- Sin is more than just doing what you shouldn't. It is also not doing what you should
- Take God's will in to account for everyday things, especially money

The Liability of Possessing wealth: Indulgence, Greed, and Exploitation (5:1-6)

- In ch. 2 the Rich he had in mind (not the righteous rich)
- While there were rich saints, the majority were poor
- What they should do: Weep and Howl for the miseries that are coming
- What are these miseries: rotten stockpile, evidence against them, poison
- Why? Hoarded wealth on earth, defrauded others, self indulgent, condemned and murdered the righteous

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Discussion Questions

James is not exaggerating when he tells us that God cares about everything we do, including the way we spend our money, achieve our goals, and spend our time.

1. How often do you consider God's will or values when making plans regarding the following?
 - Career decisions
 - Where we live
 - Budget
 - The friendships we pursue
 - Vacations
 - Family involvement in sports, clubs, etc.
2. How can you be more intentional about seeking God's will in these matters?

Similar to the merchants that James addresses, we are tempted to rely on our own self confidence rather than recognize all that we have is from God.

1. What are the specific things Scripture tells us that God gives us to help us plan and make decisions?
2. How do you feel when you rely on yourself? How do you feel when you fail in this way? How do you feel when you succeed?
3. How do you feel when you rely on the Lord? How do you feel when you fail in this way? How do you feel when you succeed?

James gives a warning of misery to those who hoard wealth for sinful reasons.

1. What's the difference between being responsible and being greedy? How do you determine which is motivating you?
2. In what ways are you tempted to hoard the wealth that God has given you?
3. In what ways are you tempted to use your position or influence to benefit yourself at the expense of others?
4. What would it look like to embrace biblical generosity right now?

Application: The gospel is not just to make us feel better, but to transform us into the image of Jesus. In other words, it's not enough to feel convicted, but we must pursue righteousness.

1. What is one thing that the Lord is convicting you to do from this text/discussion?
2. How can you and your community actively pursue righteousness together?