



## LEADER'S GUIDE – March 17

### *PRIMARY PASSAGE*

**James 4:13-5:6:** <sup>13</sup> Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” <sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

**5** Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. <sup>2</sup> Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

**1.) Read vv. 4:13-4:17. What statements does James make that stands out to you about planning? (Optional: Read Proverbs 3:5-6; 16:9)** In verses 13-14, James talks about how we plan foolishly when we do not include God into our plans. In vv. 15-16, he explains how the wise approach planning as they always include God. And then in v. 17, James encourages us to not wait, but to pursue opportunities to do good. (Once people discuss what James has to say about planning, you may choose to ask them to read Proverbs 3:5-6 and 16:9. These verses reinforce what James is saying: Wise planning always includes God!)

**2.) Take a moment and think about how you approach planning in your life. Can you share ways that you struggle to include God in the planning? Ways that you do include God in your planning?**

**3.) Read vv. 5:1-6. In these verses James speaks harshly against those who approach prosperity foolishly. What are some of the principles that he criticizes?** In vv. 1-3, he speaks to those who hoard their money. In v. 4, criticizes those that exploit others through their greed. In vv. 5-6, he speaks about how the rich have lost their eternal perspective and are just focused on indulging themselves in this world.

**4.) In Matthew 6, Jesus speaks significantly about planning and money. Read vv. 19-34. What do these verses tell us about how we can wisely approach planning and prosperity? Some of the key takeaways:**

- *v. 19-21 and vv. 24 - where your money is, there your heart is also. The problem isn't with money, it is our heart. Thus, being rich is not bad. The problem is when we use God's blessings only for ourselves and not God and others.*
- *v. 25-27. Do not worry about planning and prosperity, because God is in control and will provide for you.*
- *Vv.. 33-34, we should move our focus off of ourselves and focus on the kingdom of God.*

## PERSONAL RESPONSE

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**In this passage, James talks about how we as believers must approach planning and prosperity. He shows us how to do each of these wisely with one simple overarching principle: My decisions are not driven by what I want, but what honors God.**

- **Which of the James' comments about planning and prosperity resonated most with you?**
- **Where in your planning or prosperity, do you need to change something to better honor God? How can you take that next step?**