

BEST LAID PLANS

The other day during a conversation with a fellow believer the following idiom came to mind, “Best Laid Plans.” This is a line from Robert Burns’s poem, “To a Mouse,” written in 1785.

I remembered that this idiom was normally used when someone’s Best Laid Plans didn’t reach its intended goal.

This interpretation of this idiom reminded me of James 4:13-17. With this in mind, I examined our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

Jms.4:13-14	Best laid plan	Human will (ago / p.a.impv nun) Come on now! or Get real!
Jms.4:15	Better laid plan	God’s will (what does the Bible say about it?)
Jms.4:16	Boastful plan	Worldly investments of time, energy, mind, money, and talent
Jms.4:17	Back slide plan	Sin (pursuit of details of life and the good life apart from the will of God)

This lesson will study five aspects of the Best Laid Plans always involve the exercise of the will of God.

1. James 4:13-14 reminds the spiritual advancing believer why the will of God is so important to his daily living.

“Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and than vanishes.” (Jms.4:14)

Doctrinal principle: Your life on earth is like a vapor (atmis/ atmosphere/ breath or vapor on cold day). This vapor could be compared to the hyphen on the tomb stone. A hyphen connects two related things or words like birth and death. Your life on earth is the hyphen (born-died).

This simple hyphen or vapor presents all our daily calendars of activities and plans – “For my days have been consumed in smoke.” (Ps.102:3a)

The Greek word for life is (Zoe). Zoe is a reference to the Christian way of life (CWL) or phase II of the plan of God (John 10:10; 14:6). This is important because every church age believer is a member of the royal priesthood family of God by the grace of God (Eph.2:7-10; 1 Pet.2:9).

2. God has designed a grace plan to give every spiritual advancing believer divine blessings in the Devil’s world.

“**Instead**, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills (ean thelo / a.a.subj), we shall live (zao / f.a.ind) and also do (poieo / f.m.ind) this or that.’” (Jms 4:15)

The future tense deals with the uncertainties apart from the will of God. But the will of God brings certainty and confidence towards God’s plan – “And being fully assured that what He had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Rom.4:21)

“You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.” (Jms 2:22; Rom.10:17; 1 John 5:4)

3. **God's grace plan consists of three categories of the will of God that are necessary to insure that the Best Laid Plan works.**

Geographical will of God – Where does God want me to participate in His plan?

- **Jonah** – there is a right and wrong place based on the will of God. Right place is where you can grow in the word of God and in fellowship and in service with other spiritual maturing believers (Heb.10:25). It is a place where you go and come when engaged in local and foreign missions (Book of Acts).

Mental will of God – What does God want me to think regarding His word and will and work?

- **Sarah** – there is a right way to think based on the will of God under the most stressful conditions of life (Gen.12; 20/ 1 Pet.3:1-6; 1 Cor.11:3). It is important to consistently feed your soul with the truth of the word of God (Col.3:16-17).

Operational will of God – What does God want me to do specifically to participate in His plan?

- **Abraham** – Our specific task will be related to our spiritual gift and spiritual growth (Gen.22/ James 2:21-24; Heb.11:17-19).

Question: “If you won the lottery worth millions today, what would be your plans for tomorrow? How would it effect or change these three categories of the will of God in your life?” This is James’ point in our lesson text.

2. **James says that knowing and doing the will of God is essential to accomplishing the Best Laid Plans.**

“Therefore, to one who knows (oida / perf.a.ptc) Categorical Bible Doctrine (CBD) residing and functioning in right lobe) the right thing to do (p.a.infin) [Positive Volition], and does not do it [Negative Volition], to him it is sin.” (Jms 4:17; Eph.6:6b; 1 John 5:14-15)

Knowledge of CBD orients the spiritual advancing believer to God’s will, phase II time, and grace provisions (Eph.5:15-17; Col.4:5).

We call this **living one day at a time** by God’s grace – “One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He, who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.” (Rom.14:5-6; Heb.3:13; 13:8)

“So teach us to number our days that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.” (Ps.90:12)

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” (Prov.27:1)

“The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; **Great is Thy faithfulness.**” (Lam.3:22-23)

3. **The believer’s happiness and security is not in the details of life but in his spiritual growth capacity to live with or without the details of life (DOLs)**

(Phil.4:11-13) “Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**” **Be sure that the details of life are not the motivation behind the Best Laid Plans!**

(Matt.6:24-25) The spiritual mature believer understands the danger of depending on the details of life for security or happiness - “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. For this reason I say to you, ‘do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. **Is not life more than food**, and the body than clothing?’”

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