

SERIES: "24 – LIVING FOR CHRIST"
MESSAGE: WHEN YOU MAKE PLANS
TEXT: JAMES 4:1-17
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When You Make Plans **James 4:1-17**

Introduction

Have you seen the movie "Bucket List"?

Corporate billionaire Edward Cole and working class mechanic Carter Chambers have nothing in common except for their terminal illnesses. While sharing a hospital room together, they decide to leave it and do all the things they have ever wanted to do before they die according to their bucket list.

I have wanted to see this movie since it came out and as I started working on this message I decided I had to see it, so I went yesterday. And now I have started working on my bucket list. My bucket list is weird, because two of the things require me to keep sub-lists. I want to visit every state in America and I want to play golf in every state in America. So far I have been to thirty-three (33) states, but I have only played golf in sixteen (16). Granted already getting to mark Alaska off is huge.

My next big trip I want to take is to Hawaii. In addition to playing golf there I want to watch people surf those really big waves on the north shore. Notice, I didn't say surf those big waves, I said watch. If I had said surf those waves it would have to have been the "LAST" thing on my bucket list.

I love the ocean and I just love watching people surf. I can remember as a kid being fascinated with watching guys ride the tube, and now seeing these guys that go out on helicopters to ride the absolute monster waves. I wish I had the courage or lack of care for life needed to do that.

One thing that I have realized though is that, people who love to surf, never **plan** the waves, they **prepare** for the waves.

Churches (and the people that make them up) today spend far too much time **planning** things that they have no control over, instead of **preparing** for whatever might come their way. Churches and individuals who ask the wrong questions in terms of the future will be left behind.

The Bible talks a lot about God's planning for our lives, especially in the book of Proverbs ...

Proverbs 16:3 - *Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*

Proverbs 16:9 - *In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.*

Proverbs 19:21 - *Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

This morning we find ourselves in James 4 as we continue our journey through James in an effort to find a pattern for living for Christ – 24/7 ...

(Walk through vv.1-12 – then read)

James 4:13-17. “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.’ 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. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.”

I think the people James is writing to made three mistakes in their planning... the same three mistakes that we sometimes make when we plan.

1. The first is that they are **planning** without God.
2. Secondly, they were **presumptuous** about the future.
3. Finally, they took **pride** in their plans.

Wrong Question: **How Do We Plan for the Future?**

- The problem in making plans for the future is that we base strategies on what we know today not what we know about tomorrow. That makes planning very incremental.
- A much more logical approach for Christian individuals and churches involves “prayer and preparation, not prediction and planning”. (Present Future – p.93)
- The only talk about people making plans in the Bible is here in James 4 and it is found in a negative light.
- Biblical Events that changed history were planned by God.
 - ✠ **Exodus from Egypt** – parting the Red Sea, no human would have come up with that. But the Israelites slaves did pray and prepare for God to deliver them.
 - ✠ **The Incarnation** – no human would have conceived a plan where a innocent teenage girl gives birth to the Son of God. But the Hebrew people prayed for centuries for a Messiah and men like John the Baptist came to prepare the way.
 - ✠ **Pentecost** – the birth of the church. In their wildest dreams the disciples would never have come up with the idea of God dwelling in them in the form of the Holy

Spirit and 3000 people accepting that challenge at one time and being baptized. Never would they have planned for the Holy Spirit to indwell Samaritans and Gentiles.

† **Second Coming** – Jesus constantly taught the disciples to be prepared and ready for a return visit and yet when he ascended they stood dumbfounded with no real sense of hope.

† Jeremiah spoke the words of God as a prophet and said, *“I know the plans I have for you.” Jer. 29:11* To adopt our plans and our dreams, may mean settling for less than what God has in store.

† We have spent hours and millions of dollars planning and building great auditoriums for worship all around the world, and yet what we need more than anything else is for God to show up in a supernatural way and continue to do the things that only He can get the credit for and not us.

So if the wrong question is, how do we plan for the future? What is the correct question? The correct question is a very difficult one.

The Tough Question: **How Do We Prepare for the Future?**

- For you and I to be prepared for God’s leading in our life, we have to understand and agree with his redemptive mission in the world.

† For God is not willing that anyone should perish but that all would come to repentance.

- This usually doesn't happen until your heart has been captured by his heart.
 - ‡ Kim and I went to see Lord of the Dance for Valentine's Day. For two hours our hearts were captured by the story line of "good vs. evil" presented in the framework of Irish folklore, violins, solos and dance.
 - ‡ But the real battle for good and evil comes about everyday in my family, in my career, in my finances and in my schedule. (Turn to Suitcases Around)

Four suitcases represent four different areas in our lives that require preparation for the journey of some sort and I want us to look at them one by one...

1. The first and obvious area that needs preparation is your **family** right?
2. What about your **career**?
3. What about **finances**?
4. Including God in on the preparation of our **daily lives** (schedule).

Bottom Line

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."

God has plans for your future, don't try to out plan him, just trust him.

Are you packed and prepared for the future God has in store?