

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

COFFEEHOUSE FIVE CHURCH

JAMES

WHO'S LIFE IS IT ANYWAY?

JAMES 4:11-17

06/18/2017



MAIN POINT

Every aspect of your life--from your time, to your body, to your finances--belongs to God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Describe your first job. How old were you? What did you do? How difficult was it acclimating to your new role, relationships and responsibilities?

What did it feel like receiving your first paycheck? Did you feel like the time and effort you invested was accurately reflected in the amount you were paid? Why or why not?

The world is full of different kinds of resources, but none are as important to us as time and money. Therefore, they are often the hardest areas to release to the Lord. When challenged to give away our money or to spend time helping someone else, the kind of attitude we hold towards these sacrifices reveal where our true affections lie. Our willingness to be free with our schedules and our pocketbooks reveals how much we trust God to take care of our lives. James 4:13-5:5 discusses that our resources are a gift and not a necessity. While we may think that our schedule is ours or that our money was made by the works of our hands, the reality for us as transformed new creations of Christ is that we are not our own.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JAMES 4:13-17.

Are you the type of person who loves to make plans, or are you generally more spontaneous and non-committal? Give an example that illustrates your preference.

In what sense can we be prideful in making plans? In what sense can we be prideful in not making plans?

How does thinking about our lives as "smoke" check our pride about our lives and how we live them?

James is not discouraging the keeping of a day-book. Rather, as illustrated in verses 15-16, James is condemning the arrogance found at the root of a person who clings to his or her plans or makes them in such a way that is boastful of their certainty.

This passage provides a Kingdom mindset on how we view and use our time. We are not the masters of our fate. It is good to be organized and to create routines. The danger, however, lies when we become slaves to our schedules. Furthermore, the presumption that we can live by our means and our means alone is an attitude that needs to be cut from the root. Verse 15 reminds us that it is the Lord Whose will reigns supreme. Man can make plans, but the Lord directs his steps (Proverbs 16:9). The boasting mentioned in James is a pride in our time, the belief that we control the time we have, rather than letting the Lord use the time that He has given us. Verse 16 claims that “all such boasting [in our time and our plans] is evil.”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In what kinds of circumstances are you most tempted to cling to your time and your money?

How does James 4:13-17 provide you with a Kingdom mindset on how to spend your time?

What does giving God control over your time and money look like practically in your life?

PRAY

Ask God for forgiveness for all the times you have not held a proper perspective on your time and your money. Seek forgiveness for when you have made your possessions idols in your life. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict you to have a Kingdom mindset towards your finances. Thank God for all that He has given you, and ask Him to show you ways in which you can give to others, impacting them for eternity.

COMMENTARY

JAMES 4:13-17

Do not yield yourselves in-blind confidence to your planning, to go from city to city with a view to traffic and gain, but realize your transitoriness and dependence on God! Otherwise all your knowledge of good will turn to sin and judgment (vv. 11–17). Ch. 4:4–17.