

STUDY NOTES

JAMES: A FAITH THAT ENDURES

a series at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Jesus in Your Mist" on 3/24/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: JAMES 4:13-17

IS PLANNING SIN?

At first glance, James seems to tell us that planning for the future is sinful. However, he wouldn't contradict other areas of Scripture, and the rest of Scripture tells us that planning is wise. Even Jesus told his disciples that planning for the future is a good thing. **Read Luke 14:28-30.**

Planning for the future can be wisdom from the Lord.

- *What does planning look like in your life? When has it worked? When has it failed?*

James pushes us to something deeper. He isn't just talking about planning on the surface, but his point is that we cannot plan our future without God. We can't line up our future without consulting the one who knows the future.

- *In what are you currently asking God to guide your future plans?*

BUT DO WE ACTUALLY INVITE GOD IN?

If we are honest with ourselves, we probably don't practically let God into our future plans. We want to do so! But practically we don't. In order to let God into our future,

that means we need to let him in to today. Most people have a hard enough time doing that. We busy our lives with so much that we don't know how to let God into our current moment. Jennie Allen says this, "We want to do things for God without spending time with God. It is an epidemic in the church, and we wonder why we are so empty and unhappy. God created us for himself, and all our attempts to manage life apart from intimacy with him, only expose our ache for him."

How should we expect God to be in our future, when we don't even let him into our present?

- *Are you able to balance your schedule while spending time with God? If so, how? If not, where in your schedule would you like to make space for God?*

LIFE AS A MIST

In verse 14, James goes on to say why seeking God in all of life is so important. He says that our lives are "a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." Then he says that anyone, who does not live with God at the center of their time, acts doubly arrogant ("boasting in your arrogance").

We act like we don't have time for God, but in reality we don't have time to forget God.

- *Describe a time when you really felt the frailty of life (the fact that your life is like a mist).*
- *Why do you think James refers to this way of living as doubly arrogant (boasting in arrogance)?*

THE FEAR OF SILENCE

People make time in their schedule for things that they think are important. Sure, we are busy, but most people don't seek God because they don't find it valuable. We are afraid that God won't answer us. However, we should remember everything that Jesus went through in order to be in a relationship with us. He gave up everything. He obeyed God even though he didn't want to suffer and die.

Jesus has already proven his faithfulness to show up for us. We just need to persistently seek him.

- *When has there been a time when you felt like God is silent?*
- *When has there been a time when God led you to do something?*
- *James says that for the one "who knows the right thing to do, but fails to do it, then it is sin." How do you need to step out in obedience to God?*
- *Pray for strength to seek God this week.*