

**God's Test – Humility or Arrogance**  
**James 4:13-17**

Sometimes when we learn of the length or shortness of a particular animal's life it amazes us. Like the Greenland Shark that can live up to 500 years or some whales that can live over 200 years. The Giant Galapagos Tortoise has a 150-year lifespan. It seems that most creatures that do not dwell in water, including humans, have a much shorter lifespan.

Growing up in the Midwest, always close to ponds, the May fly was always a curious looking creature with its elongated body and giant translucent wings. What I didn't realize was that its expected life is one day. That's amazing since you would see such an abundance of them out by the ponds or lakes as you were fishing. Of course, another short span belongs to those pesky houseflies – only seven weeks. But we all wish it were more like the Mayfly.

We hate it, but our pets also don't live long. I have had many dogs in my life. And it's always difficult to have them die.

But it seems that humans are always trying to live longer. Most of us, the vast majority, are not anxious to let loose of this life.

We're talking about that from God's Word today on *Wings of the Morning*. But first listen to Casting Crowns:

**“I know You're There”**

In the Bible, the Book of James, chapter 4 it says: *“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”*.

The picture here is the traveling merchant, of course. We see them throughout the Bible and other ancient historical accounts. Someone who wants to make money takes a product from his home or somewhere and transports it to another place to sell it and make a profit. Nothing unusual or a problem here. You could also remember Jesus’ parable of the Rich Fool. He was a farmer who produced such a great crop that he had to build bigger barns. Again, nothing wrong with doing a great job farming. My in-laws, while they were living strove to do well at their farming to support their family, and so they did.

But James here is saying something that few of us pay attention to. In fact, we probably try hard not to give any attention to it. We do not know what will happen tomorrow. We act like we do. We acquire possessions like we are going to have a couple hundred years to enjoy them. We make plans like he says as if we are the ones to determine whether we will complete them. We acquire debts that say we have decades to pay them off.

But like the farmer who built the bigger barns we forget one thing in particular. We can do nothing without God’s permission. In fact, we could at any moment die.

James calls our lives a mist, a vapor. It appears and then vanishes. That is for all human beings, even those that have the power and money to constantly medically improve themselves.

Everyone will die once as it says in God's Word and then comes the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

And in Jesus' parable the rich man was unaware of his impending death. *"But God said to him.*

*You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"*

Are you getting the picture? Whether you're rich or poor or somewhere in between, you are not the master of your own destiny. To plan as if you are is foolish and selfish. To plan is good and important and encourages by God. In fact, Jesus said that you should very determinedly pile up treasures – in heaven – not earth. *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

That is God's economy. Planning, in submission – Submission – to God is right and good.

Planning in your own schemes (whether you are a trillionaire or homeless) is not right and not good.

So, James ends this with: *"...anyone ... who knows the good (and the highest good is submission to God through Christ in all things), he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."*

You may be a seemingly good person – poor, rich or middle class. But if Jesus Christ is not your King – you are not only a sinner by birth, but a sinner (a doer of evil) by practice. Your life is a mist. You don't know when you may die, even suddenly. Have you, are you right now, submitted to God?

9/7/25

If not, let's start right now. Pray:

Dear God, I'm sorry for all my sinful attitude. I'm sorry for my sin. Please take me and clean me up. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, please call or write to me. You can call 877-306-HOME. You can reach me at Sunday Breakfast Mission or online at [sundaybreakfastmission.org](http://sundaybreakfastmission.org). I want to send you something to help you in this new life. And may God richly bless you.