

## Midweek ministry @ Ballyloughan

worshipping, growing, caring, serving, engaging

- What is the connection between verse 17 and the verses which precede it?

Having a Godly perspective on wealth... (5:1-6)

- How would you summarise the teaching of this passage?
- What do you think constitutes a life of "luxury and self-indulgence" and "hoarding wealth"? What makes these behaviours so offensive to God? How do you go about discerning if you have crossed the line into these behaviours?



CARING & SERVING. James 5:17 talks about knowing good we ought to do but not doing it. Proverbs 3:27,28 encourages us to consider helping our neighbour today. Is there someone in your group, in the church family, community, at work who has a practical need? Discuss what you personally can do to help meet that need.



ENGAGING. Please continue to pray for Alpha which takes place on Thursday nights. Our Easter Community Event is coming up in a few weeks time – please pray for the preparation of the programme and invitations. In May / June we plan to 'leave the building', reaching out to the community. Perhaps you could 'brainstorm' various things that we could do – all ideas are welcome!



WORSHIPPING.



Part of this week's material has been on how to face the future. Psalm 93 is a very short Psalm which talks wonderfully about God's strength, sovereignty and control over the chaotic events of this world. Read the Psalm (or another passage or use a song even which is similar in content) and spontaneously offer prayers of praise and adoration in response.

James: A down-to-earth faith  
9 - Keeping the right perspective (4:11 - 5:6)  
Notes for teaching night 13<sup>th</sup> February

James has spoken in 4:8 about the sin of '*double-mindedness*' - a disease we're prone to as Christians, where we know God's way yet in actual fact we end up going on our own way. We can be 'practical atheists.' James highlights 3 ways our 'double-mindedness' may be evident.

### I. Keep a Godly perspective on \_\_\_\_\_ . (4:11,12)

v11: "*Brothers, do not slander one another.*"

'slander' = 'to talk against' or 'to talk down'. Two reasons we shouldn't slander others:

#### (i) When you slander someone \_\_\_\_\_ .

v11: "*Anyone who speaks against his brother and or judges him, speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law you are not keeping it but sitting in judgement of it.*"

James is referring to back in 2 v 8, 'the Royal Law.' Would we ever dream of actually saying that the law 'to love your neighbour' is not for me, not worth the paper it's written on? Yet that's what happens when we slander others.

#### (ii) When you slander someone \_\_\_\_\_ .

v12 "*There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you- who are you to judge your neighbour?*" When we ignore the law to 'love your neighbour', we actually ignore the God who made the law.

### II. Keep a Godly perspective on \_\_\_\_\_ . (4:13-17)

#### (i) *Life is fragile* – \_\_\_\_\_ .

*"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...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."*

James is not condemning planning as such. The trouble comes in v16 - these people are actually boasting and arrogant about their planning. They are planning

their lives with no reference to God. They assume they are in control, they've left God out of the picture. Life is so fragile and uncertain. James is making the point that we are to live our lives with a sense of humble dependence on God which acknowledges that all of life comes under his will.

(ii) **Life is brief** – \_\_\_\_\_

v14 “*What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*” v17, “*Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*” James is condemning the sin of procrastination.

Proverbs 3:27,28: “*Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbour, ‘Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow’ – when you now have it with you.*”

We worry so much about the *duration* of our lives. God's not so obsessed with the duration of our lives, he's more concerned with the *donation* of our lives. How we use our lives, give of our lives invest our lives during the short time we have in things that will have an eternal influence.

**III. Keep a Godly perspective on \_\_\_\_\_.** (5: 1-6)

James is addressing wealthy non Christian bosses who were abusing their Christian workers. He wants to teach people about the dangers of wealth. Two downfalls:

(i) \_\_\_\_\_ (vs 1-3) James is against the way these people accumulate or hoard their wealth. Difference between saving and hoarding. Notice that their silver and gold have corroded, which they don't normally do, but they do in the atmosphere of heaven. “*Do not store up treasure for yourselves on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (Matthew 6: 19,20). Wealth is for using, and for Christians it is for using for gospel purposes.

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (vs 4-6) These wealthy bosses were keeping all of their wealth to themselves, to the extent that they were doing their workers out of money. They were so busy living self-indulgent lifestyles, wasting away all of their wealth on themselves without consideration of others in need.

## Follow-on Material

Please do not feel that you have to stick rigidly to this material! It is only a guide!

Remind the group that you are there to experience Christian community – community over which Jesus presides and in which he is the primary participant. We are here to learn from him and to use the gifts that he has given to us to minister to one another and build up one another.

### GROWING



- What do you think James means when he speaks in 4:8 about being 'double-minded'? (or as we said last week, 'practical atheists.')
- Chapter 4:11 – 5:6 is really an application of ways in which we can be double-minded.*

*Having a Godly perspective on relationships...*

- What does it mean to 'slander' someone?
- According to vs 11,12, when we slander someone, what are we actually doing that is so serious?
- James' concern seems to be that our speech should be an expression of love for others rather than arising out of a desire to harm others. What must be taken into account if we are going to speak in a way that brings benefit to others?

*Having a Godly perspective on time... (4: 13-17)*

- What is the basic point which James is trying to get across? What does the passage tell us about the way we are to make decisions?
- How do you see the teaching of this passage affecting our tendency to worry about the future? How, according to this passage, are we to deal with worry if it arises in our lives? How have you sought to drive worry out of your life?