



James

How to Live the Christian Life!

Living the Will of God

James 4:11-17

Message #9 of 12 – S666

Sermon given on December 6, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living the Will of God

James 4:11-17

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 4**
- Today, we continue our series through the letter from James **How to Live the Christian Life**
- Living the Christian life is the best life we can possible live
- When we are living it well, it is beautiful and can even be enjoyable
- For that to happen, we need to be in step with, or in sync with God and His plan for our lives
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **James 4:11-17**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living the Will of God**
- James opened chapter four talking about what happens when the grace of God is missing in our lives
- He comes back to that idea here in verse 11
- **James 4:11-12**
- If you are trash talking another Christian, you are trash talking the law
- The law that James is referring to is the 'royal law' **James 2:8**
If you really fulfill *the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well.*
- If you are speaking evil of another believer, you are not loving them and you are judging the law of liberty or love as false or useless
- Then asks the rhetorical question, who are you?
- Ended the last message saying that we are to humble ourselves
- A person who speaks evil of others is setting themselves above the other person, above the law of love, and above God, who is the only Lawgiver
- This person has a serious problem with pride
- Then James shifts to another illustration of pride

- And in doing that he also begins a discussion about the will of God
- One of the common things someone might ask me is how do we know what the will of God is
- First, it is probably a good idea to understand what the will of God is
- In very simple terms, God's will is His plan for all of creation
- That would be defined as His general will
- He also has a specific will for every individual that He created
- And that specific is unique to every individual
- God's will or plan for my life is different than His plan for your life
- The Christian life is like a dance
- The ladies of my household enjoy watching Dancing with the Stars
- They usually show the contestants as they practice during the week
- When they are out of step, it can be hard to watch
- They are sometimes frustrated, even angry
- In most dances, one person leads and the other follows
- In this dance we call the Christian life, God created the dance, He determined the steps, and He is the leader
- James is going to describe to us 3 wrong attitudes toward the will of God
- By avoiding these wrong attitudes we can live the Christian life in a way that glorifies God, blesses others, and grows our faith
- And it will be beautiful to watch and be enjoyable to live
- First wrong attitude – **Ignoring God's Will**
- **James 4:13-14**
- 'we will go' = arrogance – assuming they know what is best for them
- 'to such and such a city' = independence – they don't need to know what God thinks
- 'make a profit' = materialism – don't need God's blessing to be successful
- They weren't talking to God about their plans, and if they were, they weren't asking for His will to be known, they were asking God to bless their plan
- In the show, the judges are looking to see how well the participants meet the requirements of the assigned dance

- What do you think they would do if the person who was to be following decided to do whatever they wanted, ignoring the judges?
- In verse 14, James says, ‘How can you make plans about a future that you know nothing about?’
- Not only that, but your lives are as a vapor – here for a moment, then gone
- In every dance they only have a couple of minutes to display their ability
- No one is promised a long full life
- This reality hit very close to home this past week
- Those 14 people killed in the terrorist attack in San Bernardino probably had no idea when they went to that place, that it would be their last day on earth
- The second wrong attitude – **Being Above God’s Will**
- Skip verse 15, we will come back to it **James 4:16**
- Turn to **Daniel 4**
- This is a person that looks around them and says, ‘I did that!’
- King Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful and successful king, built up the city of Babylon, and it was magnificent
- He had a wrong attitude about God’s will
- **Daniel 4:30**
- ‘Babylon is great – look at what I did for me’
- **Daniel 4:31-33**
- Turn back to **James 4**
- For seven years Nebuchadnezzar had the mind of an animal
- All because he claimed the glory that belonged to God alone
- Occasionally on Dancing – one of the amateurs will argue with the expert judges who are usually trying to help them improve
- Some people argue with God about the plan He has for their life, like they know better than God
- No dance works when both people are trying to lead
- Ignoring God’s will, and thinking your will is above God’s will and both driven by the sin of pride
- The third wrong attitude about God’s will –**Disobeying God’s Will**

- **James 4:17**

- This person knows God's will and chooses to disobey
- In the parable of the talents, three servants given money to invest
- Two did and received a reward – one didn't – punished
- This would be like being assigned a tango, but dancing a waltz
- I don't know if anyone on Dancing has ever done that, that they would probably a very low score, no matter how well they danced, and they might even be eliminated from the competition
- God established a plan for our lives that is good and beautiful
- And He expects us to live out that plan, to dance with Him
- Jesus spoke about this **Luke 6:46**

But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?

- You are out of step with Jesus if you call yourself a Christian, but don't do what He says
- And there are consequences to doing things your own way **Hebrews 12:6**

For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.

- If you get out of step with God, don't be surprised if you get your toes stepped on
- It is important for us to get into step with God, if we want to dance this Christian life well

- **James 4:15**

- 'instead' of ignoring God's will, or thinking you are above God's will, or disobeying God's will
- 'instead...say, "If the Lord wills..."
- One of the key words in that statement is 'If'
- My will, my plan for my life doesn't always line up with God's plan
- If I want to live this Christian life in a way that is good, I need to get into step with God's plan – He is not going to change His plan
- Would like to leave you with four things to help you to get into step with God's will for your life

- First – **Know God's Will**

- You need to get to know what God's will is for your life **Acts 22:14**
Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.'

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How to Live the Christian Life!

James 4:11-17– Living the Will of God

4

- We get to know what God's will is from His Word, the Bible, and from trying to walk with Him in the Spirit – by living and doing what we believe God has set for us to do

- **Second – Understand God's Word**

- To dance well with God, we need to understand the steps of the dance we call the Christian life **Colossians 1:9-10**

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

- It is not enough just to know what God's Word says, we need to understand it – Bible study – discipleship

- **Third – Prove God's Will**

- We need to make sure that we are doing God's will **Romans 12:2**

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- When we are in sync with God our lives prove that God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect

- **Fourth and last thing – Do God's Will**

- Once we know, understand, and have proven God's will, we need to do it **Ephesians 6:6-8**

...as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

- We need to do it and keep doing it
- The dance is not over until the music stops
- As long as our lives are, we are to dance with God
- On Dancing, when the couple is in sync, it is beautiful to watch, and you can tell that they are enjoying the experience
- That's what our Christian life can be – dancing with God in His will
- When we get into sync with Him, it is beautiful and joyous
- It won't always be easy – God will try to teach us new dances and steps
- But if we will surrender ourselves to the flow of His grace it will be good

- And others will watch and judge our lives based on how well we are in sync with God
- And some of them will want to learn how to dance with God too
- Amen
- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever.

Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21