

There are times when you may feel you should bring your plans and potential decisions before the Lord for His counsel—and ones you may think you don't need to. How do you decide which ones you take to God for His counsel and which ones you don't?

In his message, Pastor Jerry makes this statement, backed up by James 15-16:

“Planning the future without God's will being the objective is evil because it misses the one lasting target of life.” According to **Hebrews 12:2**, what is the one lasting target of life?

Stumble #3: Disobeying our Conscience - James 4:17

“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

How would you explain what a “*seared conscience*” is as found in **1 Timothy 4:2** and what is meant by “*for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin*” from **Romans 14:23**?

Let's Live It Out Together

Read **Romans 12:1-2**, **Ephesians 6:6** and **Colossians 1:9-10 & 4:12**. Next, read the statement below. Do you agree with it or disagree—and why?

For the disciple of Jesus, doing God's will is an act of worship, from the heart, as a way of life.

Don't forget to pray for one another, for those in authority, and for the spread of the Gospel around the world.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

PLEASE DO NOT FEEL THAT YOU HAVE TO GET THROUGH ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS. FEEL FREE TO SELECT THOSE QUESTIONS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND ONLY FOCUS ON THOSE. MAY GOD BLESS YOUR STUDY!

Life Group Homework

JAMES 4:11-17

REAL ARROGANCE EXPOSED

Let's Get Started:

“When medieval monks compiled a list of seven deadly sins, they include pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and laziness. Conspicuously absent from that list was the sin of slandering others. Nor, in all likelihood, would slander rank very high on any contemporary list of serious sins. It is so widespread we scarcely seem to notice it.” (Excerpt from the McArthur New Testament Commentary, James, pg. 217)

Slander

The Miriam Webster dictionary has its definition. Write out, in your own words, your definition of slander. Share your responses with one another.

Let's Dig In:

Did you know that the Old Testament denounces the sin of slandering God (or men) more often than it does any other sin? In Pastor Jerry's message, he identified Scriptures warning against three sins that can easily stumble

Stumble #1: Judging Others - James 4:11-12

“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Slander is common, even among Christian brothers and sisters. Slander trashes another person's reputation. Even though we may make slanderous statements about someone, we have our ways of justifying it and making it not seem like it's necessarily sinning. What reasons or excuses might we use to “justify” slander?

Slander in the Old Testament

Fill in the blanks below to learn more about slander. Note: All Scripture is from the ESV translation.

Leviticus 19:16: *You shall not go around as a _____ among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your _____: I am the Lord.*

Psalm 15:1-3: *O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks _____ in his heart; who does not _____ with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

Slander in the New Testament

Matthew 15:19: *For out of the _____ come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, _____.*

2 Corinthians 12:20: *For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, _____, gossip, conceit, and disorder.*

2 Samuel 10:1-17: This is a story about slander and the catastrophic damage it can cause. Read the story together and then test your understanding by answering the questions below:

To whom did David wish to show kindness?

1. _____

Why did David want to show Hanun kindness?

2. _____

What did David do show Hanun kindness?

3. _____

How did the princes of the Ammonites slander David?

4. _____

5. How did they humiliate the servants David sent to console Hanun?

6. Realizing that their public humiliation of David's peaceful delegation would inevitably result in war with Israel, Hanun's sons hired Aramean mercenaries to assist them in fighting against Israel. What was the result? _____

7. How many charioteers did David kill?

8. How many horsemen did David's men kill?

David's motive was to console Hanun because his father had died. Most likely, Hanun's father had helped David when David was a fugitive, running from King Saul. Because Hanun misjudged David's motive, the damage was cataclysmic.

Judging other people's motives is a common sin. Why do you think it is so common and what makes assuming or judging another person's motives so attractive to us?

Stumble #2: Planning our Future Without God – James 4:13-16

“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”

What lessons about making plans for your future can you glean from the following Scripture passages?

Proverbs 16:3

Proverbs 19:21

Matthew 6:33