



International Bible Lesson

International Bible Study Commentary
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Learning to Depend on Jesus James 4:11-17

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that (James 4:15—KJV).

Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that” (James 4:15—NASB).

Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that” (James 4:15—NRSV).

James wrote to Christians. Obviously, we would never think of an unbeliever putting their plans before God in prayer and asking God to show them what He wanted them to do. James shows us that if a Christian is not careful, they can begin thinking as an unbeliever no matter how sincerely they began as a Christian. As a Christian thinks of their business or what they will do to earn a living, James encourages us to bring everything to God in prayer. Sometimes a Christian will hurriedly pray without thinking, “Lord, I am going to [fill in the blank], bless me.” James would have us pray, “Lord, if you will tell me your plans or show me what I should do, I will do it. Lord, I think I should do this or that, but I want you to help me decide what I should do, then I will do it with Your blessing and help.” Of course, we know what we should not do from reading the Bible, so we will not do that. We are praying for the Lord to show us what good things we can do. We are asking the Lord to show us what He wishes for us to do, to give us the power to do it, and to keep us from making mistakes. As we grow older, we learn to depend on Jesus Christ for everything, even what we once considered small things. We pray for help to safely drive down the street or walk to and from the mailbox without falling. We have

learned that we can pray and totally depend on Jesus, so we entrust everyone and everything to Jesus.

Thinking Further

1. How can you not judge as James wrote in James 4:11-12, and also do what Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves”?
2. How should someone make plans, do business, and make money?
3. What did James say we should think about when we make plans to do something in the future?
4. How can we remind ourselves to always say, “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that”?
5. How might you encourage and help someone who tells you, “I know the right things to do but I fail to do them. I commit sins”?