



## **REVIEW: Living Faith Submits Its Plans to God (James 4:13–17)**

*James challenges those who plan their future without God. Life is a vapor—brief, fragile, and vanishing quickly. Our calling is to submit every plan with the humility of “If the Lord wills.” Anything else is arrogant boasting. And knowing the good we ought to do but refusing to do it is sin. Living faith doesn’t just make plans—it surrenders them.*

### **Read:**

*Take time to slowly read these passages:*

- **James 4:13–17** – Do not boast about tomorrow; life is a vapor.
- **Matthew 6:19–21** – Store up treasure in heaven.
- **Isaiah 40:6–8** – The grass withers, but the Word of God endures forever.
- **Luke 12:16–21** – The rich fool who planned without God.

### **Reflect:**

- Where have I been making plans as if tomorrow is guaranteed?
- How does remembering my life is a vapor change the way I should live today?
- Am I investing my vapor—my time, talent, and treasure—into eternal things (God and people)?
- Where do I know the good I ought to do, but delay or avoid it?

### **Remember:**

- **Your vapor is short.** Don’t waste it on what vanishes.
- **Your vapor can count.** Trade what is temporary for what lasts forever.
- **The only eternal investments are God and people.** Obedience shows love for God; sacrifice shows love for people.
- The best on-ramp to serving others is the local church. If you don’t know where to start, begin here.

## Apply:

Choose one tangible action this week:

- Begin each day with the prayer, “Lord, if You will...” and submit your schedule to Him.
- Take a small step of obedience in an area you’ve been delaying.
- Intentionally use time, talent, or treasure to love someone in your church family.
- Start a habit of generosity by giving through your local church.
- Ask God to show you one person you can encourage or serve this week.

## Pray:

- **Confession:**

“Father, I confess the pride of living as if I control tomorrow. Forgive me for the times I’ve ignored Your will.”

- **Dependence:**

“Teach me to trust You with my plans. Remind me daily that my life is a vapor and that only what’s done for You will last.”

- **Surrender:**

“I place my goals, schedule, and priorities in Your hands. Use my vapor to glorify You and bless others.”

## PREVIEW: Living Faith Weeps Over Wealth (James 5:1–6)

*James now warns those who trust in riches while neglecting righteousness. Wealth without surrender brings misery. Living faith doesn’t hoard—it invests resources to honor God and serve people.*

## Read ahead:

- **James 5:1–6** – Warning to the rich who hoard and oppress.
- **Matthew 6:24** – You cannot serve both God and money.
- **1 Timothy 6:6–10** – The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

## Think Ahead:

- Do I see my resources as mine to control—or God’s to steward?
- How am I tempted to trust in wealth, possessions, or comfort instead of Christ?

# How to Surrender Your Plans to God

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## 1. Start with God, not your goals.

- **Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5–6 — *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”*
  - **Practice:** Before you write anything in your planner or set a goal, take 5–10 minutes to pray and read a short passage of Scripture. Ask, *“Lord, what do You want me to do first?”*
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## 2. Keep your grip loose.

- **Scripture:** Acts 16:6–10 — Paul’s travel plans changed twice by the Spirit before God sent him to Macedonia.
  - **Practice:** As you make plans, remind yourself: *“This is where I think I’m going, but God can change it at any moment.”* Write your plans in pencil, not in permanent marker.
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## 3. Check it against the Bible.

- **Scripture:** Psalm 119:105 — *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*
  - **Practice:** Before committing to a plan, ask: *“Does this line up with God’s Word?”* If it conflicts with Scripture in any way, cross it off the list immediately.
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## 4. Ask wise believers for input.

- **Scripture:** Proverbs 15:22 — *“Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.”*
  - **Practice:** Share your plan with a trusted Christian friend, pastor, or mentor and ask, *“Do you see any red flags?”* Be ready to listen and make changes.
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## 5. Pay attention to open and closed doors.

- **Scripture:** Revelation 3:7 — *“...What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open.”*
  - **Practice:** Keep an eye on the opportunities God puts in front of you and the ones He removes. Thank Him for both, knowing He sees what you can’t.
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## 6. Step out when He says go.

- **Scripture:** James 1:22 — *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*
- **Practice:** When God makes the next step clear — take it. Don’t wait for perfect conditions. Trust that He will guide you as you go.