

“What is your Life?”
James 4:11-17

The Greek word translated speak not evil signifies anything that may hurt or injure another, such as slander and gossip (Ex. 23:1-2; Ps. 50:20; Prov. 16:28, 17:9, 26:20; Rom. 1:29-30; Eph. 4:31). Since the Old Testament Law (Lev. 19:16) and the Law of Christ (Matt. 7:1; John 7:24) forbade evil speaking of others, violation of such puts one **above** the Law. The Lord alone is the Lawgiver and Judge (Isa. 33:22; John 5:22). That James is teaching on judgment to condemnation is evident from verse twelve, as only God can save or destroy. Christians are **commanded to confront** sin and **reconcile** if possible (Matt. 18:15-20; 2Cor. 5:18; Gal. 6:1).

The use of businessmen out to make a profit illustrates a practical atheism prevalent in the world and even among believers, i.e., living one's life as if God did not exist. These men formulated their plans as if they **knew** what tomorrow would hold, but **only** God knows the future (Isa. 46:9-10; Luke 12:16-21). They had a presumptuous confidence in human life which is frail and uncertain and transient like a vapor, fog or mist (Job 9:25, 14:1-2; Ps. 39:4-6, 62:9, 89:47-48, 90:10).

The believer must instead **submit** (subordinate) his plans, life, and will to that of God (verse 7). Our very lives are in the hands of the One who **is** Life and upholds the worlds by the power of His word (John 14:6; Heb. 1:1-2)! We are to pray “**Thy** will be done” (Matt. 6:10) just as Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:35-42).

The boasting, arrogance, or bragging that James speaks of is translated the pride of life in 1John 2:16. The Greek word for rejoice is usually translated boast, glory or rejoice. Context determines an evil or good sense (1Cor. 1:29; 2Cor. 12:5). James warns that **their** boasting is **evil**, because we are only to rejoice or glory in the Lord (1Cor. 1:31; Phil. 3:3).

James summarizes with a definition of sin as **not** doing the good we **know** we should do (Gal. 6:2). John defines sin as transgression of the Law (1John 3:4). Paul says anything not done in faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Since our lives are so short, we must learn to **number** our days (Ps. 90:12). The just shall **live** by faith (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38), since without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). We are to walk by faith and **not** by sight (2Cor. 5:7), not knowing what tomorrow may bring.