# **Resolved**

New Year’s / James 4:13–16

# Significance

Have you made resolutions only to break them?

One year ago, what did you think you’d be doing today?

# Context

James, the brother of Jesus, is addressing the wealthy merchants in the church. Business travel was prevalent in the first century. Naturally, a good businessperson would make careful plans, arranging both sales and purchases far ahead of time. They might have discussed their business deals and boasted about their plans. There is no evidence they prayed about their decisions. They seemed to believe they got their way and accomplished what they planned.

# The Question

“How will I react if God steps in and rearranges my plans?”

# Bible Verse

**James 4:13–16 CSB**

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.”

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

***1. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (13-14a)***

Then I’ll say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.” “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?’ “That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (Lk 12:19–21)

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***2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (14b).***

**Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts. (**[**Ps. 90:12**](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps90.12)**)**

**Clement of Rome**

His breath is in us, and, when He will, He shall take it away.

***3. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (15-16)***

# Tests

Do you live in a way, make decisions, or plan for the future without reference to God?

Do you take into account God’s sustaining care or common grace? Or do you take credit for all the good you experience?

Could unbelievers note how you see that God has been a factor in your life?

Do your resolutions and plans serve God and the people he created?

Do you describe retirement in selfish terms as “your” time?

Do you see work and careers as ways to make money to buy what you want, get ahead, feel secure, wield influence, or show status?

Do you believe God is in control of the “significant” areas of life but not interested in the “mundane” matters?

Do you make practical decisions about education, job changes, moving, investments, and spending without prayer? (Ms. Barbara James)

Do you consult the Bible for constant input to our decisions?

Have you left God out of the picture?

Jonathan Edwards’ Resolutions “Being sensible that I am unable to do any thing without God’s help, I do humbly entreat him, by his grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ’s sake. Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week. 1. Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved, so to do, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever.

Jonathan Edwards’ Resolutions: And Advice to Young Converts

# Big Idea

**• All \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and don’t receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. (Jas 4:2–3).**

13 No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God,” since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn’t tempt anyone. 14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death. 16 Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 By his own choice, he gave us birth by the Word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Jas 1:13–18

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” Lk 22:42

# Pray

“Dear Jesus, I confess I am a sinner and deserve judgment and hell, but I believe You love, came to this earth for me, lived a sinless life, and died on the cross for my sins. I believe God raised you from the dead to forgive me. Please forgive me, come into my life, and grant me eternal life in You name. Help me glorify you in all I do. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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**Piercing Heaven: Prayers of the Puritans A Prayer from One Still on the Fence**

A PRAYER FROM ONE STILL ON THE FENCE

Righteous and holy Sovereign of heaven and earth:
My breath is in your hand. All my ways are in your hand. But I confess I have been far from glorifying you, or conducting myself according to your will.
So I have reason to adore your forbearance and goodness, that you have not long since stopped my breath, and cut me off from the land of the living.
I appreciate your patience. Thank you that I did not, months and years ago, become an inhabitant of hell, where ten thousand delaying sinners are now lamenting their folly, and will be lamenting it forever.
But God, it is very possible that this trifling heart of mine may ultimately betray me into the same ruin.
I am convinced that, sooner or later, I must give serious thought to faith, or I am undone. And yet my foolish heart draws back from the yoke. I stretch out on my lazy bed, and call for a little more sleep.
My corrupt heart pleads against the conviction of my better judgment. Lord, save me from myself! Save me from the deceit of sin! Save me from the treachery of my perverse nature, and fix upon my mind what I have been reading!
I have heard the warnings about the uncertainty of life and the day of salvation. I have made a few lightweight goals, and have begun to take tiny steps in your direction.
But I have only been fluttering around faith. All my intentions have been scattered like smoke, or a vapor before the wind.
Bring these things home to my heart, now, with a more powerful conviction than ever. Pursue me with them!
And if I should be insane enough to try to escape again, let your Spirit use the language of terror. Employ your most powerful tools to awaken me from this deadly stupor—even if it interrupts my workday, or my sleep.
From this moment, Lord, may I be able to recognize a more lasting impression of faith than anything yet made on my heart. Amen. —Philip Doddridge