

Strategic Planning—James 4:13-16

WWT Board of Directors Devotion

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Let's begin with a reasonable question: What does the Bible have to do with business, especially strategic planning? After all, the newest parts of the Bible were written more than 2,000 years ago! That was before Google, Wikipedia, and Chat GPT; so, how can it be relevant still today?

It is still relevant today because the Bible raises our perspective beyond this temporal world, to focus on what is eternal. The Bible reminds us that while we are here for a brief time, God wants us to seek His guidance and His wisdom for all aspects of our life, yes, even strategic planning!

Which leads to our Scripture reading from James 4:13-16:

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

Isn't it fascinating that in the 2,000 years that have passed since James wrote this, the elements of planning and goal setting really haven't changed? If you read closely James even incorporates the "SMART" goal setting methodology. It is Specific- who, what, when, where, and how are detailed. It is Measurable- profit! It is Achievable in geography, and Relevant to their business. And it is Time bound: today or tomorrow we will go...and spend a year there. Perhaps James was an early McKinsey consultant?

But as you can see, James' point is not the planning process. His point is that while planning is important, it is done under conditions which are out of our control. James doesn't say DO NOT PLAN. He says TO PLAN, but to do so in a way that acknowledges God's sovereignty, and our alignment to God's will! If we omit God from the planning process, James reminds of our arrogance.

In summary, Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, explains the dynamic of our planning with God's sovereignty this way in Proverbs 16:9, "We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps."

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word. It is as relevant and powerful now as it was 2,000 years ago. As we now turn our attention toward the very important strategic planning duties which lay before us, let us do so with posture of humility as we plan, acknowledging that YOU determine our steps, and asking that YOU guide our strategic planning by YOUR will. In Jesus Name we pray with humble respect for all faiths and backgrounds. AMEN.