

James 4:15, 17

“Take My Yoke Upon You”

- I. Intro
- II. Vs. 17 Disobeying God’s will
- III. Vs. 15 Obeying God’s will

I. Intro

James throughout his letter to the “*dispersed messianic believers*” writes to them about what he believed was **the hardest aspect of the Christian life, maturity!** He spoke to them of things that would aid their maturity like **trials and tribulations, reading and applying the word of God.** He also wrote to them about **things that would stunt their maturity** like falling into the trap of thinking that **what we know instead of how we live is an indication of maturity.** He warned of the **dangers of the tongue** and of **falling worldly wisdom instead of Godly wisdom.** Then as we were last in this letter James brought out another derailment for maturity, **failure to obeying God’s will for your life.** We noted that **the safest most joy-filled existence any Christian can have is to be right where God wants you to be!** We must never forget that **the will of God is never separated from the heart of God and as such, His will for us is an expression of His love towards us.** We looked at the outline of the passage at the three possible attitudes towards the “*Will of God*”, two of them are destructive to us and one of them where we should be.

- I. Vs. 13-14, 16 **Ignoring God’s will:** “*Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”* Vs. 16 “*But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*”
- II. Vs. 17 **Disobeying God’s will:** “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin*”

III. Vs. 15 **Obeying God's will**: *"Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."*

James also revealed the fruit that will happen to us if we disregard to the will of God for our lives will cause us to fail in three areas:

- **Planning the future without God**
- **Presuming to know the future**
- **Postponing what should be done today**

II. Vs. 17 Disobeying God's will

Vs. 17 **Disobeying God's will**: It is painfully clear that James saw some as knowing the "Will of God" but **chose rather to disobey it**. There "sin" was **not ignorance** but rather **"willful disobedience"**. This attitude expresses far more "pride and arrogance" than mere ignorance as it says to God, *"I know what you want for me, but I don't want to do it, I know what is best for me, better than you do."* Peter wrote in 2 Peter 2:21 that *"it would have been **better for them not to have known** the way of righteousness, **than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them**."* The primary reason people disobey God's will is "PRIDE" as people like to believe they know better than God and want to **"drive"** instead of allowing God to **"direct"**. Success is often the catalyst to this since a person has succeeded they begin to believe that they are the **"master of their own fate"** the **"captain of their own ship"**. People have accomplished amazing things but the thought that apart from God they can do anything, is false! We will hear folks say things like this: *"If you just believe in yourself you can become and do anything you want."* The church in false teaching has also bought into this false narrative in pushing **"false faith"** that all you need to do is visualize what you want and believe and you accomplish all that your heart desires; if you have enough of this **"faith in your**

faith” you will gain your own will! People also act as though they can reject or accept God’s will; when in reality **rejecting God’s will won’t change His will it will only adversely affect your life!** We cannot have a “***take it or leave it attitude***” with regards to the will of God, He is our creator and loving Father and as such if we chose to disobey God’s will thinking to make Him only our savior and not our Lord He in His love will discipline us. The devil has planted a lie into the hearts of many a believer that suggests that obeying the will of God for their life is a recipe for misery. They say things like: “***If I really obey God, He’ll send me some place, or into some situation that I don’t want.***” But even if a Christian chooses to disobey the will of God in an attempt to avoid the difficulties of life, what will they say when they face Him? Oh, they avoid far more blessings than they ever did difficulties. And then they will come to the loving chastening hand of the Living God where they will have a coarse correction back to what is best for them. What I dislike the most about coarse corrections is that I see all the time wasted in my attempt around what I choose not to experience only to have to experience it anyway now less the blessings of His presence for the cost of my excursion! They can also cost us the loss of eternal rewards that would have been enjoyed where neither thief, rust, nor moth can destroy. In I Corinth. 9:24-27 Paul likened it to the Greek games and a runner who had been disqualified for the rewarded crown because he disobeyed the rules of the game.

- **Ignoring God’s will**
- **Disobeying God’s will**

Has three things that it will do if we continue along this action:

1. **Planning the future without God:** This will lead us to “**map out our lives**” apart from His guidance and perspective. What an incredible disadvantage to try to navigate life apart from God’s direction and input. Think of what advantage we believers have to navigate life that the rest of the world apart from God doesn’t possess, He is all

knowing, everywhere present, all powerful and nothing or no one can thwart His will! There have been countless movies, albeit from a worldly perspective, that has as a part of its plot a person who can go into the future and take advantage of the information. But in most of those movies they have no ability to change the outcome in their present circumstances. But when we follow God's will He can keep us from the things that would destroy us, take the lame and cause them to walk, the blind to see and even the dead to rise. And as Ps 23 reminds us that even when we find ourselves in the Valley of Death we will have no fear for He will be us. The psalmist in Ps 139:7-12 expressed such an advantage when he wrote: *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.* There is ZERO advantage to planning your life apart from God and every advantage by following His will for your life!

2. **Presuming to know the future**: This will also lead a person into believing they know the future to which James says on verse 16 is just pure arrogance! Look at again the all the false predictions from entertainers, educators and scientists who have told us events of what will happen in the future and have been completely wrong. To attempt to calculate life apart from the ONE person who knows the End for the Beginning is fool hearty. When I asked my financial planner who is a believer how they navigate the fluctuations in the market when global events, elections etc. are constantly changing his response is that they try is constantly consider these events by realizing somethings will lose and some will gain and keep you someplace where you want to be....well I certainly felt better? Life cannot be navigated from where we are but can when we go to the ONE person who is above it all and can see every curve and every turn! Have you noticed that when you were younger, you had far more needs than you had resources? And when you have gotten older you have more resources but less faculties in which to enjoy them. Wouldn't it be better to be guided by God to make those two work a little bit better?
3. **Postponing what should be done today**: The final thing will happen when you ignore or disobey "God's will" is that it will lead to "**procrastination**" which is always **the greatest thief of time**! With the reality that every moment is a gift we will be lease inclined to squander our days in inconsequential pursuits. Years ago for Christmas my Grandmother got me a gift that in my teens I didn't appreciate as much as I do know in my 60's. Inside the envelope was a card with a circle and two words inside the circle "**TO IT**" underneath this was the explanation: You now have a great gift for life a, "**ROUND TO IT**" so that you can now do what you always said you would do when you final got a "**ROUND TO IT**" so "**GET TO IT**"! With every day that passes we have less time to tell and demonstrate God's love. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 90:12 "**Teach us the number of our days that we may enter the heart of wisdom.**"

III. Vs. 15 Obeying God's will

Vs. 15 **Obeying God's will**: Jesus said in John 4:34 "*My Food, is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.*" That ought to be the heart of every believer to do and finish the work of our Heavenly Father. Paul the apostle didn't view obedience to the will of God as chains that kept him from what he wanted most in life, but the path was to it even though following God's will often placed him in chains. When we examine our material universe we will realize that everything operates in accordance with material laws. Obey those laws and we can achieve amazing things disobey those laws and we will plummet to the earth! Certain laws govern flight and an aeronautical engineer who obeys those laws in design and building a plane will cause those who fly to enjoy the operation of the plane. Disobey those laws and everything will come crashing to the ground. God's will for our lives is comparable to His laws that govern the material universe. Both are specifically and personally designed so be a blessing and enhance our living in His blessings! God doesn't have machines or robots who are called to do the same things at the same time. We don't all have the same gifting, education and experiences and because of this no two lives are made in the same mold or pattern. This is why following God's will is what is best for each of us individually as it is tailor-made specifically for each of us to navigate to our best advantage the life God has given each of us. When we gave our lives to Him He placed this operating system into our hearts to empower and guide us through life so that we will get the greatest amount of joy and fulfillment out of the life He has given us in His Son. *If we disobey God our life begins to become a "grind" and if stay in a grind long enough it will become a "rut" and stay in a rut long enough and it will become a "grave"! **The only difference between a***

“grind” and a “grave” is time and depth! Saints God love us so much that when He is not allowed to rule over our lives you can bet on the fact that He will “overrule” your life out of His love for you. The will of God is a living relationship between God and the believer that keeps us under His love continually experiencing His goodness! The believer’s relationship to the will of God is a key to maturity and following His will is not difficult to do as obeying what we know of His will always lead to Him revealing more of it on a step by step walk with Him. God doesn’t reveal His will to the curious nor the careless but to those who are ready to follow Him. Saint’s, everything in our lives is important to God because He has planned every detail. His desire is for us not only to know His will for us but to understand it as well. God wants His children to know the “why” of His plan for us as we are more than His children, we because of Jesus are His friends. Furthermore, God invites us to prove His will for us by experiencing the wisdom of walking in it. You cannot prove what you are unwilling to experience personally. So, do what God has called you to do today this moment and then repeat each and every step. Jesus said in Matt. 11:29 “Take My yoke upon You, and learn from Me.” You can’t operate in God’s will haphazardly, part way you must be all in from the heart. The secret of living in the center of God’s will is to make living in it a delight and not a duty; it is when duty is a delight that burdens become blessings. When you are obedient to God’s will you will enjoy greater fellowship with Him then you ever knew was possible, you will grow in your faith and in His Word, you will experience a greater communication with God and because of this you will enjoy a greater quality to your life and then when it is over you will be ushered into His presence.