

God Consciousness

Text : **James 4: 13-17 ; Luke 12: 1-21**

S#1.

S#2.

A. Are you excited about starting a new year ?

1. This year flew by very fast. *We pick up momentum going down the hill.*
2. Have you looked back over it to see what you have accomplished ?
3. How did you handle the adversities and the joys ?

S#3.

B. How did your spiritual life fair over this past year ?

1. It was challenged at times; how did you face those challenges ?
2. Did you mature in your faith and become confident in God ?
3. Have you drawn closer to God and to His people ?

S#4.

C. As you look back over the year, are you pleased with your use of it ?

1. What is the best thing that happened and what is the worst ? *Are they related ?*
2. If you had the year to live over again, would you do it the same way ?
3. If not, what changes would you make ? (*Periodic reflection is healthy.*)

D. Are you looking forward and planning what you want to accomplish this year ?

1. The old adage is true in every avenue of life : *“To fail to plan is to plan to fail.”*
 - a. The person who sets no goals seldom leads a productive and happy life.
 - b. The business that does not plan for the future does not make it to the future.
 - c. The congregation that does not plan drifts into obscurity and fails God.
2. Planning involves the setting of goals not just dreaming of great things.
* *A goal gives direction and measures success, but dreams are just wishful thoughts.*
3. There are basic requirements for formulating a goal that will give direction.

A goal must be :

- a. Specific (NOT ... I want to be a better person or a better Christian or ...)
- b. Measurable (“Better” is subjective. Church meets 156 times a year I attend 50.)
- c. Achievable (This church will add 100 new people this year. Unachievable.)
- d. Relevant (Not ... This year I will learn to speak the Russian language fluently.)
- e. Time-bound (I will read the N. T. through by the end of March. / 24 pgs per wk)

S#5.

E. Both of our texts speak of people being condemned for making plans.

1. **Luke 12** ... The man was planning his retirement.
2. **James 4** ... The person is setting forth a solid business plan.
3. Is God saying that we should drift through life with no sense of direction ? **NO !**

I. God Himself plans so we know He endorses planning.**S#6.****A. God pronounced His plan for saving mankind in the garden of Eden.****S#7.**

Gen. 3: 15 – And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

B. God had a plan for the seed of Abraham.**S#8.**

Gen. 15: 13-14 God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. **14** "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

C. God made plans to free those held captive by Assyria.**S#9.****1. No one can stop what God has planned.**

Isa. 14: 26-27 This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. **27** For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"

2. Some of God's plans are conditional. (*If they do this, I'll do that, but if not ...*)

Jer. 26: 3 – ... All the words that I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word! **3** 'Perhaps they will listen and everyone will turn from his evil way, that I may repent of the calamity which I am planning to do to them because of the evil of their deeds.'

S#10.**D. God planned the sacrifice of Jesus to offer salvation to mankind.****S#11.****1. God planned His sacrifice before He created mankind.**

I Pet. 1: 20 – For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you **21** who through Him are believers in God,

2. The crucifixion of Christ was a pre-planned sacrifice to pay the penalty for sin.**S#12.**

Acts 2: 23 – —this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. **24** " But God raised Him up again, ...

E. The Apostles planned their work ahead.**S#13.****1. Rom. 13: 1** – I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.**2. Even the Apostle's Paul sometimes had plans thwarted.****S#14.**

I Thes. 2: 18 – For we wanted to come to you — I, Paul, more than once — and yet Satan hindered us.

II. Why were the people in our texts condemned for their plans ?**S#15.****A. The farmer of Luke 12 had worked hard for his success, why not retire ?** **S#16.**

1. This farmer had achieved that which most people set as one of their goals in life.
2. The scriptures teach us to lay by in store when there is opportunity to do so. **S#17.**

Prov. 30: 24-25 Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: **25** The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer;

3. His error was not in saving or in retiring, but in living to and for himself.
 - a. No matter what he professed to believe, he lived as if there is no God.
 - b. **Luke 12: 21** – So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

B. The business man in James 4 was doing common business planning.**S#18.**

1. This business man did what is expected of all successful entrepreneur.
 - a. He established a business plan. Go establish an outlet in a different city.
 - b. He set a measurable goal. Make a profit by buying and selling.
 - c. He set a timeline. I will spend a year there.
2. Is God anti-business or anti-capitalism ? Not at all !
 - a. Jesus told the parable of the money in which servants were to make gain.
 - b. No enterprise can stay in business if it does not produce gain.
 - c. God's system : 1 kernel of corn produces 800. 1 grain of wheat produces 50.
3. This businessman's error was not in the way he conducted business; he left God out.
 - a. No matter what he believed, his life declared that he did not believe in God.
 - b. The failure to include God in one's plans is to deny God's sovereignty in his life.

James 4: 15-16 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." **16** But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. **S#19.**

C. God alone gives one the ability to be successful in any situation.**S#20.**

1. It is God who gives both individuals and nations the ability to prosper.
 - a. **Deut. 8: 17-18** Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' **18** "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." **S#21.**
 - b. America is successful only because God enabled it to be so.

2. You have NO control over the basic building blocks of success.
 - a. What if you had been born to parents in rural Malawi in a mud hut ?
 - b. What if you had been born with limited mental capacity, unable to learn ?
 - c. What if you have been born physically weak or severely uncoordinated ?
3. The individual can only build with the materials and ability which God gives.

S#22.

D. The man who lives to himself without regard for God is a “practical atheist.”

1. We have no difficulty identifying the wicked person as a practical atheist. S#23.
Tit. 1: 16 – They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.
2. The Christian who lives without regard to God is no less a denier of God.
 - a. Life gets challenging and we fix our minds on the issues of the day. S#24.
 - b. *When his pants caught fire he forgot trying to extinguish burning curtains.
The house burning down pales in importance when one's leg is burning.
Satan keeps our attention on pressing issues to distract us from God.*
3. We must make a conscious decision to center our thoughts on God.

Col. 3: 1-3 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. S#25.
2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

S#26.

III. Our life must demonstrate our attitude toward God, not just our words ?

- A. We are dependent upon God for life itself. (*Live like it.*) S#27.
 1. The rich man planned on having retirement years.
 - a. **Luke 12: 19-20 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."** S#28.
20 "But God said to him, ' You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'
 - b. This attitude is portrayed in a TV commercial, “I’m only 60; I have many yrs...”
 2. God’s people of old were reminded that they are reliant upon God for life. S#29.
Deut. 30: 20 – So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days.
 3. The prophet Daniel warned King Belshazzar (son of Nebuchadnezzar) God controls.

**Dan. 5: 23b – ... you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, S#30.
wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified**

4. Christians are also taught that we are dependent upon God for our very life.

Acts 17: 28 – **that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist,** **S#31.**

5. Beyond our brief years on this earth, man's eternity is in the hands of God.

S#32.

B. We must live in consideration of the brevity of this life. (*breath, vapor, hand*)

1. Brevity is a relative term.

- a. To a young person a school year lasts an eternity. (*also for a teacher :-*)
- b. A mile is a short distance in a car, but swimming it kept me out of Green Berets.

2. The length of years of one's life is likewise a relative thing.

- a. The oldest person to ever lived on the earth was Methuselah who lived 969 yrs.
- b. The oldest person I've ever personally know lived 106 yrs.
- c. To Jacob 130 years was a short life, but long enough.

Gen. 47:9 – **So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers** **S#33.**

3. In comparison to eternity, even the lives of those who live "long" are short.

- a. **James 4: 14** – **Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.** **S#34.**

- b. **Psa. 144: 4** – **Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow.** **S#35.**

C. We have no guarantee of tomorrow so we must live each day as the last day.

CONCLUSION :

- A. Attack the new year set goals and strive to excel, but don't omit God.** **S#36.**

1. **Prov. 3:6** – **In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.**

2. Submit your plans to God's will. **S#37.**

Prov. 19: 21 – **Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the Lord will stand.** **S#38.**

B. Submitting to God's will does not require one say "Lord will" before everything.

1. The Puritans put the letters "DV" at the end "Deo volente," is Latin for "Lord willing."
2. "Lord willing" is an attitude of heart, not a formula of words to repeat.

S#39.

C. Our challenge is to commit our life to the control of God, beginning today.

INVITATION :

S#40. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 4: 13-17**

13 Come now, you who say, " Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." **14** Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. **15** Instead, you ought to say, " If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." **16** But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. **17** Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Luke 12: 16-21

16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. **17** "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' **18** "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" **20** "But God said to him, ' You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' **21** "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."