

Playing God (Part 2)

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] And one of our elders, Ryan, is going to come and read from James chapter 4 for us. James chapter 4, verses 11-17.

Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.

There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

[1 : 09] This is the word of the Lord. We are working our way through the epistle of James in the New Testament.

And we have looked at James chapter 4 for a few weeks. And last week we looked at verses 11 and 12 that we read again today. And then today we will focus on verses 13 to 17.

So you will remember if you were here last week, we just read it. There is a command in 11 and 12.

Do not slander. And then in our passage today, 13 to 17, there is another command effectively.

And it is, do not make arrogant plans. As you plan your life and your days, do not do so with pride and arrogance. At first, it looks like verses 11 and 12, do not slander.

And verses 13 to 17, do not make arrogant plans or disconnected from one another. But when you look closer, you see that they are two different symptoms of the exact same disease that is going on.

[2 : 07] In the human heart. And last week we saw that first symptom. And that is playing God as judge. And so James said, do not judge your neighbor. And that is really the sin, the issue, the arrogance of condemning somebody else.

And saying that they are without hope, without mercy, without the possibility of salvation even. And he said, do not play the judge. You are not God. You cannot be judge. You do not have jurisdiction for that.

You cannot cross that boundary. That is a human limitation that you just cannot cross. Only God is judge. He alone. And this week, it is the same issue, different symptom.

Same disease, different symptom. And that is not only playing God as judge, but playing God as king. And in playing God as king, we are assuming control of tomorrow. Of saying, tomorrow we will go and do such and such a thing in such and such a place and make money.

And he said, you are in danger of playing God as king and assuming control of your life. And it is a control that you just do not have. And so in both instances, what connects them is this idea that we have limits as human beings.

[3 : 13] That we are beautifully and wonderfully limited because we are wonderfully human. And so we cannot be the judge of all the earth. And we cannot be the king of all the earth. And there is a connection point between them. It is not translated exactly that way in the ESV.

But we are told at one point in this passage we are in today, 13 to 17, what is your life? This question. And in the passage just before that, who are you? So you see these two questions that are covering the same issue.

And that is different ways of trying to climb the throne of the universe. And play God as judge or play God as king. Same throne, two different ways of getting on top of it. And really, the disease that James is talking about is the delusion of self-sovereignty.

And so James is asking us to consider today that we might be walking through life under a delusion, an illusion of self-sovereignty, self-rule.

And that's the real issue. The root is a refusal to stay within our creaturely bounds and creaturely limits. Okay, so verse 13. James, in verse 13, says, Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a place.

[4 : 23] Now when he says, come now, that is language that only appears in the epistle of James, nowhere else in the New Testament. It's unique to him. And it's a way of trying to get us to think and to reason and to consider.

But it's sort of doing it by grabbing you at the, you know, the collar of your shirt and shaking you a little bit and saying, Come now, you who say, tomorrow we will go and make money in this place. Come now and think with me and consider very carefully your humanity. So let's ask this morning, what, as James sort of grabs us and shakes us a little bit and says, Come now and think with me about your humanity, what is it he wants us to consider?

Three things, of course. Three things. Number one, he wants us to think about the problem with our plans. And number two, he wants us to think about the cost of the way we make our plans.

And then lastly, he wants us to remember the God who remembers us. So first, the problem with our planning, with the way we make plans. And so you'll see it right there in verse 13.

[5 : 33] He says, Come now, listen with me, think carefully. You who say, today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.

Yet you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. Now he's talking here to something that we know really well. He's talking to Christians. This epistle was written to Christians, all scattered throughout the Mediterranean.

But they're also clearly city people. So they're saying that we're going to go city by city and we're going to go to the market and we're going to sell our goods and we're going to make a profit. And so there's a booming Hellenistic Roman culture in the first century economy.

And there's lots of opportunity for people to make money as merchants and tradesmen. And so this is something that we know very well. You come to the city. Maybe you came to get an education.

But you definitely come to the city probably because you were trying to make money.

And you wanted to get a job. And the cities offer more jobs. And there, you can imagine, there's a group of Christians. And they're all in the church. And they're standing around a map. You can imagine a map laid out on a table.

[6 : 37] And all these merchants are saying, oh, we're going to go to Rome. We're going to go to Thessalonica. We're going to go to Athens. We're going to go to Corinth. And the people in Corinth are going to love what we sell. And we're going to sell out of it in a day or two.

And the next month we're going to go to this city and that city. And they're thinking about all the different ways they're going to maximize their profits along the way. This is not alien to us. We do the very same things.

And the issue in this passage is not making plans. Clearly, he's addressing that. You've got to make a plan. You've got to be ambitious. He's talking to entrepreneurs here.

And some of us in this room are entrepreneurs. The issue is not being an entrepreneur. It's not being ambitious. It's not going out to the market to make money. It's not trying to capture marketplace opportunity. And it's not making plans in your daily life.

You have to do that. The issue is different than that. Downstairs in the church office, we have a three-meter-long church calendar. And if you've been in our church office, you'll see that it covers an entire wall.

[7 : 36] And right now there are dates filling it through January of 2027. And we think we know all the things that we're going to do throughout the autumn this coming year. And some of us will have the annual ritual of going to Blackwell's or wherever you like to go, Waterstones, in late December, early January to buy the 2027 planner that's coming up.

And this year you have to decide, are you going to pay more for Moleskine? That will be the question before you. That's the question I always wrestle with. Do I want the Moleskine planner? We have to do this.

We all do this. We have to make plans. The issue is not making plans. And we can tell that because in verse 15, he says, Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills.

In other words, he's saying, as you stand around the map and point to the cities that you're going to go to to try to make a profit, you ought to say, as you make that plan, only if the Lord wills.

You see, the issue is not the fact that we make plans or that we're ambitious in a way or that we are entrepreneurs or that we come to the city to get a job and make money and provide for our families and ourselves.

[8 : 46] The issue is how we do that, the manner in which we do that. And he's saying that the normal way we make plans, even as Christians, is very typically sinful and wrong and broken.

And the issue here is that as we make our plans, most of the time, most days, most years, we forget about God. We don't think about God.

We spend our 24 hours and our weekly planners and filling out our church calendars, and we can be in grave danger of not remembering God and saying, if the Lord wills, as we make our plans and trying to discern what His plan is for us.

And so the main idea here is that we plan, but we forget about God as we plan. And this is a warning. This is a truth about the human life. And it's so important because it's not dramatic rebellion.

James here doesn't talk about prodigal sons and daughters. He doesn't talk here about dramatic rebellion. He talks about the very subtle rebellion, the very subtle rebellion of forgetting about God in your day-to-day life until you don't remember God at all.

[10 : 02] You're not God-conscious in any way. It's the problem and the issue of God-forgetfulness. And so this is an issue of drift, of slow drifting from any consciousness of God in the day-to-day.

And it's very subtle, and eventually it becomes a habit. And we make plans, and we don't think about God at all. So he gives you the diagnosis here in verses 16 and 17. And in verse 16 he says, As it is, as you plan, the way you're making plans and forgetting about God, you boast in your arrogance.

And so the diagnosis that James brings is that when we forget God in our day-to-day life, that is boasting. And it's boasting because it's living a life of pride and arrogance.

The theologians of old called it the pride of life. And it's not verbal boasting. So it's not saying before your neighbor out loud, Look how great I am.

Aren't I amazing? Look at all the things I've done with my life. He's saying instead, a life where you are living by the rules, you look like a Christian in most ways, but you're not remembering God and saying as the Lord wills, as you make your plans, is a life lived out of deep boasting, of arrogance, of forgetting God in the day-to-day.

[11 : 18] And that's a way of subtle arrogance, the pride of life. And he goes so far as here in verse 16 to say, That is evil. So there's a way to live a life of evil that is so subtle, and that's just to not think about God at all.

Not think about God when you wake up in the morning. Not think about God at lunchtime. Not think about God before the evening meal. Not think about God as you work out your weekly calendar. Not think about God as you go to the boardroom.

Not think about God as you prep that PowerPoint. Not think about God in any instance of life. That is a subtle but real rebellion. An evil, he calls it. An evil in the Bible means something that's upside down, something that shouldn't be that way.

And you think about the classical philosophers, and they correctly spoke about how we should be seeking as human beings the true, the good, and the beautiful.

But when we forget about God, we're not conscious of God in making our plans. Number one, we're living as if we're self-appointed kings. So as we push God out by forgetfulness, the self comes to the center.

[12 : 25] And we become kings and queens of our own little worlds. We take control. We make our plans. We say we will make a profit in these places. And we push God out as kings or queens of our own little universes.

And therefore, we commit a sin where we're speaking, we're acting against what is true. We're not. We're not kings and queens. We're playing God as king, though we're not.

And therefore, life is not good. We're not seeking the good. And therefore, we're not living a beautiful life, a life that is truly and fully human in that way. And so that's what makes verse 17 make sense.

Because in this passage, lots of times, commentators talk about how verse 17 almost doesn't seem to fit. So he says, So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Anybody who knows the right thing, what is the right thing? The right thing is to remember God in all your plans and all the moments of life. But you fail to do that, to do that good, then that is blatant sin.

[13 : 25] It's blatant rebellion when we don't remember God in our day-to-day moments. C.S. Lewis, in the Screwtape Letters, he writes letters between the senior demon Screwtape and his understudy, his nephew Wormwood.

And one of the really famous letters that he writes says that the best way to corrupt a human is not through dramatic sin, but through what he calls, quote, the nothing.

And what is the nothing? The nothing is keep the patient's mind filled with a stream of trivial busyness, vague worries, and half-conscious plans, so that the patient, quote, never thinks about God at all.

And Screwtape, in his book, is delighted when a man can spend an entire day, quote, in a moderate depression with no thought about God or the devil.

That is exactly the sin that James is addressing here. It's not explicit rebellion. It's the great rebellion of inattention, of not paying attention to God. And that's his target in our hearts, if we will allow it.

[14 : 34] Will you allow yourself today to be aware of inattention to God, of not being conscious of God, not remembering God, not thinking about God, not living your day-to-day life in the light of the reality of God's closeness and his presence?

And when we do that, just like last week, we said that when we slander people, we put them in the dock and we become the judges. I feel bad about being up here making this illustration.

We put people in the dock and we are on the bench. We are the judges. And in the same way, in the same way, when we push God to the margins by forgetting about God and put ourselves to the center as kings and queens of our own life, we actually put God in the dock again and judge him how?

By saying, you are weightless to me. The God who made me, the God who supplies everything to me, you are weightless to me. You are of no concern to me. I don't think about you. I don't need to think about you.

And we put God down into the dock as if we are the judges. It's the great subtle sin of rebellion by forgetfulness. Now, secondly, James tells us here about the cost of that to our lives.

[15 : 45] What does it cost us to be God forgetful? And let me just point out to you two costs that are in this passage. There are so many, but just two that are right here. And I only want to spend one to two minutes on the first one because it's something that we talk about so often here.

But the first cost is this. It is what the Bible calls idolatry. And idolatry happens when we make other things into our gods. And we serve that God and we worship that God.

And here, that is what I think is happening. It's a subtext in the passage. And the way this happens is when we are not consciously asking the question, today, this next 24 hours, what must I be and do for Jesus Christ as the directing question of our lives?

If that is not the directing question of our day, as we make plans, we are going to classically follow the mechanism of idolatry, which is to take God off of his throne, put something else in the place, and to follow and chase and serve that thing until it becomes our slave master, our God.

And what is going on in this passage that points us to that? Well, remember, these guys are all huddled around the map and they're saying, we're going to go to Athens and we're going to go to Corinth and we're going to go to Rome and we're going to make so much money.

[17 : 03] And James is trying to get them to say, you have not asked the question, what this year must I be and do for Jesus Christ? As the defining question that should be underneath all plan making.

And so what are they doing? They're falling in love with maximizing their profits. So materialism is their God here. And they want to maximize profits at all costs without ever asking a single spiritual question about what God actually wants for them.

So the problem is not being a businessman or a businesswoman. The problem is not being an entrepreneur, but it's not asking the question as we do business, what must I do and be for Jesus Christ at the core of all my plan making, all my ambitions, all my hopes and my dreams for this coming year.

And that's the big issue that James brings up. And I think it's a simple application here of pastoral wisdom from James. And it's something like this. Sometimes the greatest enemy in our lives are not the most explicit enemies of God.

The greatest enemy we face in our life is our heart getting attached to God's gifts. One of the biggest issues many of us in this room will face today is being over-attached to God's gift, worshipping the gifts, and forgetting altogether about the giver.

[18 : 23] And that's the sin of inattention. And it's the great cost of forgetting about God in our day-to-day life, in our morning and noon and evening time and at our bedtime. And you can imagine these guys all standing around the map.

And they're just not asking—the problem is not the map. The problem is not the plan. And the problem is they're not asking, what does God want for us this year? What does God want for our lives this year?

What should we be pursuing for God's sake as we go out and do business all across the Roman Empire? And it's a really fast track for being captured—to being captured by an idol.

Now, the second cost of two is anxiety. Both of the costs in this passage are subtext. But in verse 14, James starts to address the real problem and the solutions that we can bring to it.

And this is what he says. After the people say, we're going to make a plan. We're going to go today or tomorrow and make a profit in this city or that city. And James says, yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

[19 : 26] What is your life? You're a mist that just appears for a little time and then it vanishes away. And so he brings two questions to us this morning.

You do not know what tomorrow will bring. You have no knowledge of the future. You don't know what the next 24 hours will hold. And then he says, and you're only a mist. I don't know if you've ever walked across the meadows in the early morning when the mist is all across or Inverleaf Park or wherever you live.

But it's absolutely beautiful and haunting as well. But you know that about 10 a.m., 11 a.m., the mist completely clears away. And James says, as you make your plans, you are forgetting about the unpredictability of your life and the brevity of your life.

And so you never said before God, Lord, teach me to number my days as I make my plans. You've forgotten about the unpredictability of your life and the brevity of your life, that you have no control over what's going to happen today or tomorrow.

You have no control over other people in your life and what they do and what they say and how they act. And there's the gap. So the gap between verse 13 and 14 is where anxiety lives.

[20 : 38] And here's the gap. In verse 13, we say, I'm making my plan. Tomorrow I'm going to do this and that. I've got big plans for my life. And then in verse 14, you're not in control.

You don't account for the unpredictability and brevity of your life. And it's in that gap that anxiety arises. And the gap is thinking that we are sovereign over the events that are going to take place and the simple truth that we're not.

And the fact that we long to be sovereign over what's going to happen tomorrow and this week and the simple truth that we're not means that as long as we believe that and we forget about God, we will play the prophet in our day-to-day lives.

And imagine all the situations that we wish we could control, but we can't. And they're going to rise up like smoke in the heart, a fire burning deep down in the soul. And we're going to be incredibly anxious constantly because we don't actually have control over what's going to happen tomorrow. And James is trying to get us to ask that. We've said throughout this series that there's so much connection here to the Sermon on the Mount. And James is clearly pulling in language from the Sermon on the Mount.

[21 : 46] And you can remember Jesus in Matthew chapter 6 saying, don't be anxious about your life. Can you add a single day to it? Very similar language as James chapter 4.

Isn't life more than food? Isn't life more than clothing? Profit-making, Jesus brings up. Are you in control? You don't know what tomorrow will bring. So James is re-raising what Jesus brings up in

Matthew chapter 6.

And he's saying, will you instead say, Lord, teach me to number my days? Remember God, stop claiming sovereignty over your life. Tim Lane, one of the counselors, a Christian counselor who wrote a book on anxiety, he talks about how anxiety actually happens in us when we try to control our plans.

And he says that anxiety is, quote, a frustrated aspiration to omniscience. Here's how anxiety works. God has made us as human beings to possess some of his attributes.

And God's attributes, the theologians tell us, are both communicable and incommunicable.

Communicable attributes, what are those? Those are the ones that you can get, that you can catch, like a communicable disease you can catch.

[22 : 58] You can love because God is love. You can be righteous because God is righteous.

These are communicable attributes. But there are incommunicable attributes of God that you can never possess. And those things are omniscience, knowing everything.

Omnipotence, being all powerful to have control over the times and the seasons and the events and other people. And Tim Lane says, what is anxiety but a frustrated aspiration to omniscience, omnipotence?

It's trying to possess the incommunicable attributes of God that you will never be able to possess. You can't control anything. You're not in charge. And he's saying that the more we try to make our plans and we forget about God, we will not be at peace.

We will be restless. Anxiety will fill that gap. We will be worried. We will be playing the prophet all the time. It's a structural mismatch. You're not made to be king.

And when you make your plans without thinking about God, we're trying to pretend like we are, and it's just going to create restlessness in our hearts. In the Lord of the Rings, Boromir, the great son of Gondor, his problem in the novels is not that he's a coward.

[24 : 09] He's not a coward at all. And instead, Boromir is a brave, courageous warrior. But his problem is that when he sees the ring, he has a fatal flaw.

And it's this, that he stands before the council of Elrond, and he sees the ring laid on the table. And his flaw is he looks at the ring, and he believes that with the right person wielding the ring, with the best intentions, that we could do maximal good in the world.

And so Tolkien, the devout Christian that he was, he made the ring, the ring of power, Sauron's great ring, to symbolize human aspiration to omniscience and omnipotence.

And Boromir believed, if I have the right motivations, and if the right human being were to put the ring on, then boy, we don't need to destroy the ring. We could control the world for the best ways.

And one of Tolkien's subtle lessons throughout the whole of his novels is this, the desire to seize sovereign power over outcomes, even if you have good intentions, is not your job, and you can't do it, and it will always ruin you.

[25 : 13] It will either create anxiety that you can't overcome, or it will turn you into a power-hungry person, driven by the desire to control everyone in your life. And so the biggest anxiety-producing problem is just simply trying to be in control and playing God, and we're being told here that we can't do that.

We're carrying weights in our lives we were just never made to carry. I hesitate to quote from The Onion, from the pulpit, but The Onion is the satirical magazine that I very rarely read.

But there is one article that has always captured many, many, you might have heard this before, lots of people have referenced this article, but The Onion wrote a piece titled this, Man on the cusp of having fun suddenly remembers every one of his responsibilities.

Local man, Marshall Platt, age 34, came tantalizingly close to kicking back and having a good time while attending a friend's barbecue last night before remembering each and every one of his professional and personal obligations.

Backyard sources confirmed. Platt was reportedly seconds away from letting go and enjoying himself when he was suddenly crushed by the full weight of work emails that still needed to be dealt with, looming deadlines for projects that would take a great deal of time and energy to complete, the upcoming wedding he had yet to buy airfare for because of an unrealized issue, an unresolved issue, I should say, with his Southwest Rapid Rewards account, and phone calls that needed to be returned.

[26 : 53] He can't let go because somewhere he believes that if he stops thinking about the things he thinks he needs to be in control of, the world's going to fall apart. And how many of us have been

at that backyard barbecue, that back garden barbecue, and we were the man or woman that almost had a good time, but we woke up and we were crushed by our anxieties and our obligations.

We're not at peace. We're restless because we're trying to play God. We're trying to be our self-provider. We're trying to control our lives, and that means that we sit on the weight of a stolen throne. You know, when you appoint yourself king or queen over your circumstances, you inherit the king or queen's responsibilities, and that is the responsibility that only God can carry.

So finally, briefly, James asked us to do something about it, and here's what we can do about it. He asked us, lastly, to remember the God who remembers you. Now, he tells us really explicitly what to do, and it's pretty simple.

He says, number one, remember that your life is brief, that you're a mist. Lord, teach me to number my days. Number two, he tells us, remember you're not in control.

Who are you to make plans about tomorrow when you're not in control, to forget that you're not God the king? And then lastly, and this is the most important thing he tells us to do is remember God in everything you do.

[28 : 19] Remember God in all your plans. So what does he say? Instead, you should be saying, if the Lord wills. Now, that doesn't mean that during tea and coffee today, every single time you say anything to anybody, you say, if the Lord wills, DV.

But it is good to say it sometimes, at least. And, you know, in a city where most people aren't Christians, it's not a helpful thing to sit in every boardroom and say, I will make that PowerPoint if the Lord wills.

That might be incredibly off-putting and not the right time for certain people. And you don't want to say, you know, when your friend or your spouse or your roommate says, can you bring home milk after work? And you say, I will bring home milk if the Lord wills.

That's not what he's saying to us. But what he is saying to us is, you better think it. You better have it as the chorus line running through your heart as you make your plans.

It better be a burden to say, only if the Lord wills. A glorious release, a place of peace where you finally say, I can rest because it's only if the Lord wills that I'll do this or that that I hope to do.

[29 : 31] And it's surprising how often in the New Testament, the writers of the New Testament add that line. So a place like 1 Corinthians 4.19, Paul says, I will come to you soon if the Lord wills.

Or Hebrews 6.3, and this we will do only if God permits it. And so the New Testament writers actually teach us to speak like that. Or how about the Lord's Prayer, which is a daily prayer where we say, our Father who art in heaven, thy will be done on earth today as it's done in heaven.

What is that prayer? That's the prayer, that's a dangerous prayer because it's a prayer that says, thy will be done in my life today. Only your will, Lord. May I, as I make my plans, be and do what Jesus Christ requires me to be and do as my directing command.

That's what it is to say, thy will be done in my life on earth as it is in heaven. And so we're being asked this morning to get off the throne if you want to have peace. Maybe we could finish with a question like this.

How many days this past week did I, did you not think about God at all? How many hours in this past week and even this morning did you not think, were you not God conscious for even a moment?

[30 : 55] How many hours of planning have I already made in this coming semester and not sat down and said, only if you permit, Lord. Only if you will. Help me to discern what you desire for me to do.

We all can say, we can all answer that in our own hearts and we know that we all wander through our days without the thought, a single thought of the God who made us and made the world and supplies even our oxygen as we sit here and breathe.

And the real antidote to this problem is this. It's remembering for every single minute, every single second that I forget about God and I don't think about Him and I don't recognize Him.

Jesus Christ has never forgotten me. Jesus has never forgotten you for one single moment from eternity to eternity. And even right here as you sit, Jesus Christ is remembering you before God the Father, interceding for you, bringing His own worthy salvation before God the Father for you, even now.

And in the middle of history, Jesus Christ remembered you. You know, we have a whole history, really. That's what history is of God remembering us. And that's what the word covenant actually

means.

[32 : 07] The God who chases after people and remembers people who do not think about Him, who do not remember Him. And in the middle of human history, we can remember Jesus' words before the Father.

He said, I will not lose a single one of them. I will not forget them. I think that the Garden of Gethsemane is sort of the inversion of James chapter 4, where James says, we forget about God. We forget to say, thy will be done. But Jesus, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, you remember that agonizing garden? He was weeping blood. He was in utter misery about to face the cross.

And what did He say? He stared at the cross, something so horrific. And He said, not my will, but yours be done. Thy will be done in my life, Lord. My Father.

And He went to the cross. And at the cross, He said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And He was forsaken by His, He was forgotten so that you could be remembered. As one writer puts it, Jesus Christ was God forgotten, forgotten by the Father so you could be God remembered.

[33 : 10] And when we remember that, we've got to say, how can I not then, going from that, remember God in all my plans? Remember Jesus who remembers me in all moments. Here's a simple example of what this looks like.

Paul David Tripp tells the story of Susie's birthday, little Susie's birthday party. Little Susie had a birthday party and little Johnny was at this birthday party with little Susie.

And little Susie was sitting at the head of the table and all the presents were piled up around her.

And little Johnny, like all the other kids, had been given bags, little bags, with party favors.

And you know, Johnny looks at the head of the table and he sees Susie and she's got all these presents around her. And Johnny pulls a pencil out of his bag. And then he pulls, you know, a chocolate coin and Johnny starts to realize that Susie has all these presents and I've got a pencil.

And Johnny's mom starts to see what's going on and she looks at Johnny's face and you know, it's getting angrier and angrier. And Johnny's mom says to Johnny, this is not your party.

[34 : 25] And I don't say it to sound too hard and I say this to me and all of us today, but James 4, 13 to 17 is really just saying to us, this is not your party. The world is not your party.

And something so counter-cultural, your life is not your party. Our God, our maker is the God of history, the God of creation, the God of redemption, the God of all things and our life belongs to him and it's not our party.

And so Jonathan Edwards was so famous for getting up in the morning and reminding himself of something like this. He would say, everything I enjoy today, which is better than hell, is strictly by the mercy and gracious upholding of the power of God.

Everything I enjoy today, that is better than hell, is strictly by the gracious, merciful upholding of the living God of my life. That's not morbid.

That's a way to be able to say, I'm not on the throne today so I can be at peace, that everything I have is a gift. It's the way to get up in the morning and recognize God in all your plans.

[35 : 34] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word and we pray now that you would help us to remember you, that we would be God conscious, that we would know this world is not ours, our life is not ours, it's not our party, it's not our world, and therefore be able to go and make our plans in your light.

So Lord, teach us to be God conscious, not God forgetful. Teach us to remember you in all things and therefore be able to be at peace. And we pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.