

Financial Integrity

James 4:13-5:6 (NIV)

"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."¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."¹⁶ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.¹⁷ Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

^{5:1} Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.² Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes.³ Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.⁴ Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.⁵ You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.⁶ You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you."

James 4:13-5:6 (The Message)

"And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today—at the latest, tomorrow—we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that."¹⁶⁻¹⁷ As it is, you are full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil.

¹⁻³ And a final word to you arrogant rich: Take some lessons in lament. You'll need buckets for the tears when the crash comes upon you. Your money is corrupt and your fine clothes stink. Your greedy luxuries are a cancer in your gut, destroying your life from within. You thought you were piling up wealth. What you've piled up is judgment.⁴⁻⁶ All the workers you've exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of the Master Avenger. You've looted the earth and lived it up. But all you'll have to show for it is a fatter than usual corpse. In fact, what you've done is condemn and murder perfectly good persons, who stand there and take it."

Our sins exposed...

James 4:13-17

Sin of **presumption** (vs. 13-15)

Sin of **boasting** (vs. 16) - "pride of life"

Sin of **omission** (vs. 17)

James 5:1-6

Crime of **hoarding wealth** (vs. 2-3)

Crime of **dishonest gain** (vs. 4)

Crime of **luxury** and **self-indulgence** (vs. 5)

Crime of **murder** of **innocent men** (vs. 6)

Small Group & Personal Reflection Questions:

Read James 4:13-17

1. What jumps out to you most about this passage?
2. Do you struggle with the three sins described in 4:13-17?
 - If yes, which one(s)?
 - What can you do about that today?

Read James 5:1-6

3. How does this passage relate to your life now?
4. Of the 4 crimes laid out in 2-6, which one(s) have you committed?
 - How does this affect you?
 - How will you live now in light of this text?

Did you use these small group questions? If so, email Pastor Kent at kentc@northway.org to let him know what you've learned.