

## Sermon Study - 3.15.2026

### Leader's Corner

Open Hands: Planning & Money

James 4:13-5:6

**Main Passage:** James 4:13-5:6

**Summary:**

James warns that the problem is not planning or wealth themselves, but the illusion of control and the temptation to trust in what we can manage instead of trusting in God. Life is fragile, the future is uncertain, and faith is expressed through humble dependence and open-handed generosity. True disciples live wisely, plan responsibly, and steward resources faithfully — but always with the posture, “If the Lord wills.”

**Main Idea:**

Planning and wealth are not the problem — presumption and misplaced trust are. Faith plans wisely and stewards generously with open hands.

**Main Practice:**

Write “If the Lord wills” over your plans this week and practice one intentional act of generosity.

## Prayer and Praise

**Community Prayer:**

Lord, you hold our days in your hands.

Forgive us for the times we trust in our plans more than your will,  
and for the times we trust in our resources more than your provision.

Teach us to live with open hands —  
open to your leading, open in generosity,  
open in trust that you are enough.

Form in us hearts that depend on you in all things.

Through Jesus we pray,

Amen.

**Worship Options:**

- Build My Life
- Trust In God

(Alt options: I Surrender All, Give Me Jesus, Gratitude)

# Group Discussion

1. What phrases and Biblical truths stood out to you from the sermon?

- What warnings does James give about planning in 4:13-16?
- What warnings are given about wealth in 5:1-6?

2. What does it really mean to say, "If the Lord wills"?

- How can wealth slowly replace trust in God?
- Why do you think James connects control, money, and faith together?

3. Where do you feel the strongest need to control outcomes right now?

- What plans are hardest for you to hold loosely?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to trust God with finances?
- What would living with open hands look like for you this week?

4. Why do people naturally trust planning and money more than God?

- How can success, stability, or wealth slowly shape our hearts without us noticing?
- What is the difference between wise stewardship and self-reliance?

5. Is there an area where your trust has shifted from God to yourself?

- Are your plans shaped more by prayer or by pressure?
- Do your financial decisions reflect faith or fear?
- Where might God be inviting you to loosen your grip?

6. What is one plan you will consciously place in God's hands this week?

- What is one way you can practice intentional generosity?
- What would it look like to live this week with the mindset, "If the Lord wills"?

## Practice

### Group Practice (during group)

Take one minute of silence.

Have each person write down:

- One plan they need to surrender to God
- One act of generosity they will practice this week

Optional: Pray in pairs for open hands and trusting hearts.

### Individual Practice (this week)

- Write "If the Lord wills" over your plans each day
- Give something away intentionally (time, money, encouragement, service)
- Pray daily: "Lord, I trust You with what I cannot control."

## Further Study

### Additional passages:

- Proverbs 16:9
- Matthew 6:19–34
- Luke 12:13–21
- 1 Timothy 6:6–19
- Psalm 39:4–7
- Ecclesiastes 5:10–15

### Themes to explore:

- Trust vs control
- Stewardship vs hoarding
- Dependence on God
- The brevity of life
- Generosity as worship

### Optional resources:

- Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)
- Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12)
- Teachings on stewardship in the epistles