

## Promises, Not Promises: Tomorrow vs. Forever

January 19, 2020

Ted Cunningham

1. We are not promised tomorrow, but we are promised what? How much and when do you focus on God's actual promise?
2. Have you ever clung to false promises that you thought were Christian? Please share.
3. **Read James 4:13-16** 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 in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. (NIV) Planning in and of itself is not wrong, but what type of planning is wrong? Are you ever tempted to do this type of planning? How can you change your thinking about future plans?
4. What are some of the word pictures or metaphors used in Scripture to depict the shortness of life? Would you live differently if you felt you were almost out of time? List some specific ways.
5. How is planning affected by the sovereignty of God? **Read the following proverbs.**  
**Proverbs 16:9** In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps. (NIV)  
**Proverbs 19:21** Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. (NIV)  
Give an example of a major life plan you made that didn't turn out the way you thought it would. In hindsight, do you see God's hand in that situation? If so, how?
6. Matthew 6:19-34 instructs us to 1. store up treasures in heaven, 2. seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, and 3. not worry about tomorrow. What steps can you take to fulfill each of these in practical terms?
7. Ted mentioned that we often have our guard up to block out distractions from our goals and say "no" to most unexpected opportunities. Do you tend to say "yes" or "no" to most unforeseen possibilities that present themselves? Or do you procrastinate and say you'll do it later? If you think you should adjust your response in any way, please share.
8. Ron Hutchcraft wrote, "But it's important to remember that the way to have a purpose-driven life is to have a purpose-driven day today. God takes all those days lived His way and then He weaves them into an awesome life! You do the day. God does the life. That makes life manageable instead of overwhelming. It makes it doable instead of undoable." What are some specific ways you can live a purpose-driven day?
10. Read the following statements. Live for Today. Plan for Tomorrow. Prepare for Eternity. Which one do you naturally focus on the most? Which one do you need to work on more? Explain.

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### Great food for thought and action:

Each day, start with Jesus. Each day, look for people who need you, not people who can meet your needs. Each day, confess and renounce the sin that may have brought you down yesterday. Each day, give each member of your family all of you, even if it's only for a short time. Each day, you pray for God to give you an opportunity to tell someone about your relationship with Jesus. Each day, make some progress on your long "to do" list, putting the most important ones first. And each day, at the end, sign off with God, crowning Jesus the Lord of what you didn't get done today. **Ron Hutchcraft**