If the Lord Wills: Making Every Day Count

Pastor Rick and First Lady Deanne Mulkins on Planning with God, the Brevity of Life, and Doing Good Today

Pastor Rick Mulkins Sr. and First Lady Deanne Mulkins | Friday, November 6, 2026 | Host: Mark Burns

Program Summary

In this Friday room-of-friends study of James 4:13–17, Pastor Rick Mulkins Sr., First Lady Deanne Mulkins, Mark Burns, and friends consider the danger of planning tomorrow without seeking the Lord. Planning is not condemned; presumption and self-reliance are. Rick and Deanne describe seeking God's guidance, waiting patiently, and remembering the lesson of the Gibeonite deception in Joshua 9. The group discusses humility, the gifts God gives, and the brevity of life, illustrated by a 90th birthday celebration for longtime participant Bill. Mark reflects on his late father and the value of spending time with loved ones while there is opportunity. James 4:17 challenges listeners to act on the good they know they should do, including reconciliation. The conversation concludes with the reality of sin, repentance, salvation through Jesus rather than good works, and a prayer for listeners to seek the Lord.

Key Takeaways

• James 4:13–17 challenges presumptuous planning, not responsible preparation.

• Include God in decisions before committing to a course of action.

• Ask, wait, and watch for God's guidance rather than rushing ahead.

• The Israelites' failure to inquire of God in Joshua 9 illustrates the danger of relying only on appearances.

• Our abilities, opportunities, and even our next breath are gifts from God.

• Life is like a mist: valuable, brief, and not under our control.

• Time with loved ones and opportunities for reconciliation should not be endlessly postponed.

• James 4:17 reminds us that failing to do known good is also sin.

• It is never too late to turn toward Jesus and begin living faithfully with the time remaining.

• Salvation is received through Christ's grace, not earned through moral effort or charitable works.

Scripture References

• James 4:13–17

• Joshua 9:14

• Proverbs 16:9

• Proverbs 16:18

• Psalm 90:10–12

• 1 Corinthians 1:31

• Ephesians 5:15–16

• Romans 3:23

• Ephesians 2:8–10

• Matthew 4:17

• James 4:8

• Psalm 103:12

Quote of the Day

“Don’t abandon God. Make sure you put Him in the equation, because we don’t know what’s going to happen.” — Pastor Rick Mulkins

Broadcast Notes

Deanne reads James 4:13–17. The group revisits last week's teaching on speech before turning to the question of boasting about tomorrow. Rick emphasizes including God in plans; Deanne speaks of asking, waiting, and watching. Joshua 9 is raised as an example of failing to seek God's counsel. Rick recalls prayerfully considering retirement, while Mark recognizes longtime friend Bill on his 90th birthday. The discussion turns to humility and the brevity of life, and Mark reflects on his father's death following Alzheimer's disease and his gratitude for time spent together. Participants encourage prompt reconciliation and obedience to the good God places before us. The closing conversation addresses sin, repentance, and the Gospel, including a listener invitation to seek counsel at 1-888-NEED-HIM. Deanne prays for listeners. The supplied transcript also includes informal conversation after the program's closing; that material is retained in the transcript for completeness.

❤■ Practical Applications

• Before a major decision, pray and consult Scripture rather than merely asking God to bless a finished plan.

• Make room to wait for wise counsel and God's guidance.

• Write down one area where I have been relying too heavily on my own control.

• Thank God for the health, abilities, and opportunities I often take for granted.

• Contact a family member or friend I've been meaning to call.

• Take one respectful step toward reconciliation where it is wise and safe.

• Do a good deed I've been postponing, without expecting recognition.

• Read Psalm 90:12 and consider how to use my time wisely.

• Tell someone about the hope and forgiveness available through Jesus.

• End each day by entrusting tomorrow to the Lord.

Today's Challenge

For seven days, begin with the prayer, 'Lord, if it is Your will, guide my plans and help me do the good before me.' Each day take one practical step: seek God's wisdom about a decision, encourage a loved one, resolve a neglected responsibility, or pursue reconciliation where appropriate. Read James 4:13–17 and Psalm 90:12, and remember that today is a gift.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the gift of this day and for the life You have entrusted to me. Forgive me when I rush into plans without seeking Your wisdom or imagine that tomorrow is guaranteed. Teach me to prepare responsibly while holding my plans with open hands. Give me patience to wait, humility to listen, and courage to act when I know the good I should do. Remind me to treasure the people You have placed in my life and to seek peace where relationships are strained. Thank You that my failures do not place me beyond the mercy offered through Jesus Christ. Help me use the time I have to love You, serve others, and walk faithfully with Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speakers

Pastor Rick Mulkins Sr. serves at First Baptist Church in Springfield, Illinois. He and his wife, First Lady Deanne Mulkins, regularly encourage the Mark & Friends room-of-friends Bible study with Scripture, testimony, and practical reflections on Christian living. In this conversation, they explore seeking God's will, humility, and making good use of the time He gives.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. With decades in Christian radio and ministry, he brings Scripture-centered conversations and testimonies to listeners, seeking to educate, edify, and evangelize.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you’re near.

It's so good to see you. We hope that it’s clear. Everyone loves you.

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here.

Fellowship's sweet of knowing you're near. It's so good to see you. Reading from James chapter 4 verses 13 through 17.

Now listen, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a day there, carry on business, and make money. Why, you don't even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Instead, you ought to say, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

Anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. Reading from James chapter 4 verses 13 through 17. And that was First Lady Deanne Mulkins.

We have her and her beloved husband Rick back in the studio again. We appreciate their passion for God's word, their faithfulness in serving the people of Springfield and beyond all those that show up on Sunday to the First Baptist Church of Springfield. They've served there for a number of years.

In fact, Bishop Franklin, they used to serve with him years ago. He's on our radio board, so we appreciate that relationship. Rick and Deanne's passion for God's word and for reaching the lost.

That could be you, that could be me at points in my life where we're lost from God's word. But once we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and His spirit abides and works in and through us, we are saved. We are redeemed and we're on that sanctification process.

It doesn't mean like you come to Christ and then you never sin again and everything works out and candy canes fall from the sky and you get to ride on unicorns. I have a friend that says that. Unicorns and it's like an M&M, but it's the chewy, fruity... Skittles.

Skittles! Okay, thank you. Yeah, Skittles. Skittles, yeah.

You get unicorns and Skittles. Anyways, we're appreciative that we're going to continue in our book of James. It's God's word, like Deanne was saying, that the book of James is like the New Testament version of Proverbs.

There's so many good nuggets, so many good things we can apply to our life. It's practical. It's insightful.

It really helps us understand and discern God's leading. A lot of things about the tongue and the things that we say. But today's passage in my Bible says boasting about tomorrow.

And so it's not good to boast about ourselves or our plans. What is it? There's that word, if I'm going to boast, is it Paul? I'll boast in the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1. 31. We want to boast in the Lord. So we talked a lot last week about not slandering, being careful with our words.

How do we speak about others? Others that are created in God's image. They might be acting out. They might be sinning.

But we need to be careful because God is pursuing them and loves them. Absolutely. And so today we're going to learn about, now listen, you who say today or tomorrow we'll go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make money.

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. So what should we learn about this passage? Or what would be a takeaway for somebody driving to work today or pondering reading the book of James? I would say in that verse right there, verse 13, a great takeaway would be this. Don't abandon God.

So many times we are so busy with doing everything we're doing and we forget to put God in our plans. And that's why James is reminding us we need to put God in our plans because we don't know what today or tomorrow or next week holds. Again, I think it's just something that we need to practice.

Thank God, maybe most people who are believers do put God in their plans, but I know there are some that probably don't. But I think he's giving us an exhortation right here. Don't abandon God.

Make sure you put him in equation because we don't know what's going to happen. And I think there's importance to you sharing a little more because we have Paul in the room here. Paul's a planner.

Paul's got one of those great minds. He should have one of the highest-paid positions here. He serves so faithfully and consistently and practically and assists in so many ways, but he's very bright.

He was one of those engineers with that engineering mind. Nuclear power plant, was it, Paul, that you worked at? Nuclear safety. Nuclear safety, so he's very sharp.

But you're not saying it's unwise to plan. It's just we can't trust in ourselves, right? That is true because we only see today maybe or within the next hour. It's God that holds tomorrow.

He holds the future. He knows everything that's going on. And it's so important that we make sure we put him in those plans.

It's kind of like what we're doing right now. We have something that's going on in our life, and we are including God in our plans. Absolutely.

And so we are asking him on a constant basis. We're saying, Lord, show us what way you want us to go. And we're asking him to open up that way and for him to go ahead of us.

And so the most important thing that we do is ask, but then the second most important thing that we do is wait. Wait for his answer and watch. That's another one.

That's another one. We're a people. We have a tendency to jump.

Waiting is one of the hardest things to do. But when you're seeking the counsel of God and you're waiting, that's tough sometimes. Yeah, and so we've done a lot of waiting in our life.

So we know the character of God and we recognize that, but we always seek his guidance and his wisdom because it is so important to do that. If you leave him out of your plans, you know what? We're getting a little bit too old, Pastor Rick, that when

we were young, we had time to make up for the mistakes, but we are older now. You know what? We don't have time.

The brevity of life. Yeah, we need to make good decisions today. And some of you might be in that same situation, and it's best for you to ask God and to wait for his answer.

And how many times, Pastor Rick, I'm sure you've done some counseling, we'll kind of create these plans and then we'll say, Oh, by the way, God, will you bless my efforts? We didn't bring those plans to the Lord before we launched into them. We kind of said, Well, bless my efforts, Lord, because I've thought this through and I think you're for it. Instead of saying, Lord, I have some ideas, some thoughts.

What do you think? And then get confirmation, then move forward. That's good. And, you know, I was reminded of a story the other day.

It's found in the book of Joshua, and I think it's in the ninth chapter. It talks about the Gibeonite deception. I don't know if you're all familiar with that story or not, but the Gibeonites came and they deceived the Israelites.

The biggest problem with it was the Israelites did not inquire of the Lord because if they would have inquired of the Lord, God would have told them, These people are lying to you. But because they never encountered God, they never saw him, they were deceived. And that packs a punch because there's things that we know to do, too, in seeking the Lord, but we don't seem to put them in our plans.

We don't seem to take the time to do that. And I say this with full humility. I've been retired three and a half years from my regular job at Memorial Medical Center.

But, you know, it wasn't a decision I made overnight. I mean, I calculated. I'm kind of like Paul.

I'm pushing numbers in my head. I really went over that for a whole year with God. You know what I'm saying? Because I'm like, God, is this what I'm supposed to do? Am I supposed to retire? I'm only 64 years old.

What do I need to do? I was constantly putting God in my plans because I had an agenda, but I wanted to make sure with God it was okay. And that's exactly what God wants. Hey, that just reminded me.

I failed to say that Bill in the studio here, he turned 90, and we didn't get to say anything about him. But happy birthday, Bill. Happy birthday.

Still practicing law. Happy birthday, Bill. Yes.

Wow. A very faithful addition on these Fridays when we gather and have the Mark & Friends program for you all. But we appreciate Bill.

He's been a business underwriter because of his law practice for many, many years. But he's 90. He's still practicing.

He got up the stairs to join us today. Wow. We appreciate Bill and his work and his heart for the Lord.

He shared a little bit of his testimony. I had him on some years ago, but appreciate Bill. And 64 years old.

So that's when you retired from work from Memorial Hospital. I was 64. But again, I was putting God in.

I mean, I was walking the corridors. I'm like, God, is this what you want me to do? I just kept putting it before the Lord. And I wasn't going to move until I had a concrete answer.

And then I really felt in my spirit it was time. And then that's exactly what I did. Well, what's the Lord think about boasting and pride? Oh, that's no good.

That's no good. Yeah. Let me put it this way, if I can say.

It's okay if you are getting bragged upon and your head gets big. But make sure your eyes leak. You see what I'm saying? I mean, because people will come up.

They'll pat me on the back. They'll say this and that. But you know what? I got to walk with humility.

And I want to make sure that I'm walking with humility. And, you know, of course, we already know that boasting is not good unless, of course, you're bragging on the Lord. But sometimes, you know, we have to be careful because pride can get attached to us.

And that was Lucifer's biggest problem was he was taking all the glory. You know, the glory was supposed to basically go through him to God. But instead, he was taking it.

And by doing so, it was a downfall for him. And like you're saying, Mark, we have to be careful because pride is a killer. Yeah, pride cometh before a fall.

Yes. And it's okay to be. It's before destruction.

I heard that. Yes. And it's okay to validate.

You know, thank you, God, for the gift sets that this person has. And thank you for how you poured in. Like there's some preachers I'm like, wow, are they operating in their gifts? And people have different gifts.

God wants to work through people with certain gifts. But he's the root of all those gifts. He's the reason you have them.

And the mere fact, if you don't believe that, the fact that you're even breathing today is a gift from God. So you really can't take credit for too much. If you've worked really hard, well, who gave you the wherewithal to work really hard? That's true.

Who gave you the health to work really hard? Who's giving you the breath to breathe today? So it all comes from God. Absolutely. It also says, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.

You know, and that's the thing. You know, you think you might be planning to do this, you know. But really, you know, is it the Lord's will for you to do that? I mean, you'll do it if it is.

Hey, Christi, many times because you've joined us for many, many of these Friday editions of Mark & Friends, but you're nodding your head a little and it seems like you have something to share. I'm putting you on the spot. Well, it just feels like that when other people observe you and you're trying to keep up with, should I do this? Should I not do this? And nonbelievers have a tendency to have their eagle eyes on you, and the second you kind of are unsure about something, it's like their hands go up and it's like, well, you know, you're just not really sure, are you? And it just seems to me like there's an awful lot of people who are just so ready to, if you say, I'm going to go do this and I'm going to go do that, and they'll say, well, sure you are, you know.

But God is saying, you're making a plan here, but you haven't asked me sort of the same thing, but we listen to God. And a lot of times we'll hear people instead of God, and we'll listen to them over the still small voice that we should be paying. And often it'll make us angry or fight against that.

Hey, Pastor Rick, how about this portion of verse 14? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Should we kind of take note of the reality is we all only have so much time here on earth. So is he kind of helping us make the most of your opportunities, or is he also saying you're just like a flash? You're just going to be here and not here.

So what can we learn or what's like a good takeaway? Because that's kind of interesting. You are a mist. I mean, we're a wonderful mist.

We're creating God's image, and thank you, God, for bringing us into existence. But we basically appear for a little while and then vanish. What should we learn? Well, I'll tell you what.

It's a privilege and honor to learn that Bill just turned 90, because the Psalms say in chapter 90, if we have the strength, we can live to be 70 or 80. So it's telling us that the brevity of life, you know. I mean, I'm looking at me.

I'm 67 years old. I mean, if I look at that passage, I'm like, ooh, you know, I'm getting on the backside. But again, it lets us know that time is short, and we need to redeem the time.

Whatever time we have, give it to God. Live for the Lord. You know, just get radical for Jesus Christ.

I think that would be the bottom line. I got an amen in my corner over there. But that's really it.

It's just, you know, having a hunger for Jesus Christ, knowing our time is short. And also maybe for the person that's tuned in that says, but Pastor Rick, I failed so many times. I feel like I'm out of the game.

I don't feel like I've measured up. Maybe they only have a year or two, but shouldn't they optimize the time they do have? I mean, it's never too late to turn to the Lord. No, that's right.

And the thing is, Mark, we've all failed. Thank God our God does not keep a record of all wrongs. And so, you know what? You're alive today.

You're on the right side of the dirt this morning. You need to just thank God and just begin to live the life for Him, whatever time you do have, because we don't know. We don't know.

Am I going to live to be 90 like Bill? I don't know. I pray that I do, and I pray that the quality of life is good. But in the meantime, I'm going to live every day for Jesus, and that's what He wants us to do.

You know, I'm thinking of a story here. My dad recently died of Alzheimer's. Many years ago, there was a song on the radio by a group called Mike and the Mechanics about all these years, and the song was about spend the time wisely.

Get to know people and spend time with them while you have the time. And I'm so grateful that I heard that song so many years ago, and I took advantage of it and spent time with my dad and honoring him because I didn't know at the time that was going to happen. And for many years, he was around but not.

And I'm looking at this and going, you know, you might be in your 20s going, I'm bulletproof, I can do anything. But you're not, and time will go by a lot faster than you think it will. That is true.

So use it well and start now. Don't wait until you've got that diagnosis or you've got, you know, a year left. Your life will be so much better if you take advantage of this kind of knowledge from the Bible.

I wrote down or I'm thinking live without regrets. Like there might be somebody, even right now, God's putting on your hearts that you maybe haven't called. Maybe it's a family member or a brother or a neighbor that you've got to reconcile with and don't regret not doing it because something could happen to them.

They could pass away or die and then you won't be able to have that resolved. So pray up today maybe for all of us. Lord, is there somebody I need to contact or touch base with or meet up with? And if somebody comes to mind, then call them, drive over to their house, take them out for dinner, break bread with them.

Usually, not always. I like that one. Break bread.

Good things through that fellowship. Absolutely. On 17, Mark, that kind of goes on along with what you were saying there because anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it sins.

So if you know that you should be calling somebody or you know you should be going by and doing these certain things, whatever it is that God has told you to do, you need to do it or to you, it will be sin. Well, we can even go a step further. When you know to encounter on the Lord concerning your plans and you don't do it, to that person it's sin.

That's true. We know to inquire of God. If you're making a plan, you know to do it, and you don't do it, that's an issue.

Yeah, and the Bible talks about it. It's sin. Rick, good Baptist preachers will many times in their sermons talk about sin.

Absolutely. It's not a word that's shared a lot nowadays. I mean, I've heard some people say, what does sin mean? So maybe talk a little bit more about sin because it's mentioned here in the Bible and often we neglect to talk much about it.

Yes. The Bible does talk about we were all born into sin because of the fall of Adam. We know that story.

We as people, as believers even, we sin sometimes by accident or maybe purposefully, but God is telling us that when we are sinning against God, there's a flaw. There's an issue there. I thank Jesus Christ that He doesn't hold all my sins against me, that I have given those to Him.

And when we look at sin by definition, it means missing the mark. Think about you're getting ready with a bow and arrow. You missed the target, and we've all missed that.

And I've told my wife many, many times, it doesn't matter how you start. It's how you finish. We've all sinned.

We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But because I have sinned, I turn to Jesus Christ and He redeems me. And because I have sinned, I turn to Him and I put my faith in Him, I trust in Him, I cry out and say, Lord, forgive me of my sin.

The Bible says in the book of Matthew 4, verse 17, Jesus' first message was repentance. He's telling people everywhere to repent of their sin and turn toward God. And that's the bottom line.

God says, I don't care how bad you've been. I don't care what you've done. It doesn't matter if you repent of it and you turn to Me, I will remove your sins as far as the east is from the west.

And that's the beauty of our God. And love you freely. And love you freely.

And that Romans passage, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So listening friend, you might feel maybe some healthy conviction. You recognize you're a sinner.

We're all sinners. I'm a sinner. Me too, yes.

But we have a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. God sent Him on this earth to be the punishment for sin. God had to deal with sin.

If He dealed with it and didn't leave us hope, none of us would measure up. None of us would make it to heaven. But because of Jesus taking on our sin, taking on our punishment, being that substitutionary atonement, being that propitiation, the hard word for me to even say it, remember, but the fact that we can't earn our way into heaven.

So I'm talking to some of you that are good people, wonderful people. You go to church. You give to the poor.

You help out. But those works don't earn you into heaven. Those works are wonderful.

And as followers of Jesus, we want to do them. But it's because of what Jesus did for us. We couldn't earn it.

We can't get into heaven because we're good people or we're better than those sinners. We get in because we've accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It's because of His shed blood on our behalf.

And we're so thankful and grateful to God that He had a plan by sending Jesus. Jesus was the light of the world. He was the King of kings and Lord of lords.

But He was the Savior for your sins, for my sins. And when we ask Him to come into our heart and we recognize that He's the way into heaven because He took on our sins, then we can have that relationship with God. And if you've never made that decision before or it's maybe a new concept for you, you can call 1-888-NEED-HIM.

1-888-NEED-HIM. It's a free call. They're trained counselors.

They'll pray with you. They'll answer your questions about having a relationship with God. Does God, in fact, answer prayer? Can you read the Bible? Is it truthful? They'll talk with you and share with you, and they will help you understand who Jesus Christ is and how today can be your first day of recognizing you are a follower of His and you're welcomed into God's family.

So, Dan, I'm going to have you close our time in prayer for the listener that's maybe uncertain about a relationship with God to those that are excited, and they're going to read through James 4 today. Okay. Lord, we just pray for the one that is listening today, and we just ask you, Lord, that they would hear you and they would seek you, Lord, and that they would look into your word and read it for themselves because this is the living word of God and that, Lord, there isn't a book like this made.

This is a book that is God in it and living and gives you life. So we just pray right now for that listener. We pray, Lord, that you would have them seek you with their whole heart and that, Father, that they would allow your Holy Spirit to just begin to work with them and change them and help them to grow in you, Lord, for I know that, Lord, that this life is hard, and there are so many things that you can go through that is so hard, and we just ask, Lord, that you would give them the peace that passes all understanding that only comes from your Spirit.

So all they have to do is call upon the name of the Lord, and, Lord, you hear them and you answer them. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen, amen.

Amen and amen. Oh, listening friend, God loves you, He cares for you, and He delights in you. Believe it or not, He really does.

Draw near to Him and He'll draw near to you. Well, thanks for listening. Thanks for being a part of our Radio Listening family.

This is Mark Burns, Pastor Rick and Deanne Mulkins, and a room of friends with the Ministry of Great News Media. God bless you and have a great day, night, and weekend. Amen.

Amen. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

That's a wrap. That's a wrap. That's it, Dan.

That's a wrap.