

21. These men's working objects, which are absolutes, are declared to occur over a year in the future after which they will have made a profit.
22. However, for that to take place, they are depending on certain events to occur over which they have no control: **(1)** they do not know when they will leave their present location, **(2)** they do not know their destination, and **(3)** they do not know how long it will take to be successful but guess maybe a year.
23. And to cap it all off, these boys are smack-dab in the midst of reversionism moving toward the sin unto death. They are depending on variables in order to even get started: they do not know when to leave, they do not know which way to go, and they do not know how long it will take to rake in the dough.
24. When they leave, which way they go, and how long it will take they are not prepared to say, but what will absolutely come to pass is, "they will make a profit!"
25. The analysis of James 4:13-14a exposes a kind of arrogance typical of reversionists. Their lust for money will be assuaged by simply going to another geographic location. This is the rationale of those in reversionism.
26. Their reasoning is based on wanderlust, "a strong longing for or impulse toward wandering." The verb, to wander, is defined as, "To move about without a fixed course." At some undesignated location, "they will engage in free enterprise and make a profit."
27. Would you trust these guys? Would you buy stock in their company? Would you wait an entire year before any dividend checks arrive?
28. Probably not, based on the information contained in verse 14 with emphasis placed on the ellipsis which we have noted:

James 4:14a You two do not understand what kind
of life ... yours tomorrow. (EXT)

1. James's ellipsis is intentional and is intended to function as a challenge. He wants it to force the men to fill in the ellipsis between "what kind of life" and "yours tomorrow." They have already practiced their response in verse 13 with a list of "could be this or "could be that."
2. These reversionists are planning on an event that they assert will take place over a year from now that is based upon nothing certain taking place between today and the self-prophesied result.
3. It is legitimate to set goals, however, this effort has to have a stated and defined objective which includes a plan, a purpose, and a desire accompanied by stick-to-itiveness, dogged perseverance, and tenacity.

4. However, these words mean nothing unless they are backed by research, training, investigation, and a willingness to learn from those who have been successful in the areas of expertise they seek to pursue.
5. The plan of the two men James addresses may be described as “a shot in the dark, a flip of a coin, or a risky thing.” There is nothing in their plan they can count on to justify investment of over a year of their time and efforts.
6. Yet, this is exactly what the believers in James: Chapter Four are trying. James drives home the reality of their schemes by challenging them to fill in his ellipsis: “You two do not understand what kind of life ... yours tomorrow!” The two men are challenged to fill in the ellipsis.
7. They have already stated they do not know exactly what their life will be like tomorrow. Or the next day. Or to what city they will visit. Of what they are convinced will eventually happen is they will make a profit.
8. There is one thing of which these reversionists should always be confident although they are slow learners: They will always be frustrated because outside the plan of God everything they decide to do will not work out. Whatever does occur will not be to their advantage.
9. James confirms this in the verse’s next sentence, “For you two are just ἀτμίς (*atmís*): “a vapor, a cloud, or smoke,” a transitory gas, fog, or fume, each of which is prominently suspended in the air but then gradually disappears.
10. These three examples occur in the air and can be seen by everyone in their general vicinity. They can capture observers’ attention, who sometimes question the cause, but shortly it fades from view.
11. This is how James describes their impact: “... it appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” The verb, “vanishes,” is the present passive participle, ἀφανίζω (*aphanízō*), which describes what appears briefly, but then vanishes from view.
12. James 4:14’s second sentence reminded one biblical commentator of these several lines in Macbeth’s soliloquy in *Macbeth*, Act 5:

**Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.²**

² William Shakespeare II, *Macbeth*, in *The Plays and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, eds. William George Clarke and William Aldis Wright (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 27:309.



13. James has just given the two reversionists a dressing down, a severe reprimand. Given the “what for.” And well-deserved. If these two men do not respond to James’s tongue lashing they will soon be the deserved recipients of divine discipline and potentially the implementation of the sin unto death.
14. There is a Latin proverb that sums up Macbeth’s soliloquy and the two reversionists in James: chapter 4, verse 5:

Sic transit gloria mundi: Thus passes away the glory of the world.

15. Here is the expanded translation of:

James 4:14 You two do not understand what kind of life ... yours tomorrow. You two are just a fleeting vapor trail which soon vanishes from view. (EXT)

16. In an effort to prevent this, James, in grace, gives some good advice to them in James Four beginning with a good dose of grace orientation in:

James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” (NASB)

1. James begins his pastoral advice with the substitutionary preposition, **ἀντί (antí)**: “Instead,” followed by the conditional, **ἐάν (eán)**: “If” followed by the present active infinitive of **λέγω (légō)**: “say.” The infinitive of **légō** indicates that James is changing what the two men said about making money over to what they should have said.
2. Thus, in this verse, James gives the men advice by means of a quotation beginning with the phrase, “If the Lord wills” James uses the definite article, **ὁ (ho)**: “the,” followed by the proper noun, **Κύριος (Kúrios)**, referring to God the Father.
3. **NOTE:** When a text contains the Greek proper noun, **Κύριος (Kúrios)**, but without the definite article, then it refers to Jesus Christ, although there are some rare exceptions.
4. The word “wills,” is the present active subjunctive of **θέλω (thélō)**: “to will, want, desire.” “If it is God’s desire” is a good way to translate this in our context.
5. This sentence emphasizes the sovereignty of God. “If it is God’s desire, we will live and prosper.” This is followed by a summary of other duties we will perform for the Lord with the phrase, “and do this and that.”
6. These are illustrations of what the positive-volition believer has in store for him as a motivated, grace-oriented believer who functions inside the divine dynasphere and executes the sophisticated spiritual life.



7. The desires of God have to do with the principle that God the Father has been eternally aware of all that occurs throughout history. He is never caught off guard, and there is nothing about which He is unaware. Thus, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by the divine decree.
8. This means that God has integrity and thus maintains order in the universe. He has immutable standards that are designed to provide order for all time if His standards are followed.
9. That they are not followed is proof positive that the perfect environment established in Eden was lost because the free-will of man chose to violate divine standards.
10. God's standards are immutable, thus, violation of any one of them results in divine punishment, which entered the human race with the Fall of man.
11. Therefore, when believers opt for human viewpoint, human good, and evil, then to that degree peace, order, and prosperity gradually transforms the Zeitgeist so that disorder impacts and prevails for everyone.
12. History's first rebellion happened in Eden when Adam violated the divine command to not eat the forbidden fruit. His doing so resulted in the Fall of man. We recently studied the rebellion which occurred in the priest nation, Northern Kingdom, during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. The rebellion presently threatening the downfall of client nation America is led by a host of ham actors repeating their lines, but whose strings are being pulled by those monied rebels who oppose the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America, the Bill of Rights, and subsequent Amendments.
13. Bottom Line: Every thought, decision, and action committed by Homo sapiens were eternally known by God. Therefore, the phrase, "If the Lord wills," refers to the divine decree and "If the Lord desires," is a good translation for this context.
14. This emphasizes the divine decree. God's decree advises against these two men thinking well of their plan and therefore intend to execute.
15. Therefore, God, through James, advises the men with grace orientation to then decide, "we will live and also do this or that."
16. James gives great advice to these men by reminding them of the divine decree and our place in that decree. With arrogance they are not qualified to make choices without consultation with divine viewpoint.
17. They are not enabled to make good choices when they function outside the divine dynasphere, most assuredly while in reversionism. This failure is why their first three assertions are not absolutes in verse 13, but guesswork.