

This brings us to verse 15 and the good advice about what they ought to say. Yet, what they ought to say was not resident in their inventory of ideas.

Principle: If you do not have resident divine guidance from an inventory of biblical absolutes, then your ability to make good decisions from a position of biblical power is unavailable.

This brings us to:

James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “ἴf [εἰάν (eán)] the Lord wills [aorist active subjunctive of θέλω (thélō): “to desire, to intend, to design, to decree] , we will live and also do this or that.” (NASB)

1. The phrase, “If the Lord wills” refers to two doctrines: **(1)** The Divine Decree and **(2)** Divine Guidance. The believer’s ability to make good decisions from a position of strength depends entirely on his knowledge, recall, facilitation, and application of Bible doctrine.
2. The two men in context have cooked up an idea to “make a profit” in free enterprise, but without any divine guidance and the strategy they concoct is based on loosely conceived ideas minus absolutes.
3. What they do not consider is divine approval. The strategy they concocted in James 4, verse 13, is haram-sacrum: irresponsible, disorganized, and reckless.
4. They are free to execute their ill-conceived plan, but it is not one God would support. Therefore, James suggests they ought to consider asking if the Lord wills—would He desire, intend, design, or decree such a plan as theirs?
5. The situation concocted by these men has not resulted in them considering several doctrines. They have not considered whether their idea, as nebulous as it is, is contained in God’s Divine Decree or the Doctrine of Divine Guidance. Have they even given any thought to their own soul?
6. The human soul is imputed to the biological life of each individual at physical birth and includes the following essence:
 1. **Self-consciousness:** Man is aware of his own existence and is able to relate to both animate life and inanimate life (Acts 20:9–12).
 2. **Mentality:** Self-consciousness requires the thinking part of the human soul and is made up of two parts: **(1)** the mind: recollection, memory, feeling, perception, thinking, willing, and reasoning and **(2)** the heart: frame of reference, memory, vocabulary, categories, norms and standards, and application. (Matthew 22:37)

3. **Volition:** Man has the option to be positive or negative toward anything in life. Free will refers to the sovereignty of humans to make choices that are not determined by prior causes or by divine intervention. Therefore, human volition in the soul is independent and the central element in resolving the angelic conflict before the Divine Court of Appeals. (Galatians 3:26)
4. **Conscience.** This is the police department of the soul which evaluates information presently contained in the inventory of his soul's norms and standards. (Luke 24:16)

NOTE: Emotion is not part of soul essence but the result of the function of the human soul. The soul can produce good or bad emotions, the former from the stream of consciousness or the latter from the sin nature.

7. It is from the believer's soul essence that he is able, through spiritual growth, to develop a number of doctrines with which volition can apply. It is a slow process at first, but over time, the Holy Spirit will increase your inventory of divine guidance to consult for application.
8. This is the accumulation of divine guidance that may be referred to as the will of God or that which He has decreed. Here are passages that illustrate this:

Isaiah 58:11 The Lord will continually lead you; He will feed you even in parched regions. He will give you renewed strength, and you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring that continually produces water. (NET)

Proverbs 3:1 My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments,

v. 2 for they will provide a long and full life, and they will add well-being to you.

v. 3 Do not let truth [אֱמֶת ('emeth)] and mercy [חֶסֶד (*cheseth*): faithfulness] leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. (NET)

9. In verse 15, we have noted the phrase, "If the Lord has decreed, then we shall live ...," the future active indicative of ζάω (*záo*). The future tense is prophetic in the sense that, "If the Lord so decrees, then we shall remain alive."
10. This is followed by one of two things suggested and introduced by the future active indicative of the verb, ποιέω (*poiéō*): "do." What they will do in the future is not specified, just actions described as "this" or "that."

