

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 (poiéo): "do." What they will do in the future is not specified, just actions described as "this" or "that."



11. “This” is the object of the future active indicative of **ποιέω (poiéō)**: “do”

James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “**If** [**ἐάν (eán)**] **the Lord has decreed** [**aoist active subjunctive of θέλω (thélō)**: “to desire, to intend, to design, to decree], **we shall both live** [**gnomic aorist future active indicative of ζάω (záō)**: **prophetic**] **and in the future accomplish this** [**gnomic aorist future active indicative of ποιέω (poiéō)**: **prophetic**] **or accomplish that** [**ἐκεῖνος (ekeínos)**: one far away] **as mature believers.” (EXT)**

Principles on the Greek future tense in James 4:15:

1. The Greek future tense is primarily an indicative tense referring to reality so that the element of time in the future is emphasized.
2. The future also signifies the character of a verbal idea, but instead of presenting progress as the leading idea, it presents the general significance as being indefinite.
3. All future tenses are not as simple as the future tense in English which signifies something that will occur in the future often indicated by the word, “shall.”
4. In the Greek language, the future tense originates from the aorist subjunctive. Therefore, the force of the aorist subjunctive in Greek moves into the future tense and survives there.
5. This means we have a problem every time we come to a future tense in the Greek New Testament.
6. The aorist tense indicates a narrative event in past time. The future tense anticipates an event in future time. This requires us to inquire why this is important.
7. The two verbs we are addressing in James 4:15 are gnomic aorist futures and may be expressed this way:
... we shall both live [**gnomic aorist future active indicative of ζάω (záō)**: **prophetic**] **and in the future accomplish this** [**gnomic aorist future active indicative of ποιέω (poiéō)**: **prophetic**] **or accomplish that ...**
8. The expanded translation of the verse indicates that the believer who advances to spiritual maturity will experience and enjoy the benefits of the super grace life.



James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “If [ἐάν (*eán*)] the Lord has decreed [aorist active subjunctive of θέλω (*thélō*): “to desire, to intend, to design, to decree], we shall both live [gnomic aorist future active indicative of ζάω (*záo*): prophetic] and in the future accomplish this [gnomic aorist future active indicative of ποιέω (*poiéō*): prophetic] or accomplish that [ἐκεῖνος (*ekeínos*): one far away] as mature believers.” (EXT)

Details on the Super Grace Life: God’s Decree and the Believer’s Advance

1. God’s omnipotence knows all that is knowable from eternity past. He knows every person that places his personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life and all those who do not.
2. Believers have the opportunity to grow in grace and enjoy the earthly benefits of the sophisticated spiritual life—some advance partially, others fully, and some not much at all, yet all are saved.
3. In verse 15, James is emphasizing that the benefits of the super grace life are available to every believer, but each person must grow in grace to every level of the spiritual advance to enjoy the benefits available to those in spiritual maturity.
4. Therefore, the believer’s advance in the spiritual life is made possible by the grace of God. The benefits are available but contingent upon the believer’s advance in time.
5. Therefore, the sophisticated life is the product of God’s grace provision in concert with the believer’s advance in time. Doctrine is available. The Word is communicated by prepared pastors. Those who avail themselves to that system of teaching will grow in grace if positive. The advance to super grace results in fabulous blessings in time and eternity.
6. The blessings are available to every believer but only those who make the spiritual advance accrue the privileges associated with spiritual maturity.
7. However, many believers get to the point of salvation by grace but instead of the advance they opt for the lie and enter into the various stages of reversionism.
8. It is true that a reversionist can recover by confessing his sins and returning to serious study of Scripture under the teaching ministry of a qualified pastor-teacher and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
9. Those who do not break free from reversionism’s downward spiral are destined to spend a great deal of time chopping cotton in the Millennial Kingdom’s back forty.



10. The opportunity for the spiritual environment and advance for every believer is available simply by making the decision to go positive, get doctrine in his soul, and grow in grace.

11. Those who opt out of this grace provision are illustrated by the two men that James describes in:

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)

12. This is the spiritual condition of those believers who are brought to task by James in his Letter. They are challenged to stop reverse process reversionism as a means of crawling out the chaos their volitional decisions have taken them in verse 15:

James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “If [ἐάν (*eán*)] the Lord has decreed [aorist active subjunctive of θέλω (*thélō*): “to desire, to intend, to design, to decree], we shall both live [gnomic aorist future active indicative of ζάω (*záo*): prophetic] and in the future accomplish this [gnomic aorist future active indicative of ποιέω (*poiéō*): prophetic] or accomplish that [ἐκεῖνος (*ekeínos*): one far away] as mature believers.” (EXT)

13. These two men are among those who simply cannot extract themselves from the throes of cosmic addictions associated with reversionism. Yet verse 15 gives clear advice on how they could begin the process of reversion recovery.

14. The current spiritual situation in Jerusalem in general and at James’s church in particular remain status quo in the souls of those with locked-in reversionism, a summation that James address in his conclusion of James: Chapter Four, beginning with verse 16:

James 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. (NASB)

1. This is the option the reversionistic believer choses to pursue. The situation is addressed in the two closing verses. In verse 16, it is locked–in arrogance while in verse 17 it is the problem of negative volition.
2. Verse 16 begins with the adversative use of the particle **δέ** (*dé*), which sets up a contrast between reversion recovery, noted in verse 15, and the negative mentality of the reversionist.
3. This reversionistic attitude is described by negative-volition production and mental-attitude sins.