

1. These two men have done no research to discover when to leave, what city to visit, and how long they will stay in town, but are confident they will engage in free enterprise and make a profit.

2. James intervenes with a reality check 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)

3. James gets their attention with an ellipsis, indicated grammatically by three dots: ... and defined as, “the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete.”¹

4. The critical thing missing in these men’s plan is certainty. They have a plan but they do not have the knowledge required to execute it and James points this out to them with his ellipsis.

5. The reason they do not understand what kind of life is ahead for them “tomorrow!” Why? Because they cannot look into the future. Every minute of every day no one has the ability to have absolute knowledge of what is going to happen tomorrow.

6. God has omniscience and we have just noted some critical aspects of His complete knowledge of the future while we are left with an ellipsis. It is because of this that James follows with a piece of good advice in:

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

1. In this context, the gnostic aorist refers to eternity past, when God set up a plan for their lives. The aorist tense reminds us that billions of years ago, God knew every idea we would ever have, and provided for it, or not.

2. This means God anticipated a request in eternity past and incorporated His answer into the decree. However, in this context the “if clause” is associated with potentiality: “If the Lord wills.” Does the Lord desire to accommodate these two men or does He not intend to do so?

3. The two men have displayed by their actions and they have not sought divine support for their plan, therefore, the subjunctive mood puts the divine response up in the air, “Does He desire or intend to accommodate their plan?”

¹ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2014), s.v. “ellipsis.”

4. This places the Lord's response squarely into the divine decree for divine approval or disapproval. These two men do not have the power to look into the future and make a decision based on assumed divine approval.
5. God does not work this way. These men's rationale must be based on their personal inculcation of biblical principles, guidelines, and doctrines from which to draw a conclusion that their plan is well thought-out.
6. **PRINCIPLE:** In human history, the sovereignty and God and the Free Will of man coexist by divine decree.
7. God's desire, intention, and design for believers is for their inculcation, retention, facilitation, and application of Bible doctrine. It is from that inventory, and that inventory alone, that the Lord's will is determined.
8. Otherwise, it is guesswork from rationales based on human viewpoint. The verse is clear and must be applied, "If it is God's desire, intention, or design," then move forward with your rationale.
9. James has set in place a system by which, without the asset of prophecy, a believer can make a good decision from the resource of divine guidance, a doctrine that is not only applicable to this verse but also a major resource to inform believers on how to make good decisions in concert with the desire, intention, and design of divine viewpoint.
10. This leads us to a study of the doctrine of:

Divine Guidance

Introduction:

1. Often you may hear someone ask, or maybe you have been the one to wonder, "What is God's will?"
2. The simple answer is discovered by engaging this process: "Find a church where the pastor teaches Scripture from the original Hebrew and Greek languages.
3. "Concentrate on the subjects taught, retain what you learn in your soul, facilitate the doctrines into paths of least resistance, and apply what you learn to life and circumstances."
4. You have to do this by yourself. Spiritual growth is a walk, not a run. The Word of God is alive and powerful and as such requires strict concentration on your part.
5. However, the primary Teacher is the Holy Spirit whose spiritual link to you is through the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher in a local church.

6. It is through this system that the believer grows in grace, acquires multiple doctrines which are categorized in Scripture, and which ultimately becomes the inventory of immutable truths retained in your soul for recall and application to life and circumstances.

Principles of Divine Guidance:

1. Divine Guidance is the process of systematically acquiring personal knowledge God's guidance for the believer through the biblical system of spiritual growth revealed in Scripture.
2. This process is provided specifically for only those who have placed their personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. This person knows he is delivered from the condemnation of spending eternal life in the Lake of Fire.
3. The principle for divine guidance for salvation, spirituality, and application of the Royal Law is found in:

1 John 3:23 This is His [**God's**] commandment, that we believe in His Son Jesus Christ for salvation [**John 3:16**], for the believer, status quo spirituality [**Ephesians 5:18b**], and application of the Royal Law [**Leviticus 19:18 cf. James 2:8 et. al.²**].

4. The word, "will," is applied to three categories of individuals: (1) The sovereign will of God, (2) Angels, elect and fallen), and (3) Homo sapiens.
5. Jesus Christ in His true humanity had free will:

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me;

v. 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.

v. 7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.'"

No volition among Homo sapiens would imply no volition in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

² The Royal Law expands this Levitical commandment in numerous passages of the New Testament: Matthew 19:19; 22:39-40; Mark 12:31; John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 1 John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11; and 2 John 5-6, plus our passage in James 2:8. Eleven books; 7 writers. Counting Leviticus 19:18 as the original, it is cited 26 times in Scripture.