

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 of 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.



The foundational principle of divine guidance, is based on the fact that man possesses free will from the volition of his soul:

free will *n*: freedom of human beings to make choices that are not determined by prior causes or by divine intervention.³

The basic principle of divine guidance is based on the fact that man possesses volition of the soul as free will.

6. The will of God via the human race:

God's directive will is the same as the desire of God. His directives are commands and prohibitions: "Do this; do not do that."

God's permissive will is what God allows to happen because He has given free will to man.

God's overruling will is the principle that Jesus Christ controls history.

7. Mandates of Divine Guidance:

Submit to the will of God by being filled with the Holy Spirit to empower obedience to God's will:

Ephesians 5:18b ... be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Know the will of God by accumulating Bible doctrine in the *kardia*:

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Grow in the will of God by advancing to spiritual maturity in order to execute His will to the maximum:

2 Peter 3:18 Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

8. The will of God for believers:

Viewpoint will of God: What does He want me to think?

Operational will of God: What does He want me to do?

Geographical will of God: Where does He want me to be?

³ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass., 2014), s.v. "free will."



Conclusion:

In our context in James 4:15, is it God’s “desire, intention, or design” for these two men to engage in free enterprise “halfcocked”? Here are two dictionary definitions of the term:

Halfcocked. adjective. Informal. Inadequately or poorly prepared: a halfcocked plan to buy out the company.⁴ Half cocked. adverb. Prematurely; unprepared: not going into this half cocked.⁵

The advice James suggests to these two men is for them to consider what God recommends from His divine omniscience. He would recommend that they consult His divine guidance.

Divine guidance is available only through Bible study. Scripture provides divine guidance through the teaching ministry of a pastor-teacher and precisely from the one presently available to them, namely James, the half-brother of Jesus, located in Jerusalem.

From his teaching ministry, they would gradually acquire an inventory of doctrinal absolutes in the 11 categories of Systematic Theology that would provide them with the divine guidance they need to make good decisions from a position of power.

Presently, they are not capable of making good decisions based on divine guidance. Their inventory for decision-making is strictly human viewpoint which does not even provide them solid guidance from human rationales:

James 4:13 Come now, you reversionists who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, and shall work in that place about a year, we shall engage in free enterprise and make a profit.” (EXT)

James makes the issue clear by insisting they are going off halfcocked 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)

(End JAS4-66.Rev. See JAS4-67.Rev for continuation of study at p. 661.)

⁴ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, fifth ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2016), s.v. “halfcocked.”

⁵ *American Slang*, ed. Robert L. Chapman (St. Louis: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), s.v. “half cocked.”

