

# If God Permits

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## Introduction

Planning is important, but let us acknowledge our dependence upon God (Ps. 37:23-26; Prov. 16:1, 9).

*Psalm 37:23-26 ... 23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, And He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. 25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread. 26 All day long he is gracious and lends, And his descendants are a blessing. (NASB95)*

*Proverbs 16:1 ... 1 The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. (NASB95)*

*Proverbs 16:9 ... 9 The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps. (NASB95)*

Accordingly, let us consider various passages containing the expressions “if the Lord wills” or “if God permits.”

## Association

God desires that we maintain close association with fellow Christians (Ps. 133:1-3; Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 10:23-25).

*Psalm 133:1-3 ... 1 A Song of Ascents, of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron’s beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing—life forever. (NASB95)*

*Ephesians 4:1-3 ... 1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 10:23-25 ... 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some,*

*but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*  
(NASB95)

However, such circumstances are dependent upon the will of God. Consider Paul's relationship with the Ephesians (Acts 18:18-21; 19:1-10), the Romans (Rom. 1:8-15; 15:30-33; Acts 28:16, 30-31), and the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:14-21; 16:5-14).

*Acts 18:18-21 ... 18 Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. 19 **They came to Ephesus**, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, 21 but taking leave of them and saying, **"I will return to you again if God wills,"** he set sail from Ephesus. (NASB95)*

*Acts 19:1-10 ... 1 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. 2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. 7 There were in all about twelve men. 8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (NASB95)*

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*Romans 1:8-15 ... 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. 9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly **I make mention of you, 10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.** 11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (NASB95)*

*Romans 15:30-33 ... 30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, 31 that I may*

be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; 32 **so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.** 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (NASB95)

Acts 28:16 ... 16 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. (NASB95)

Acts 28:30-31 ... 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered. (NASB95)

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1 Corinthians 4:14-21 ... 14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church. 18 Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 **But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power.** 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. 21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness? (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 16:5-14 ... 5 But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; 6 and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. 7 **For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.** 8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; 9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. 11 So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren. 12 But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity. 13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love. (NASB95)

## **Growth**

God desires that we grow in our faith and discipleship (Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17-18).

Ephesians 4:14-16 ... 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in

*all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (NASB95)*

*1 Peter 2:1-3 ... 1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (NASB95)*

*2 Peter 3:17-18 ... 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (NASB95)*

However, such circumstances are dependent upon the will of God (Heb. 6:1-8).

*Hebrews 6:1-8 ... 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 **And this we will do, if God permits.** 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. 7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. (NASB95)*

## **Commerce**

God desires that we labor so as to provide for our own (Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-12).

*Ephesians 4:28 ... 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. (NASB95)*

*1 Thessalonians 4:11 ... 11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, (NASB95)*

*2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 ... 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. (NASB95)*

However, such circumstances are dependent upon the will of God (James 4:13-17).

*James 4:13-17 ... 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.**" 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (NASB95)*

## **Suffering**

God desires that we face and overcome adversity (Acts 14:21-22; 1 Thess. 3:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:10-12).

*Acts 14:21-22 ... 21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (NASB95)*

*1 Thessalonians 3:1-3 ... 1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3 so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. (NASB95)*

*2 Timothy 3:10-12 ... 10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (NASB95)*

However, such circumstances are dependent upon the will of God (1 Pet. 3:13-18).

*1 Peter 3:13-18 ... 13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 17 **For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.** 18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; (NASB95)*

## **Conclusion**

Boast not about tomorrow, for we do not know what the day may bring forth (Prov. 27:1; Luke 12:13-21).

*Proverbs 27:1 ... 1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth. (NASB95)*

*Luke 12:13-21 ... 13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (NASB95)*

Time is fleeting (Psalm 39:5; 144:4); eternity is forever (Rev. 20:10-15; 22:1-5).

*Psalm 39:5 ... 5 "Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah. (NASB95)*

*Psalm 144:4 ... 4 Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow. (NASB95)*

*Revelation 20:10-15 ... 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (NASB95)*

*Revelation 22:1-5 ... 1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no*

*longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (NASB95)*

Let us, therefore, make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (Rom. 13:11-14).

*Romans 13:11-14 ... 11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (NASB95)*

Are you prepared to meet God (Amos 4:6-13; 2 Cor. 6:1-2)?

*Amos 4:6-13 ... 6 “But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities And lack of bread in all your places, Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the Lord. 7 “Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While there were still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up. 8 “So two or three cities would stagger to another city to drink water, But would not be satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the Lord. 9 “I smote you with scorching wind and mildew; And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the Lord. 10 “I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the Lord. 11 “I overthrew you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze; Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the Lord. 12 “Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” 13 For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness And treads on the high places of the earth, The Lord God of hosts is His name. (NASB95)*

*2 Corinthians 6:1-2 ... 1 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— 2 for He says, “At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you.” Behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”— (NASB95)*