

"IF"

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"IF"

You can't have LIFE without living the "Ifs" in the middle!

- ❖ You've heard that "good things come in small packages". Well in this case, it is a two-letter word that packs a powerful punch!
 - ❖ Reading and studying God's word lately, I kept seeing the word "IF".
 - ❖ No wonder, it is in the Bible over 1,600 times!
 - ❖ The Bible definition of IF= condition
 - ❖ Greek definition of IF= a wish
- Put them together "A wish with a condition"
- ❖ I began searching and quickly realized "IF" is one of the most important words in the Bible..would you agree?
 - ❖ I have to share though, that "IF" comes with applications and conditions involving opportunities, punishment, and blessings.
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- ❖ "IF" is a word a child learns quickly, then a teenager, then as adults... have you ever heard...

...if we eat your veggies, we can have cake
...if we do your homework, we can play outside
...if we do your chores, we can use the car
...if we eat right, we will feel better

- ❖ We understand "if" in these ways of life so why not in our faith?
- ❖ "IF" is crucial in the Bible because it states conditions we should all be aware of and pay attention to!!

- ❖ IF is a word that introduces conditions or circumstances upon which certain consequences follow ...some good some bad.
 - ❖ Have we overlooked the word "IF"? It is a little big word...little because only two letters...big in its importance.
 - ❖ This two letter word never stands alone.
 - ❖ Jesus always put "if" on our side...if man does... God will.
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- ❖ Let us look at 1 John 1:6-9
 - ❖ NIV—"IF we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But IF we walk in the light, as He is the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. IF we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. IF we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
 - ❖ THE MESSAGE says IF we claim to be Christian and continue to practice sin we are lying through our teeth. IF we admit our sins, He will cleanse us.
 - ❖ Why do we still have the impulse to sin? We live in a flesh suit. IF we have accepted Christ as our Savior, His presence is within us. The very power, Holy Spirit, that enabled Jesus to resist all temptations lives in us.
 - ❖ Roman 8:13 tells us if we live according to the flesh, sin nature will take over!
 - ❖ If you read Paul's letters to the churches in the N.T....according to Paul if we don't keep at it, keep going, keep walking, keep repenting and keep believing then we were never really saved.
 - ❖ Galatians 6:9 has been my life verse since I received a serve out on a life sentence."Let us not become weary in doing well, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest IF we do not give up". In other words, don't get tired of doing what is right because God promises that whatever we do today we will be rewarded in the future!
 - ❖ If we dare to believe and don't get our miracle, God has a greater one planned. Stay tuned, I could have given up after

the parole board told me to die here. I continue to believe even after 38 years 7 months and 12 days! You inspire me and I know God wanted to perform a miracle on my heart and mind before He deals with my circumstances and it may be the same for you so don't miss the "Ifs" or give up.

- ❖ Romans 4:21...Do we believe God can deliver? IF we do then we must put our trust in Him regardless how our circumstances look. Good news, God is not bound by our lack of faith or being a coward. He desires to use us, but IF we fail to trust Him, He will use someone else. There is no sin in doubt or fear. There is sin in how we respond. We can choose courage and trust God or be spineless and keep feeding our self centered desires.
- ❖ Romans 2: 5-6 and other places , we learn God will reward believers for Spirit empowered works and punish unbelievers for flesh driven deeds. *What does that mean? Ser?*
- ❖ Do we admit our sins? Do we ever use these excuses?
 - Oh sure I don't always do right but I am pretty good
 - I' am just as good as the next person, etcThese may sound good but they sound hollow to God. IF we love God, sin effects us and convicts us until we are to the point of deep sorrow over our sins and being honest about them.

Confessing our sins first to God and then to each other allows faith to have its full effect on our lives, frees us from self delusions and frustration.
- ❖ Hell's misery is deep but not as deep a God's love. IF you are saved, this causes rejoicing. IF we understand hell at all, it will make us double our efforts to have a relationship with God.
- ❖ IF God used Moses and called him through a burning bush...that doesn't mean we sit by a bush outside waiting to hear from God. *That's hilarious*

- ✦ ❖ **God put Jonah in a fish to get his attention...but we don't hold praise and worship at Sea World.**
- ❖ **I don't believe God can touch what we cover up, or heal what we conceal.**
- ❖ **2 Corinthians 1:12, Acts 24:16, 1 Timothy 1:18-20..are scriptures about conscience. When we are tempted to do wrong, do we listen to our conscience or just ignore it and keep going? We all have one! Conscience is a gift from God we should care for and if we pay attention it will protect us.**
- ❖ **We face decision every day that involve our conscience, red flags when we are about to do wrong. IF we ignore it, like taking a knife and dulling the blades until it is no good. Our conscience will become ineffective. IF we disregard it too many time, just as our Holy Spirit promptings, we make a total wreck of our lives which means a disaster of a Christian life.**

- ❖ **Colossians 3:13"Get along with each other and forgive each other. IF someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you.**

- ❖ **Chap prays for peace, unity, safety many times to start our work days. Let me remind us today, it doesn't start with judging others but by each person examining ourselves.**

- ❖ **WE all need to do a gut level, honest check on our lives often. We can't say sin is no big deal , or it happened a long time ago, or it was a stage I was going through, or everybody does it...IF we want a fresh start, don't keep making excuses..REPENT and mean it. I can tell you it is real. Some have already died drug dealers, died in perversion, died liars, cheaters, died in witchcraft, sorcery, etc. If we don't get free inside, we will come back not only**

to here but the same sins!! Decide now that you hate sin and that sin definitely hates you back!!!

Faith without works is dead

❖ James 2:26 "If you do nothing, your faith is dead". This is not just talking about works but also maturing in our walk with Christ in obedience.

true!

❖ THE MESSAGE---seamless unity of believing and doing—is it what counted with God? The very moment you separate body and spirit, you end up with a corpse. Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse!

❖ Anyone who sets himself up as "religious" by talking a good game is self deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air."

❖ Faith is NOT believing God will do what we want. Faith is believing God will do what is right!!!...write a letter, ask forgiveness, be baptized, feed someone who is hungry, pray, read the Word, even with others...

❖ God will respond to this because He doesn't reject a genuine gesture and work of faith.

❖ 2 Corinthians 5:17...IF anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here."

❖ Are we there? IF we are in Christ and fall do we dismiss it, deny it, lie about it, or deal with it to become new? We need to agree with God that our acts are wrong. WE can't tell God one thing and do another.

❖ Think of it this way...sins put us in a physical and emotional prison, locked us behind fences, and shackled us to misery. Jesus gave His life to free us so we spit on Him when we continue to practice sin. We all fall short (Rom

3:23) but there is a difference in making a mistake, falling short and deliberately choosing to stay in sin.

❖ There is a big difference in living for Christ and living for ourselves. The journey of faith is a sign of maturity and genuine effort. Being power hungry, deceitful, hustling, using others is sinful and definitely not a journey of faith!!!

❖ I read this in a pamphlet...If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent an educator. If our greatest need technology, He would have sent a scientist. If our greatest need money, He would have sent an accountant. BUT our need is forgiveness, love, peace, grace so God send a Savior!!! Do you really know Him or have a relationship with Him?

❖ Do you love God? John 14:23 "If people love me, they will obey my teachings." Are we lying, cheating, practicing adultery, that is not love or obedience.

❖ I look in the mirror and I see a face of a woman who failed...failed God again..I promised I wouldn't but I did. I was quiet when I should have been bold. I took a seat when I should have taken a stand.

❖ If we give God more, what would happen? If we really got serious about being involved in the right path, what would it look like.

❖ Let me read you a true story....check this out...

There was a man leaving his office and decided to take a shortcut through a park to go home after work in New Jersey. While he was walking, he heard a woman's voice screaming from the bushes. As he got closer, he could see the bushes shaking but the voice

was getting faint. He thought to himself.. "Do I want to get involved in this?" as he was about to turn around and walk away, he saw the bushes shake again and heard another scream. He shouted, "Do you need help? What is going on? Are you alright?" Suddenly he heard a man grunt and saw him running away with pants hanging low. He went around to the other side of the bushes and told the woman the man left and she was now safe. From the bushes he heard, "Dad is that you? Dad are you there?" It was this man's own daughter about to get raped if he had not responded and gotten involved.

- ❖ For example, if you are upset or angry here.... *Love this!*
 - On one side stands the crowd cheering you on to fight
 - On the other side a child of God trying to calm you down
 - The crowd offers acceptance if you do it
 - Jesus offers a cross
 - The crowd offers flesh, flack
 - Jesus faith
 - Crowd says follow me and fit in
 - Jesus says follow Him and stand out
 - Crowd promises to love and please you
 - Jesus promises to save you!
- ❖ Ephesians 4:23—"IF you haven't been working with the Holy Spirit to break old habits and thought patterns, and form new ones...time to start!
- ❖ I Peter 4:12-13—Romans 5:3-5---trials come and go, and IF we don't develop a godly character, we won't get the promotion God has planned for our life.
- ❖ Romans 14:13—"If we allow other people to become our law, thinking we must be like them, do like them...it steals our freedom.
- ❖ Don't feel alone in doing things wrong, we all fall short (Romans 3:23). We will make mistakes and get outside God's will. IF we are truly in Christ we know immediately we fell.
- ❖ IF we sin, does that mean we are not born again in Christ?

NO...God sees and understand our struggle with sin. He knows we can't mature over night yet His word says we should grow in the will of God and our lives should show changes.

❖ **Read I John 3:9-10**

❖ **MESSAGE "People conceived and brought into a life by God don't make a practice of sin. How could they? God's seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It is not in the nature of the God born to practice and parade sin. Here is how you tell the difference between God's children and devil's children...the one who won't practice righteous ways isn't from God, nor is the one who won't love brother or sister...simple test.**

❖ **Are we acting cool, parading our sin on the yard, around the ball field, showing people lack of morals, character, not just making mistakes but choosing on purpose to show a life of sin every day?**

❖ **Many ask "if you blasphemy the Holy Spirit?"...Matthew 12:31-32 This is where Jesus gave us a serious warning about being hard-hearted and it puts us on the brink of disaster. This is an ongoing attitude, a stubborn way of life when we keep resisting and rejecting and insulting God's spirit. That is what makes it an eternal sin. Also read Mark 3:29**

* ❖ **God is often more patient with us than we are with ourselves. We question..**

IF we sin are we born again?

IF we sin are we Christian?

IF we have old desires are we a new creation?

❖ **If we are anxious or worry about this, we read Philipians 1:6—"God began a good work in you, and will continue until it is finished when Jesus comes IF we let Him."**

❖ **I shared this in our morning circle one morning. The German word for worry means "to struggle". The Greek word for worry means "to divide the mind". So this means worry is a noose around our necks that distracts us and robs our joy.**

- ❖ IF there is unconfessed sin, we need to say it, get up, get on in faith and not use it as an excuse to stay in sin.
- ❖ If we are serious about our faith, we must also care about how our actions affect others. However, Jesus is Lord of our life IF pleasing Him is more important than pleasing others
Romans 14:7-12, 15:2

❖ If there is no God, why hasn't man been able to destroy the Bible? If there is no God, why is the Bible the all time bestselling book? The answer is in Psalm 119:89 "What You say goes God, and stays as permanent as the heavens. Your truth never goes out of fashion".

- ❖ I can't cover all 1, 600+ IFS in the Bible
- ❖ What if we could own a 3lb computer that contained a hundred trillion bits of information which = 20 million books...would we buy it? We already have one and it is not secured tablet...it is our brain if we use it!
- ❖ Let's do our IFS!!! I challenge us to find all the ifs, see how many we know, how many we care about, how many we obey!
- ❖ If there are 1000 steps in between us and God, He will take the 999 steps toward us...the final step is up to us. His goal is not necessarily our happiness but to make us His. His goal is not to give us all we want but what we need. Allow our circumstances and weaknesses to do the job God has sent them to do---humble us!!!

Christ is on the mic calling us not to just go through the motions of trust and faith in Him, but to have a genuine faith that is about destroying idols and one that makes a difference. People leave the church because we are not being real!!!! Some are playing with God and church!!!! God wants a generation ready to hear Him, move and obey. Put our idols away and move toward righteousness! The bushes are shaking, will you get involved? God is screaming at us to grow and help Him build the kingdom. Can we hear the bushes or

might just be
saying
or if you
own

are we so confused because we don't have our own faith in Christ where it needs to be? Do we have idols that mean more to us than Christ on the mic? The bushes are shaking...the bushes are shaking!!!

Where are you women of courage?

Where are you real and restored?

Where are you women of faith?

Who will be a light to others?

Who will love God...love others?

Who will obey the "IFS"?

Altar call

Father God...convict us, correct us, refresh us, direct us through the narrow path that leads to life. I ask you to make us a generation that is real, relevant, and respectful of Your love and sacrifice. I pray You help us focus on living the gospel rather than lip service. We love You Lord, help us live like we do. Give us the desire for Your word. When we feel anxious turn us to a verse. When we are fearful help us ask for protection. When we are weak to ~~per~~ *peer* pressure give us strength. Make Your words close to us and encourage and direct us.

~~I pray we keep searching for IF we love God we will. I pray we are a generation that is real, relevant and respectful. I pray we are focused on living the gospel rather than lip service.~~