

# THE BIG FAT “”

## Session 2, If Series

**huge**

The reason this word is so **huge** even though it has only two letters is because of the conditional nature of its meaning.

- “IF” is a conditional word that leaves room for doubt.
- “IF” is a conditional word that gives choice.

The word “IF” is also at the beginning and middle of a whole bunch of statements that you and I know by heart. Let’s see if you know the ends of these statements... call them out if you know them...Let’s Go:

- *If it ain’t broke... **don’t fix it!***
- *If at first you don’t succeed... **try, try again.***
- *If it doesn’t fit... **you must acquit.***
- *Walt Disney said, If you can dream it... **you can do it.***
- *If the shoe fits... **wear it.***
- *If you are happy and you know it... **clap your hands.***

You see the word “IF” is a small word, but can carry with it a pretty hefty meaning in whatever statement we find it. It is a conditional word. It is a word that calls into question everything that comes after the little word or what is before it.

**“If it weren’t for Christians, I would be a Christian.”** Mahatma Gandhi

While Gandhi was a practicing Hindu, Christianity intrigued him. In his reading of the Gospels, Gandhi was impressed by Jesus whom Christians worshiped and followed. He wanted to know more about this Jesus that Christians referred to as “the Christ, the Messiah.” **If Christianity intrigued him, why would Gandhi make a statement such as above?**

*He went to a Christian church and found them to be unfriendly and very racist!*

In his autobiography, Gandhi writes that, “... morality is the basis of things and that truth is the substance of all morality.” He believed that, “A virtue achieves its potential only in its application and it ceases to have any use if it serves no purpose in daily life.” So, for Gandhi, it was imperative that spiritual truths are lived in one’s daily life.

**There are many promises God has for us in the Word of God. However, there are some conditional “Ifs” Between Us and Our Promise!**

**NOTE:** If we’ve been standing on the Word of God for finances, healing, a family relationship—or anything else—but haven’t seen a manifestation, there might be a very good reason.

- ***You see, the love of God is unconditional, but His promises are not.***
- ***Even salvation is attached to a prerequisite—an “if”—***

✓ *For instance, Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (NKJV).*

***So, when we feel like we’re in a spiritual stalemate, we need to go to the Word of God and find the “if” that leads to our promise.***

***Let’s Try this:***

***Go with an open heart, willing to change, willing to be obedient, and willing to be real about where we might be missing it.***

***Then we will probably see why our request has been on hold for some time now.***

**In the next few lessons concerning the “Ifs” in the Bible, we are going to look at promises God has given to us...if we do certain things.** Yes, there is a condition...a requirement before the promise is fulfilled.

***God’s grace is sufficient... “YES”...but, we must accept the grace offered.***

***As we look at Scriptures pertaining to specific promises, let’s spend some time meditating on each one.***

***Then...let’s ask the Lord to give us revelation (spiritual illumination) as to how we might need to make an adjustment in order to fulfill our part of the promise.***

***GOD WILL COME THROUGH...WILL WE?***

## **The Promise of Fellowship with Him**

1. *"You are My friends **if** you do whatever I command you." (John 15:14)*
2. *"**If** you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)*
3. *"**If** we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy 2:12)*
4. *"**If** we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)*
5. *"**If** you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25)*
6. *"We know Him, **if** we keep His commandments." (1 John 2:3)*
7. *"**If** we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us." (1 John 4:12)*

**Notice that most of the "ifs" are centered around obedience to God's Word—not just some of His commands—all of them. Any area of disobedience—unforgiveness, failing to walk in love, dishonesty, strife, envy—will get in between you and your promise.**

**So, determine to fulfill your end of the deal! Study the "ifs" and take a good, honest look at what you can work to correct. Then, buckle your seat belt because you're about to launch into the promise!**

**Our passage today in Philippians 2 starts with four (4) "IF" statements which get our attention right away.**

***Philippians 2:1, "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion..."***

**These four "IF" statements seem very significant. The fact that the Apostle Paul repeats "IF" four times tells us that the conditional nature of what we are about to talk about is pretty high.**

- **1<sup>st</sup>, Paul brings to our mind the encouragement that we should have by being united with Christ.** For those who are believers in Jesus Christ, we are encouraged through this life by the presence of Jesus in our lives and by the living out of His commands. When life is horrible, terrible, and just no good, we who are believers have hope and strength to drive

through it all to the other side. Jesus brings us hope. Jesus brings us strength.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 15:4-5, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus."

- **2nd, He brings to our mind the comfort we have in our lives because of the ever-present unconditional love of Christ.** For those of us who are believers in Christ, the cornerstone of our faith is that Jesus Christ loves us. One of the qualities that define our intimate relationship with God is His love for us. Jesus loved us. Jesus, as we will see in a minute in this passage, emptied Himself in Heaven and came to us in a supreme act of love. He lived perfectly for us because He loved us. He died for us because He loved us. All of that was an expression of love that is meant to bring us comfort that we are always perfectly loved by God.
- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> "IF" focuses on fellowship with the Spirit.** We do not realize how fortunate we really are as Christians. We who are believers in Jesus Christ are always connected to God in a way that is brand new in human existence. Before Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, people had to rely on a priest to intercede with God for them. People rarely were connected to God in a spiritual way.

Because of Jesus and our faith in Him, we now have the presence of God inside us as the presence of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-17,26, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. ---"the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

- **The 4<sup>th</sup> and final "IF" focuses on tenderness and compassion in our lives.** We who are believers in Christ should be marked by tenderness and compassion. Why is that? Galatians 5:22-23 came into my mind. You see, for the believer, the presence of the Holy Spirit, our living out of the Bible, and our pursuit of an active authentic relationship with God, all has benefits for us. Our relationship with God changes us. Such a Biblically-based life creates in us godly character. We who are believers understand that anything good in us is prompted by God and given by Him. He molds us to be like Him.

**Philippians 2:2, "Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."**

