

What Comes After IF

by John Isaac Edwards

The word “if” occurs more than 1,500 times throughout the book of God. It may just be the biggest little word in the Bible! God’s blessings have always been conditional. A reading of Deuteronomy 11:27-28 shows this to be the case. Were someone to say to you, “I’ll give you \$50,000 if...” Now you want to know what comes after if, right? **What Comes After IF** helps us appreciate the importance of meeting God’s conditions in order to receive His blessings.

1) **Disciples Indeed, IF Continue.** Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (Jn. 8:31). One must continue in the Lord’s word to truly be His disciple! The Scriptures place a lot of emphasis upon continuing. Paul addressed the Romans, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness...” (Rom. 11:22). Colossians 1:22-23 teaches that one is reconciled to God to be presented “...holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith...” Disciples don’t quit!

2) **Prayers Answered, IF**

Abide. In the abiding chapter of the Bible, Jesus declared, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn. 15:7). Would you like to pray with confidence that your prayers are heard and answered by God Almighty? You can, IF you abide in the Lord and His words abide in you! Are you abiding?

3) **Abide In Lord’s Love, IF Keep Commandments.** How would you like to abide in the love of Christ? The Lord uttered, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn. 15:10). Do you keep the Lord’s commandments as He kept the Father’s commandments? He didn’t pick and choose which commandments to keep or just keep them some of the time, but as He said, “...I do always those things that please him” (Jn. 8:29). Can we say that today? The Lord has always expected His people to keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13). In fact, love for the Lord and commandment-keeping go hand in hand (Jn. 14:15, 21, 23-24; 1 Jn. 2:3).

4) **Saved, IF Keep In**

Memory. The Scriptures affirm that salvation is conditional. Paul wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:1-2). Did you know it is possible to have believed in vain? This wouldn’t be true if once saved, always saved! To keep from believing in vain, one must keep his spiritual memory. This is why so much importance is placed on remembrance (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1). We would do well to take a trip down memory lane from time to time!

5) **Reap, IF Faint Not.** Galatians 6:9 reveals, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” It’s easy to become impatient, get discouraged and become weary. Many give up too soon. Every farmer looks forward to reaping time. He doesn’t plant today and reap today. It takes lots of patience. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience

for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts..." (Jas. 5:7-8). As Paul said to the Thessalonians, "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (2 Th. 3:13).

6) **Never Fall, IF Do.** Did you know it's possible for a child of God to fall? If not, it makes 2 Peter language awfully strange! "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1:10). How would you like for your salvation to be so sure, that you will never fall? You can — IF. What comes after IF? Doing! "These things" are the things discussed in the context as additions to faith. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith..." Then, he lists 7 additions to faith: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. How are you doing with your spiritual arithmetic? Why is it that some Christians fall? Because they didn't do what comes after IF! How about you?

7) **Fellowship And**

Cleansing, IF Walk In Light.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). Light-walking is essential to fellowship with God and His people and sin-cleansing! Have you checked your walk lately?

8) **New Creature, IF In**

Christ. Would you like to have a fresh start? Start anew? Be a new man? The Lord offers this to you through the gospel. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Read Paul's letter to the Ephesians and observe how these folks became a new man. Do you know what made all this possible? "But now in Christ Jesus..." (Eph. 2:13). Now, just how does one get into Christ? "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). This is where we become children of God by faith (Gal. 3:26). This is what the Ephesians did — "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).

Have you been baptized in the name of the Lord?

9) **Forgiveness, IF**

Confess Sins. Sometimes Christians sin. In fact the Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8, 10). Now, how does the child of God go about having his sins forgiven? John penned, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9). God forgives the sins of His children conditionally as we confess our sins. No confession of sins, no forgiveness of sins! Do you have any sins you need to make confession of unto God? As the prodigal who went astray, let's muster the courage to return and say, "Father, I have sinned..." (Lk. 15:21). God is faithful and just to forgive! Are you ready and willing to confess your sins?

Don't be one who comes up short of God's blessings because you didn't know or do what comes after IF!

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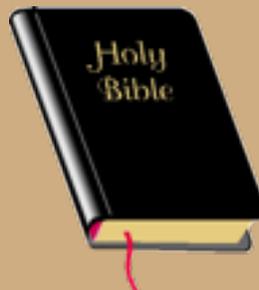
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