

One of the Biggest Words in the Bible

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The longest word I have ever seen or heard is, supercalifragilisticexpialidous. Of course, we know this is not a real word and has no significant meaning. However, as the song suggests, if you say it loud enough, you will always sound precocious. Using big words can make one sound quite intelligent.

In this article, I would like to bring to your attention a very big word. It is a word whose meaning and significance requires a great deal of understanding. It is not a word that is long in letters, being composed of only two. I am speaking of the word “if.”

IF we combine the word “if” with the word “only” they spell regret and dissatisfaction:

“If only I had been smarter.”

“If only I had said, ‘no.’”

“If only I had listened.”

“If only I were stronger.”

“If only I were prettier.”

“If only I had more talent.”

“If only I had more money.”

“If only I had waited.”

The list of “if only” statements could be endless. In this short study we are going to confine our self *only* to the word “if.” We want to notice some ways it is used in the New Testament, and how significant it is to our walk as Christians.

If We Walk in the Light

The apostle John gave us some very important “ifs” to consider.

But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

(1 John 1:7 Emphasis Mine)

IF we want to continue to enjoy the fellowship found in Jesus Christ, and the continual cleansing of our sin, we must walk in the light. Jesus gave us the same kind of “if.”

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine. (John 8:31 Emphasis Mine)

If We Say We Have No Sin

IF we look at the next verse in John’s letter, we find another important “if.”

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8 Emphasis Mine)

It is important that we acknowledge the fact that as Christians we sometimes sin. This is not to say that we are practicing sinners (cf. 1 John 3:4, 9). Rather, it is be reminded of our constant

need of fellowship with God and the blood of His Son. A few verses later, John again emphasizes the point:

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:10 Emphasis Mine)

If We Confess Our Sin

Having encouraged us to admit that we sin, John then comforts us with some more “ifs.”

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 Emphasis Mine)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 John 2:1 Emphasis Mine)

Here are two important “ifs” to know. IF we sin and want to be forgiven, it is important to confess, or acknowledge our sins. This would include the action of repenting of such sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22; 2 Cor. 7:9-10).

If We Truly Love God

IF you were asked, “Do you love God?”, it is likely that you would respond affirmatively. However, John gives us the way to truly know IF our love for God is actually real. Notice carefully what he says, and IF your love for God is true.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:20 Emphasis Mine)

The test to determine IF our love is real is answered in our love for our brethren.

Jesus gave us another way to test our love for God. This too, involves another important “if.”

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:15 Emphasis Mine)

John echoes the words of Jesus in his letters, stating:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. (2 John 6)

If We Pray According to His Will

We all know the importance and blessing of prayer. John gives us a very important “if” relating to our prayers.

*14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if** we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

*15 And **if** we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.(1 John 5:14-15 Emphasis Mine)*

These two “ifs” can greatly increase our confidence in the prayers we offer to God.

The Scriptures contain numerous uses of the word “if.” The word is often used as a condition needed to receive a promise of God (cf. Deut. 28:1, 15; Romans 10:9; Gal. 3:29). It is the need of meeting these conditions that makes this two letter word, one of the biggest words in the Bible.