

“If...”

What’s in a Word?

**A word fitly spoken...
like apples of gold.**

by Mark Householder

Ge. 4:7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Ex. 4:8 "If they will not believe you," God said, "or heed the first sign, they may believe the latter sign.

v9 If they will not believe even these two signs or heed your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it upon the dry ground; and the water which you shall take from the Nile will become blood upon the dry ground."

v10 But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue."

v11 Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

v21 Else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.

Also, and often, with laws:

Ex. 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. He shall make restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

v2 If the stolen beast is found alive in his possession, whether it is an ox or an ass or a sheep, he shall pay double.

Satan attempted to use this structure to lure Jesus into sin. Consider:

Mt. 4:3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

v4 But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

v5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

v6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

v7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

v8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them;

v9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Mt. 11:25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes;

Note: sometimes the "then" part is implied:

Lk. 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

v33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

Yet, we can see that in all these examples the "if" shows a condition which must be met in order for the consequence to occur, be it good (a reward), or bad (punishment).

Consider, then, with me that salvation and the test of Christian character also follow this logical structure:

Ro. 6:5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Ro. 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

v10 But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness.

v11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

v12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--

v13 for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

II Co. 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.

v17 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

And, again, a test of our Christian walk:

I Jn. 1:6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth;

v7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

v8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

v9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

v10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

“Whoever” could be worded “one who” or “if one.” Think on this:

I Jn. 2:4 He who says "I know him" but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

v5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him:

v6 he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

I Jn. 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

v12 No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

v20 If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

This structure can also show hope:

Ro. 8:3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

I Pe. 3:14 But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

II Pe. 1:8 For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Jn. 5:14 And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

I Pe. 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

v15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker;

v16 yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God.

...and rest:

...and a promise of wrath:

He. 3:7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, when you hear his voice,

v8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,

v9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.

v10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways."

v11 As I swore in my wrath, "They shall never enter my rest."

Php. 2:1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,

v2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

...and a clarification of faith:

He. 4:1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it.

v2 For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers.

v3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, "They shall never enter my rest," although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Jas. 2:17 So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

So powerful! So clear! So misunderstood! ☹

I Jn 3:17 But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

v18 Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

v19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts before him

Do you show your love in what you do? If not, then...

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