

“If ...”

Introduction. We are told to obey, and we are comfortable with obeying, as long as certain conditions are met. Jacob is a good example of the thought process that we are going to study today (Genesis 28:20-22). “If” expresses uncertainty and condition. God has clearly expressed His expectations for us, but we want to alter it, many times using the simple word “if”. It will help us to reflect on some common circumstances where people want to change the Bible.

I. *It Is What I Want To Do*

- A. Mankind’s first instinct is to do what they want (Proverbs 16:2).
- B. After seeing the Lord, Paul asked what he should do (Acts 9:6; 26:19).
- C. Jesus was content to do the will of the Father (Matthew 6:10; 26:39).

II. *It Agrees With My Belief*

- A. Some people never receive a love of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).
- B. It does not take long to find disagreeable passages (Ephesians 4:4-6).
- C. A great number of priests cast aside their lifelong beliefs (Acts 6:7).

III. *Someone Else Will*

- A. The Israelites were not to follow a multitude (Exodus 23:2).
- B. Paul was independent and wanted others to be too (Galatians 1:16; 6:5).
- C. Only a few end up finding eternal life (Matthew 7:13-14).

IV. *It Does Not Require Change*

- A. Repentance means to turn back to God (Acts 3:19).
- B. The Israelites demonstrated the meaning of repentance negatively (Acts 7:39).
- C. There are good illustrations of repentance in Acts 16:14-15, 31-33.

V. *It Does Not Require Too Much*

- A. Jeroboam did not want the people to have to travel to worship (1 Kings 12:28).
- B. The commandments of the Lord are not grievous (1 John 5:3).
- C. Felix wanted a more convenient season for his obedience (Acts 24:25).

VI. *I Can See The Results*

- A. Jonathan was willing to fight the Philistines purely on faith (1 Samuel 14:6).
- B. Light affliction will one day be rewarded by eternal glory (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

C. We are saved by hope in the reality of eternity (Romans 8:24-25).

Conclusion. Benjamin Franklin said that despair ruins some, but presumption ruins many. Setting conditions on our obedience to God can turn us against the truth. This will ultimately cause us to lose our souls! The answer for this is obedience from the heart, willing to put our desires behind Christ (Romans 6:17). The time to start is now, not later. Delay may mean indifference, or possibly even death. Choose the "good part" and obey the gospel today.