

## Elmer Weeks - If

*This transcript was generated automatically. Its accuracy may vary.*

What was that? That was the first day we should say, and now we have the pleasure of having him once again, sir, and he has selected as his topic. It's a small one and I'm sure it's very meaningful as we eventually will find out.

If. If. Brother, please.

Thank you, Brother Hack.

We wish you all a good New Year's morning.

And as our hymn suggested, I'm sure it's all our intention in his coming New year that the Lord has so graciously given unto us that we would strive to become more Christ like indeed that we may be more like our Lord himself, and we thought that being the case, it was the reason that we selected this particular topic. As Brother Hack has said, we've been entitled it. If.

Now we would like to look at this little word if with you because we find that it is very significant. It is a word that is interdispersed throughout God's Word and although it is composed of but two letters, it carries with it the thought that the condition or conditions which follow the word if is often of the utmost importance and must be carried out if the rest of the statement is to be true and is to be lived up to it. Keep reminding us of the conditions that must be continually met if we are to be faithful to the vows of consecration that we have made to the Lord.

We find a nif at the very beginning of our Christian walk.

We read in the words of Revelation chapter 3 and verse 20, behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

We know that this scripture pictures Jesus standing and knocking at the door of our hearts, desiring communion and fellowship with us, and thinking back, do we not all remember the first sweet experience or the beginning of our Christian walk? Do we not all recall the precious fellowship that we had when we opened our hearts to Him?

Can you go back in memory to that first of the many sweet feasts that you had with your Lord? I think we would all say that it was indeed a very wonderful experience, and it happened only because we heeded the two conditions that follow the Word. If we listened to his voice as we heard it through God's Word, and then by faith we opened our hearts to him in obedience to that voice, and in so doing the words of Romans 10:17 were fulfilled. So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

How blessed we are indeed to have this glorious promise of Revelation 3:20 extended to us, and so in this coming year, brethren, let us be very careful that nothing will come into our lives that will ever crowd our Lord out from there.

The apostle John tells us of another if which we find recorded in his gospel, chapter 14, verse 23. There we find Jesus saying these words, if a man loves me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. Let us note again the prominence of that word, if if a man loves me, he will keep my word. We find these words of our

## Elmer Weeks - If

Lord's to be perhaps the most encompassing if in the whole Bible. It carries with it conditions that touch every aspect of our Christian walk from its inception, even unto its end.

And certainly keeping Jesus words, as we have found in our experiences, is a tremendous undertaking. The extent of our love, Jesus says, is gauged by our obedience to his words, and as if to further impress this upon our mind, the apostle John again reminds us in 1 John 2, 3. Hereby do we know that we love him if we keep his commandments. John gives us here a measuring stick.

The graduations are sectioned off in obedience rather than in inches or feet.

And we might look to ourselves occasionally, brethren, and ask ourselves, how well do we measure up to this measuring rod that is inferred in this word, if how faithful, how obedient have we been to his commandments, to his words, to his directions, and to his leadings? Are the words of Matthew 22:37 true in our lives? There we read Jesus words, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Is this really true? And to what extent do we show this love for him in our everyday living?

We look to ourselves and we say, well, how do we know if this is so?

In answering that, we might ask ourselves, is the Lord foremost in my thoughts and in my desires? Does his will come before that of our families, our relatives, and our friends? Does he come before material aspirations and ambitions? Or does our needs for feeling worthwhile, humanly speaking, come before what is in our heart that we know God would have us to do or to be?

Are we content with the perhaps menial, limited status in which the Lord has placed us? Or are we sometimes restless, bored, discontented, so that we seek out something more satisfying to the flesh, the flesh that we have vowed to lay down and sacrifice?

It may be that as we honestly examine and search our hearts, we will find that we are not keeping to the fullest his word, nor are we fulfilling the responsibilities and the obligations of our stewardship, not serving the Lord and the brethren, as we once said that we would.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us in 1 Corinthians 7:24 brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God.

The thought, I believe, is to be content with what we have. The spirit of the age in which we are living is filled with restlessness. Almost everyone is seeking some change in their lives. Contentment should so mark the Christian character amidst the so common discontent as to move him to be satisfied where he is and with what he has and therein should he remain until the Lord indicates the necessity of a change. Only faith in God will guard us against the worldly spirit of discontent and of the incessant striving after something that is new and different.

If we are not faithful in this area of our lives, how can we hope to be faithful then in something greater? Let us ask ourselves often, is God truly first in my life? If we can answer in the affirmative, then we have fulfilled the conditions associated with that word. If we are then keeping this commandment of his and it is thus that we can to that extent know that we love him.

We read in Matthew 22:38 of a second commandment that the Lord left to us that is tied to that with if it reads and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself love your neighbor as you love yourself. We say to ourselves, is that possible? We know that it is possible by God's grace and through the workings of His Spirit within us. For it was so with our Lord.

## Elmer Weeks - If

Do we treat others with the same thoughtfulness and consideration that we so easily and greatly lavish on ourselves? Are we as conscious of the well being of others, and to the same extent that we are of our own? Are we as quick to make excuses for the shortcomings of others as we are for ourselves?

Do we really do as much for our brethren as we could? How do we really measure up indeed to this commandment? We know that selfishness can be a gigantic stumbling block, and not only to ourselves, but to others that are around us as well. Yes, through selfishness, earthly desires and wants, we can put ourselves right in the middle between God and even a loved one. This may be especially true in a marriage or any close relationship.

Perhaps without even realizing it, our demands, our whims, our comfort, our wants could be a great deterrent to our mate in his or her spiritual walk. Our demeanor, our attitude, everything about us affects not only ourselves but may also cause others close to us to slow down in their efforts to serve their Lord.

Let us be very careful, then, brethren, that the love we profess with our lips for others is confessed by our lives in acts that match the words that we speak, and let us take careful heed that we do not become an anchor unto others, but rather, let it be said that we were always there meeting others needs, encouraging, urging them on towards choosing the highest, helping them towards the attainment of the heavenly treasures that are held out to them, as well as to you and me.

Surely Jesus had set us a most perfect example in this respect, and he has laid before us the highest standard of selflessness possible while he walked on this earth, he was continually meeting the needs of others and even anticipating those needs.

How much do we love Him? How much do we want to be like Him? Only our obedience to him will be the answer to those questions. For obedience is our gauge it is our measuring rod. Professions of love for him are fine and appropriate, but they are not enough.

Our love must be manifest in the daily conducts of our daily living. Faith without works is dead we atone. Love, we might also add, that has no works, is likewise dead.

The apostle James, in chapter two of his epistle in verse 18, said, Yes, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works, and even as the apostle points out the impossibility of faith without the outpouring of that faith, it is likewise true of every virtue and grace that we are endeavoring to put on that are listed in Galatians 5:22. To have such an outworking in our lives, it is then imperative that our motives be to please God, and not to please self. The apostle Paul argues in Galatians 1:10am I now seeking favor of men, or of God, or am I trying to please men?

If I was still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

We should note the if in the Scripture and ask ourselves, how do I stand as to putting men before what God would have me to do or to say? Let us note also the words of Ephesians 6:6 in regard to obedience. It states, not with eye service as men pleases, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Indeed, here Paul puts his finger on the very key of obedience, doing the will of God from the heart. If this is how we are striving to do God's will, then our loyalty and affections will not be rationalized in any way.

## Elmer Weeks - If

We will not be putting anything or anyone between God and ourselves. Let us look for a moment at one of the well known examples that is given to us in Acts 4:18 20 where Peter and John so sternly express their desire of doing God's will from their hearts and at any cost.

In the setting we find them standing before the council and making a defense, and we read and they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Surely, brethren, Peter and John were intent on pleasing God and being the servants of Jesus Christ alone. Where Peter and John's allegiance lay is crystal clear.

From this account we might ask ourselves, is it quite as clear with you and with me? Jesus tells us most Definitely in Matthew 6:24, ye cannot serve man and God. Let me say that again, ye cannot serve God and mammon. Let us be decisive, as was Joshua of all. For we read in Joshua 24:15 his Bold as for me and my house, we will serve the lord.

In Hebrews 3:6 we are told Christ as a son over his own house Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end? The 20th century New Testament translates the latter portion in this way. If only we retain the courage and confidence inspired by our hope unshaken to the end. Now we know that we were given a very good outlook of what hope really is by brother Ken, and we know that hope is inspirational.

It is very essential to our overcoming. Yes, hope is the anchor to our soul. It is sure and steadfast, and it will endure unto the end. Entering within the Veil it has been said that where hope is alive, the night is less dark, the solitude less deep, fear less clutching. Hope is able to look a great distance, far beyond present circumstances.

It sees and anticipates the glory that is ahead, giving courage and confidence to the believer as he plods along through the many experiences and tests of the narrow way.

If we lack assurance in our Christian walk, it may be that our hope is not properly focused upon the many promises of God. Paul tells us in Hebrews 6:11. We must show diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. We look to ourselves and we ask, do we have this full assurance? Have we the courage based upon God's sure promises to face anything that might confront us?

Have we the confidence to trust God's guidance through the dark and low lying valleys? Is our hope truly an anchor to our souls, revealing to us the things that are eternal? If we can answer, yes, brethren, we are most truly of Christ's house and if this hope is maintained, we indeed shall overcome and shall inherit all things.

If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs, according to the promise we are told in Galatians 3:29 if ye be Christ's if we are members of his body of suffering now, then we will be members of his glorified body shortly, and then we shall inherit that beautiful promise given to Abraham, and we shall have the great privilege of aiding our Lord in blessing all the families of the earth. But how can we be sure that we are in Christ? One of the surest ways we are told in the Scriptures is to examine the area of our love for our brethren, for all our brethren.

We find in First Corinthians 12:12 that Paul shows us very clearly and very beautifully the oneness that is to be in Christ. It reads, for as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ, and skipping down to the 25th

## Elmer Weeks - If

and 26th verses, there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it or if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

And going on to another account that Paul gives to us in Ephesians 4, 15 and 16, we will read from the Revised Version, speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him, which is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body joint and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied. When each part is working properly, making bodily growth, and upbuilds itself in love, how is the body of Christ built up? How does it grow? It grows in love. Now we might ask ourselves, how well do we fit these Scriptures?

How much energy and effort are we putting into the growth and upbuilding of the body by the exercise of love towards our brethren? If we belong to Jesus Christ, we should be sensitive to their hurts, to the hurts of the other body members, and not only to their hurts, but to their needs and to their desires.

Does the love of Christ indeed knit us together? Does it give us the proper nourishment and strength and oneness that this picture of the Apostle Paul gives to us are we doing our part in this process first? John 4:12 carries a very similar thought. It reads, if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. The body members must have this love and mutual care for one another, else God will not dwell in their hearts.

And without this indwelling we can never be perfected. In regard to this mutual care and helpfulness, we found a beautiful citation by the Pastor that is given to us in reprints 2986 and it reads, every member in proportion as it is in harmony with the head and his spirit of love for the members will be prompt to act. Sometimes in our human bodies the hand may stretch forth assistance to the injured member so quickly that it seems impossible to conceive that the message first went to the head, and that then our hand was subsequently directed by the head to assist, and so it is with the members of the body of Christ, those who are in full touch and sympathy with the Head, the Lord are to so large an extent of one spirit with him, so anxious to do his will, and so well informed with respect to what his will is, that they sometimes seem to act almost automatically in respect to rendering help by word or deed, or otherwise, to those with whom they are in contact with, end of quote.

Let us continually, brethren, examine ourselves to see if our love and the Spirit of Jesus is within us, that we are seeking to put forth a helping hand in helping our brethren in such ways as the Lord gives us opportunities and let us never separate ourselves, brethren, from the Body of Christ. Let us always heed the apostle's admonition to meet together, to study together, to fellowship together. But God has made this his arrangement, and he has said that he has set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it has pleased him. We find that recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 12:18.

Going now to 2 Peter 18, we for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If these things be in you, what things are these that Peter is speaking of? He enumerates them for us in verses four through verse seven. They are faith, virtue, or noble character, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and finally, love.

We know in our studies that these have proved to be very high standards. Each and every one of them is necessary, and must be developed in us, in order that we might eventually become of that overcoming class.

## Elmer Weeks - If

Indeed, as we look back on the year pass, we would Ask ourselves, how well have we manifested these beautiful traits in all our dealings with all of those whom we have come in contact. We know in our flesh that we do and will come short. But what is really important to the Lord is the desires of our hearts along these lines, what has been indeed the true desire of our hearts in putting on these fruits?

We should not become discouraged when we fall short, because to do so wastes energy but rather we should pursue to the attainment of these godlike qualities with a greater determination. If we realize our need of a greater effort and greater endeavor, then that is good to rest in complacency. To be self satisfied would be disastrous. Recognizing our shortcomings is the first step towards overcoming them. A little illustration that brings out this point.

A small sailing vessel was observed in the bay. Her sails were spread, there was plenty of breeze, but she was seen to be making no progress at all. Some people who were standing by watching this asked a seaman, what was the matter with it? And his reply was simply, she's still anchored. Yes, brethren, anchors come in many shapes and in many designs.

Unacknowledged shortcomings can be a great anchor to our souls, as could be discouragement, because discouragement only uses up energy, and for no good purpose. Let us never allow these things indeed to be an anchor to our making progress in the Christian way. If we are to be fruitful, and if we are to abound, let us take careful heed of the Apostle Paul's sound advice. Let us strive mightily to have these wonderful traits of character daily growing within us, and let them energize us. For in so doing, we are told by Peter, we shall never fall, and an abundant entrance shall be given unto you into the everlasting kingdom.

The Scripture indicates action on our part. Much work is required in the doing of these things. A continual progress is to be made in the putting on of these qualities. There are indeed conditions to be met if we are to receive this upon an entrance. Yes, obedient action, daily watchfulness, perseverance, are the Christian's password to this glorious, abundant entrance into the heavenly courts.

Mere motion without accomplishment, we know, never avails anything. We must not be rocking horse Christians, going back and forth and making no progress. But rather, let us deal with our shortcomings in a positive way, overcoming them and going on into being more like our Lord Jesus.

Let us now examine the words of our Apostle Peter that we find in his first epistle 3:17. There he says to us, for it is better if the will of God be so that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. If the will of God be so. Obedience and submission are again implied in these words. Regardless of the consequences, the heavenly Father's will and purposes should always be first in our lives, even if we suffer for well doing.

We are reminded of Jesus words in Matthew 5, 10, 11 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you fals falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. Let us note carefully what Jesus says here. First he said, blessed are ye, or your lot is a blessed one.

And then he said, rejoice and be exceeding glad. Why is it pleasant to suffer, or to enjoy suffering for its own sake? Not at all. The reason we are to rejoice, the reason why we are blessed, is because we know that when the big if conditions are met and obeyed, then the trials, efforts, and

## Elmer Weeks - If

revilements will seem to be as naught. For we had been able then to look back and to view these things from God's viewpoint, as Jesus was able to do in his experiences when he carried out his Father's will faithfully each day, even unto the end.

And surely, brethren, we know it is hard to be misunderstood, to have our good intentions and motives misinterpreted by and misrepresented. But surely it hurts when we endeavor to be a blessing to someone, and our efforts are misapplied, and our motives may even be questioned. Should we be discouraged? Are we to be of a sad countenance at such times? Not if we accept the experience as the will of God.

He knows our hearts, he knows our intentions, and the rewards of our endeavors will be beyond expectation in the life to come, and will bring the peace and joy that obedience to God's will brings. Even now, under these adverse conditions, let us be very conscientious brethren, of doing our Father's will to the fullest and from our hearts and we should do this, brethren, with all our might.

The Apostle Paul states in Hebrews 12:7 and verse 11 if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth? Not now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous nevertheless. Afterward it yielded the peaceful fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

If ye endure chastening, what does it mean to endure it means to bear up, to persevere. In order for us to endure, we must first realize that a chastening is being given. We must understand why it is necessary that we be chastened, and we must look for the lesson to be learnt. To be chastened means to be disciplined. It does not necessarily mean that it is a punishment, but it is merely God's way of teaching, of guiding and of conforming us to the image of his dear Son.

It is of the utmost importance that we are aware that all that happens to us is by the overruling providence of our all wise and loving heavenly Father.

Job said in triumphant faith in Job 23:10, he knoweth the way that I take, and when I am tried I shall come forth as gold. We must believe, as did Job, that God causes all things to work out not for our good in an earthly fleshly way, but rather for our good in an eternal, everlasting way. To realize this, brethren, is essential to our endurance. Hebrews 12:10 tells us that God chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Endurance means that patience must be prominently displayed in our actions.

Christian endurance is done without murmuring and without complaining, whether by word or in actions, even in thought. Endurance infers obedience. It infers submission to the will of God and to his purposes. Endurance requires much self control. If we seek to avoid God's disciplines, His chastisements, if we run, or if we hide, whatever the excuse, how can then we be sons?

For we read in Hebrews 12:8 but if ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Thus we see how important endurance is to overcoming and unto the final victory that we all seek to attain. So, brethren, let us endure chastening let us endure the disciplined hand of the Lord, and let us be glad for it. Let us be glad when the rough corners are knocked away. For it is in these experiences that we will be shaped and conformed to the pattern of our beloved Jesus Christ.

Let no lesson pass us by, but let us indeed exercise thereby all of the things that come to us, that the lessons need not be repeated over and over again in our lives.

## Elmer Weeks - If

For a moment let us consider an if that is rendered in a negative sense as respecting the follower of Jesus. The Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:22,23 tells us, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Paul is again giving us Distinct conditions which, if met, bring their own reward.

On the one hand he shows the flesh prospering, and on the other he shows the death of the self, life, the death of the old nature, its wishes, its desires and its ambitions. This deadness to self, he tells us, makes us alive to Christ. It makes us alive as new creatures. Neither the new creature will rule, or else the flesh will be the master. It can't be the two together, but it must be one way or the other.

Jesus said in John 12:24, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Here again we see that prominent word. If let us re examine our lives once again and to see how much fruit we are bearing, can we say it is the new creature that is always making the choices that come to us in our everyday lives? Does the welfare of the new creature always have the priority in all our choices?

Whose comfort and convenience comes first, ours or our brethren? Do the things of the world still hold some attraction to us?

What has been foremost in our thoughts this past week?

What kind of treasures have we put forth the greatest effort to attain in this past year on what is the majority of our free time spent?

Answers to these questions, and to similar questions, if we honestly consider them, will give us a good idea on just how dead to self we really are. If we are not as dead to self as we ought to be, then we cannot necessarily then be alive in Christ as we should be. If we find ourselves living in the flesh, then the results cannot be other than that. The works of the flesh will be what is showing forth in our lives. For that is what the Apostle Paul did tell us, and it is so very true.

Let us examine a little more closely the importance of Jesus words that are found in John 12:24, and once again we read, verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Jesus words, verily, verily are calling attention to the importance of what he is about to say, what he is about to tell us. These are words of emphasis and call our attention to something that follows that will be of great importance and of a great significance.

As in the natural realm. Unless a seed is put into the ground and dies as a seed, it can never germinate, it can never take or get the necessary nourishment so that it might shoot forth roots and that eventually it might produce a bountiful harvest. A seed that remains a seed accomplishes nothing. It has the potential for bearing abundant fruitage, but it must lose its identity completely in the dying process to accomplish its intended purpose. The Apostle Paul truly caught the meaning of Jesus words, for he exhorts us along these lines.

In Colossians 3, verses 2 and 3, he says, set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid in Christ, with Christ in God. Have we caught the importance of Jesus words on this subject? Our lives will answer that question.

## Elmer Weeks - If

In closing, we would like to share one more thought with you that we find in John 15:8 herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. Thus shall ye be my disciples.

Let us resolve to more and more glorify our Heavenly Father by the bearing of the rich fruitage of a godlike Christian character, and let us never forget that to do so requires the death of our own self life. Since it is important also to know exactly where we are in the attainment of these things, we should continually in this coming year give constant evaluation to our lives in daily self examination, examining ourselves according to the many ifs, the many conditions that are given to us.

May we not become discouraged when we find ourselves falling short. But let us thank God for the awareness of our failures, and then go forward with a more determined effort to overcome and to meet all the conditions of God's promises.

And he has promised us, brethren, the help, the assistance. But we must do our part, for surely he has done his part, and brethren, if you do these things, he shall never fall from God's grace and from his love. May the Lord add His blessing.

Thank you brother Weeks, for calling our attention to many scriptural passages reminding us of our obligations and that which would be becometh a Christian those professing to be in relationship with the Lord. Brother Weeks service this morning reminds me of the Apostle Paul's words how that he tells us in 2nd Corinthians 13:5 examine yourselves whether you be in a faith prove your own selves. For the weeks gave us many thought provoking questions and we can apply them to ourselves and we can thus see how we are walking.

We have a few announcements we'd like to make at this time.

Ra Sa, a kind and loving Father. We humbly bow before thy throne of grace, thanking thee again, dear Father, for having called us into this way. We pray for much of Thy spirit, that we may discern all of the lessons that Thou hast for us and that we may run the race more faithfully, more zealously, and become indeed more like our Lord. We pray for thy overruling providences that all things, all that we say and do, who will always be to Thy glory and to Thy honor. We now again pray Thy blessing upon our fellowship, for we ask and give Thee all thanks in Jesus name, amen.