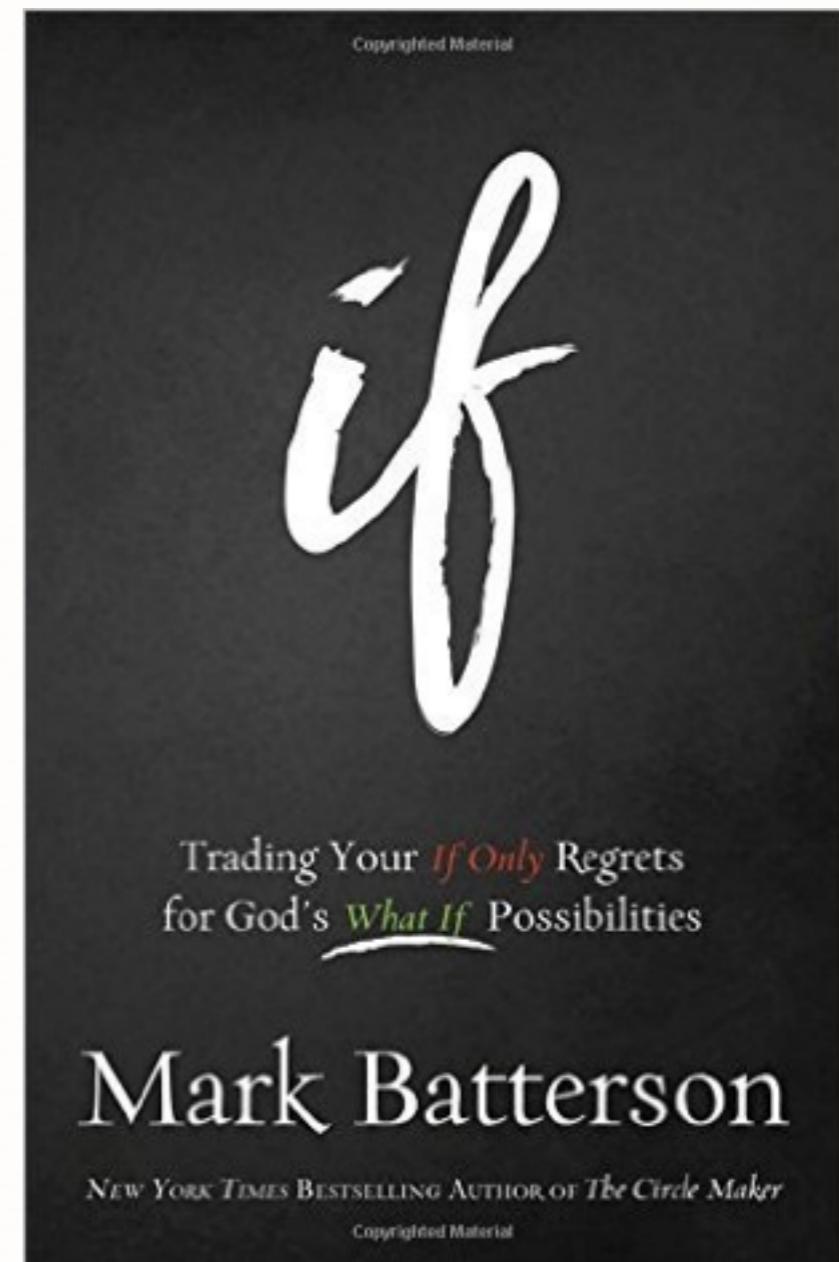


IF:
TRADING YOUR IF ONLY
REGRETS FOR GOD'S
WHAT IF POSSIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION

- These tiny two-letters hinge on the door of possibilities.
- Some of us are stuck in *if only*, living lives marked by regret. God can turn your *if only* regrets into a *what if* attitude.
- There are 1,784 *ifs* in the Bible - Romans 8:31.



A GREAT TRUTH

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:31

THE FIRST *IF*:

IF ONLY

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- Centre Court at Wimbledon:

**“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same”**

WIMBLEDON

"IF YOU CAN MEET WITH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER
AND TREAT THOSE TWO IMPOSTORS JUST THE SAME"



DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- Centre Court at Wimbledon:

**“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same”**

- This is part of a poem by Rudyard Kipling that has the one word title: “If.”
- It is an ode to self discipline, and was named Britain’s most favorite poem.

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- Perhaps the great inscription in the Bible is:

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- This is a perfect way to exit the *if only* regrets you have in your life and find the main entrance to *what if* in your future.
- We should walk under this inscription every day.

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- The Jewish people did just that.
- A scribe would use a pen to inscribe the *Shema* on parchment.
- It would be rolled up and placed in a special case called the *mezuzah*.



DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- Paul is explicit in the book of Romans: we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
 - Either we are *in sin* or *in Christ*.
 - Either we are *guilty* or *forgiven*
 - Either we are *sinners* or *saints*.
- Condemnation is feeling guilty over confessed sin.
Conviction is feeling guilty over unconfessed sin.

FORGIVENESS

- Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother. Jesus ups the ante to seventy times seven.
- He then ups the ante even more with a story of a master who forgave a servant a ten-thousand debt.
 - One talent is 180 months of wages (15 years).
 - A ten-thousand talent debt would be 150,000 years.
 - That is 2,232 lifetimes to pay off the debt.

MUSCLE MEMORY

- Romans 8-4: “Walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”
- Whether in golf, baseball, tennis or any sport, muscle memory is key to success.
- Malcolm Gladwell talks about the 10,000 hour rule.
- Just like a foreign language or martial arts, spiritual disciplines have a learning curve. Your first prayer is like a kindergartener’s painting on the refrigerator.

MUSCLE MEMORY

- Living a Spirit-led life is a steep learning curve: it takes time and discipline.
- When you study the Bible, you shouldn't be starting from scratch. You pick up where you left off.
- Need to make a decision? You need the Holy Spirit.
- Need more love? That is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Need more self-control? You need the Holy Spirit.

THE SECOND IF:

AS IF

ANCHORING EFFECT

- Romans 8:6 - “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”
- San Francisco Exploratorium: Is the highest redwood tree more or less 1200 feet? 180 feet? The two different heights (1200 and 18) are called anchors. They affected the answers people gave (844, 282).
- We tend to rely too heavily on the first fact, the first price, the first impression. Writer of Hebrews refers to hope as an anchor, and it a powerful *as if*.

ANCHORING ATTITUDES

- What is fear? False Expectations Appear Real
- Faith is the opposite: being sure of what we hope for.
- Application: Gratitude is a mindset. So is humility. So is generosity. So is courage. So is everything else!
- Marcial Losada - negative feedback loop (to survive) but also need a positive feedback loop. His studies have produced what is known as the Losada ratio which is 2.9.

CROSS-EYED

- George Whitefield preached 18,000 sermons in his 13 trips to America.
- What drew people to his crusades was not his good looks: he was cross-eyed.
- His sermons were called “thunder and lightning.”



CROSS-EYED

- George Whitefield wanted to revive Christian preaching and said: “Therefore, I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher.”
- Therefore is where *as if* begins.
- There are 1,220 therefores in the Bible. They are the theological bridges across the truths of Scripture.
- The first 7 chapters of Romans are the *cause*, then chapter 8 is the *effect*.

THE THIRD IF:

WHAT IF?

WHO IF

- Every *what if* is created twice. The first time, it is conceived in the mind. The second requires blueprints, a keyboard, a camera, or a kitchen.
- Why do Billy Graham, Bill Bright (Campus Crusade), Jim Rayburn (Young Life) , Dawson Trotman (Navigators), and Richard Halverson (Senate chaplain) have in common?

WHO IF

- Every *what if* is created twice. The first time, it is conceived in the mind. The second requires blueprints, a keyboard, a camera, or a kitchen.
- Why do Billy Graham, Bill Bright (Campus Crusade), Jim Rayburn (Young Life) , Dawson Trotman (Navigators), and Richard Halverson (Senate chaplain) have in common?
- They had Henrietta Mears as a Sunday School teacher: known as “the grandmother of us all.”

IT CAME TO PASS

- Romans 8:25 - “But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”
- Sir William Osler was the most famous physician of his generation (organized Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, served as professor at Oxford University).
- Read Thomas Carlyle - “Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”

IT CAME TO PASS

- In a commencement address at Yale University, Osler told the students he owed his success to a simple principle: “living in day-tight compartments.”
- He told them they needed to let go of dead yesterdays and unborn tomorrows.
- C.S. Lewis wrote that God wanted us to attend to eternity, and also to the present. Wise words for a culture that lives in 15 minutes of fame.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- Romans 8:28 - “All things work together for good.”
- This is the kingdom of unintended consequences.
- Robert Merton published a paper in 1936 that described unintended consequences:
 - Unexpected benefits (added bonuses)
 - Unexpected drawbacks (medicine's complications)
 - Perverse results (British cobras)

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- A classic illustration of unintended consequences can be found in Genesis 50:20.
- “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of lives.”
- Proverbs 16:9 - “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”

ROSETTA STONE

- An engineer in Napoleon's army demolished a wall in the city of Rosetta and found a stone that helped scholars decipher ancient languages.
- Romans 8:28 - is the Rosetta stone of the Scriptures. Without it, life makes no sense.



ROSETTA STONE

- Mark Batterson says the best advice he ever got was inside the bottle cap of Nantucket Nectar.
- “If every day were a good day, there would be no good days.”
- It is the bad days that help us appreciate the good days.



ROSETTA STONE

- If you woke up with health this morning, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- If you can attend church without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.
- If you have money in your purse or wallet, you rank among the top eight percent of the world's wealthy.

UNLOCKING WHAT IF

- These are the keys to unlocking *what if*:
 - God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called.
 - Criticize by creating (what are you for not against).
 - The anointing is for everyone.
 - Live for the applause of nail-scarred hands.

THE FOURTH IF:

*NO IFS, AND, OR
BUT'S ABOUT IT*

CORNERMAN

- Romans 8:34 - “Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”
- Angelo Dundee was Muhammad Ali’ cornerman.
- He described his job as cornerman: “When you’re working with a fighter, you’re a surgeon, an engineer, and a psychologist.”
- Jesus is in our corner. The Holy Spirit has your back.

EVENT HORIZON

- In the realm of general relativity, an event horizon is the point of no return. At that point, gravitational pull is greater than the possibility of escape.
- A black hole is an obvious example - the object is so massive, that light cannot even escape.
- “I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, no turning back.”
- What shall separate us from the love of Christ?

CONQUERORS

- Romans 8:37 - “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”
- The three word phrase is actually the Greek word *hupernikao*. It really means to hyper-conquer or to over-conquer.
- That’s where the word *Nike* comes from. She was the goddess of victory both in sport and in battle.
- Romans 8:37 is our Nike swoosh.

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

- Romans 8:38-39 - “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”



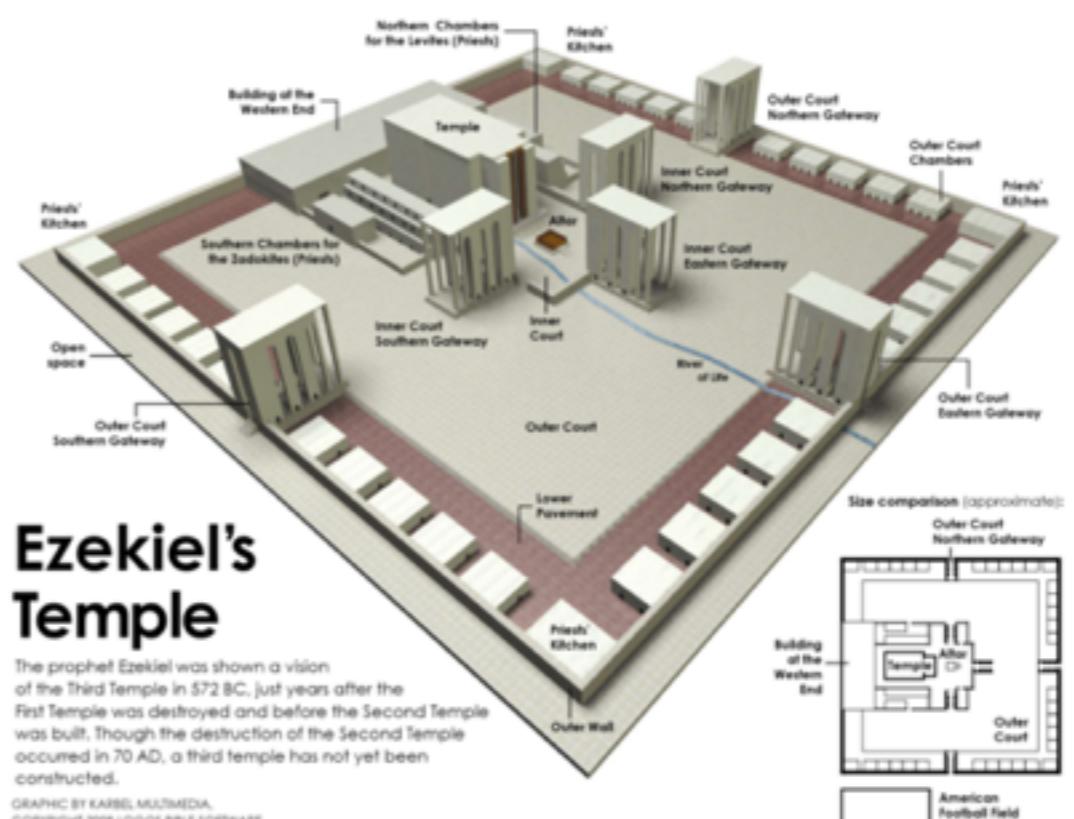
QUESTIONS

ASK KERBY

What is the Temple in Ezekiel? Is it the third Temple that will be where the desolation of abomination Jesus spoke of happens? Or a temple during the thousand year reign of Christ? Also if Jesus was the final sacrifice why does the temple in Ezekiel have everything needed in it to perform sacrifices?

EZEKIEL

- The book of Ezekiel closes with a vision of a temple and its associated rituals.
- The prophet is transported in vision where a messenger holding a measuring rod appears to him and gives him a tour of the temple.



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE?

- When Ezekiel saw the vision (573 BC), there was no temple standing in Jerusalem.
- Solomon's temple had been destroyed 13 years earlier by Nebuchadnezzar.
- This means that Ezekiel was not seeing Solomon's temple or any remnant of the temple.
- Also, it follows the Ezekiel 38-39 which is the battle of Gog and Magog.

ZERUBBABEL'S TEMPLE?

- Was this the temple that was to be built under the leadership of Zerubbabel?
- Zerubbabel's temple ended up being much smaller, and less elaborate, than the one Ezekiel describes.
- If the prophecy was about the temple built by the returning exiles, it doesn't fit the description, the prophecy failed to come true.

THIRD TEMPLE?

- Was this the Temple that is built and exists during the tribulation?
- Jews in the Temple Institute want to rebuild the Temple and have all the necessary items of worship ready to once again begin worship and sacrifices on the Temple Mount.
- This would have to take place after Ezekiel 38-39.

MILLENNIAL TEMPLE?

- Ezekiel's temple will be established after the second coming of Christ and will serve as the worship center for all people during the millennium.
- That could mean that "the prince" is Jesus Christ who is ruling over the millennial kingdom. However, it says that "the prince" will offer a sin offering "for himself and for all the people" (Ezekiel 45:22).
- If the prince is required to offer sacrifices for his own sins it can't be Jesus Christ.

SACRIFICES

- Why animal sacrifices in a millennial Temple?
- This is not a reinstitution of the law of Moses in the messianic kingdom, but a new system of kingdom law.
- The law of Moses was terminated with the death of the Messiah.
- These sacrifices are not offered to take away sin.

SACRIFICES

- Perhaps these sacrifices are like the Lord's Supper and serve as a memorial to the one sacrifice for sin forever—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- It is also possible that these sacrifices serve as ritual purification. They prevent the worshippers from defiling God's holy Temple.

SYMBOLIC?

- The vision may be of what “might have been,” had the Jewish exiles in Babylon exhibited a more thorough repentance than they did.
- “Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple” (Ezekiel 43:10–11).

