



[Exodus 19:8](#)

(8) Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

[Exodus 24:3](#)

(3) So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."

New King James Version

At this point, the Israelites wanted to make the covenant and to be married to [God](#). But when the reality hit them—the reality of what it was going to cost them in the conduct of their lives—they no longer wanted it except on their terms. Thus, when food became scarce, they wanted to back out. When water was in short supply, they grumbled. Then what did they do? They started accusing Moses and Aaron and God because, after all, they were their leaders.

Unfortunately, this is what happens in many marriages. Two people start off in love. Then the realities of the marriage begin to arise, and one or both of them are unwilling to make the sacrifices to continue the relationship and grow in unity. They begin to want the marriage on their own terms: "Well, I'll continue this IF...."

There are many examples of the Israelites wanting to back out. So God, in a sense, offered them concessions. He gave them meat for their lust. He caused water to gush out of the rock. He gave them manna. He bent over backward to meet their demands. But later on, when their descendants were in the Land of Promise, they too were unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to make the marriage successful. We know what happened then.

Conclusion: We do not want to repeat the same mistakes that they made. We have to

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learn to accept and adapt to what God provides, both as individuals, and as a body (i.e., the church).

The hardships of their pilgrimage in the wilderness were a consequence of a choice that they made to enter into the agreement with God. They did not have to agree with it; they could have returned to Egypt right away. Yet, they chose to enter into the agreement, and thus committed themselves to God's leadership. So running out of food and water, being attacked, enduring the sun above and the sand beneath—all those things represent the hardships of their entering into this agreement. They were consequences.

For this reason, before someone is baptized, he is advised to count the cost. The ministry has this responsibility, not to try to stop the person from being baptized, but to help clarify that he will have to bear the consequences of his decision. Neither the ministry nor the candidate for [baptism](#) can know all that lies ahead. In principle, he declares himself willing to accept the consequences of his decision, just as Israel agreed to the covenant before knowing every detail of what would come.

The consequences of our choices are all too frequently things that we do not want to consider. In regard to sin, we either ignore the consequences and take our chances, or we simply go into denial that the consequences are a reality that we must deal with. If we are that way, it reveals quite a lack of [faith](#) and a great deal of immaturity.

Kids are like this. Children, the immature, often do not think about the consequences of an act. They just do it. They act or react, thinking that parents are "old fogies" because we say, "No, you can't do that." They say, "Why not?" "Because," we often reply. "You can't do it because I'm the parent, and that's good enough." It should be, but kids do not consider their parents' wisdom, honed by years of experience, to be valuable. When they are sixteen years old, they do not consider that what they are doing might affect them when they are 55 or 60 years old. They are just passionate about the things that they do, but they rarely stop to think of consequences.

When we do not stop to consider spiritual consequences of the things that we do, it indicates that we are spiritually immature. God just is not real to us, or we would be taking His Fatherly advice about what to do.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[What Is the Work of God Now? \(Part 3\)](#)

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