

God's Promises and Prayer

God is a God who makes and keeps promises. There are thousands of promises in the Bible- in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. They cover a wide variety of topics such as provision, peace, answered prayers, strength, presence, Spirit, etc.

These promises of God predict our answers to prayer, foretelling what we are to expect from God. "They are the molds into which we pour our prayers"

They shape our prayers. Motivate, direct, and determine our prayers.

We pray in faith on these promises, we pray from the answer, with the answer in mind as we trust in God who makes and keeps his promises

The God of Promises

Promises Made, Promises Kept is the story of the Bible.

The storyline [of the Bible] "is the story of promises made and promises kept. God makes promises to his people in the Old Testament, and keeps his promises in the New Testament. This message of promises made and promises kept is the most important message in the world."

(Mark Dever)

- **Promises Made** is the Old Testament.
 - God makes covenants in OT, they progress -
 - Covenant with Noah,
 - Abraham (all peoples blessed through you),
 - Moses (Deut 28 - blessings and curses),
 - David (one will come to reign forever in line - 2 Sam 7)
 - Ending in New Covenant (Jer 31) - You are people, I your God, Spirit in your hearts! - Full forgiveness, redemption, restored relationship.
 - God is building his kingdom through covenants.
- **Promises Kept** is New Testament
 - New Covenant **ultimately fulfilled in Christ**, who is the fulfillment and **culmination** of New Covenant and all OT covenants/promises.
 - All the promises of God find their yes in Christ (2 Cor 1:20).
 - **God is building** a people of Jews and Gentiles believing gospel by faith, Christ growing the Church, a people of the promise, Spirit - spreading gospel.

- **Future Promises** of Jesus coming again, to establish his kingdom on earth. In the future all will be made perfect - restored fully, brokenness no more, and all promises of God will have been made and kept. We give glory to Christ who made it happen!

So promises made, promises kept!

“The point of the New Testament, indeed, the point of the whole Bible, is that God has made promises to us, he has kept those promises to us, and we are called to trust him because he is the keeper of promises!” (Dever)

God is Trustworthy to Keep His Promises

- Promises intersect with a couple of God’s attributes
- He is **all-knowing** (omniscient); possesses complete and perfect knowledge from beginning to end. **God of truth**, truthful.
 - His Promises are trustworthy.
- **All-wise** as he knows the best means for the best ends. Applies his perfect knowledge in the best, most righteous ways.
 - His Promises are best.
- **Sovereign** - in control and is working his glorious plan. Promises he makes, he will keep as it is part of his perfect plan.
 - His promises are part of His plan.
- And he has **all-power** (omnipotent); the power to bring about what he has promised.
 - His promises are guaranteed!

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?
(Numbers 23:19)

Promises of God - Definition and Types

- **Definition:** A promise from God - is a **pledge** or **declaration** made by Almighty God.
 - *Pledge* - something I will do. *Declaration* - Word of power to declare something to be, true truth, will happen (future) what is real (now).
- We claim in prayer that God is faithful to his pledge, declaration.

“We can expect that God will fulfill his promise because his perfect character and infinite resources back up what he has promised. He will be faithful to his Word.

We can depend on it!"
Yeakley)

(Tom

- **Types** of promises - conditional and unconditional; general and specific
 - *Conditional* - promises are conditioned upon our fulfilling acts of obedience before we will see the fulfillment of the promise.
 - Honor your father and mother - that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth. (Eph 6:2-3 -qtd 10 commandment)
 - Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Gal 5:16)
 - *Unconditional* - promise will be fulfilled as we simply accept them by faith
 - Whoever believes in him [God's Son] shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)
 - *General* - universal promises given to many people for all time. Many of these, esp. In NT that we can claim for ourselves.
 - Whoever believes in him [God's Son] shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)
 - My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)
 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - *Specific* - God gives us specific verses and promises that relate uniquely to our situations and experiences. We claim for ourselves. General, many, specific, few.
 - In reading Bible, Spirit impresses on our hearts, and gives inner assurance that this is unique for me right now.
 - **Question**, what about OT promises or to specific people at specific times? Can I take a promise given to Israel, David, Moses and apply them in prayer to my situation? Generally, ok to do, but with caution.

"For all the promises of God find their yes in him [Christ]"

2 Cor 1:20

We become the people of God, claim his promises through Christ.

2 Cor 6, Paul quotes OT promises to Israel from Leviticus, Exodus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, 2 Samuel and applies them to the church in Corinth... and says (2 Cor 7:1),

“Since **we** have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

- Admittedly, specific promise verses are a bit **subjective**, but can be powerful with the right cautions.
- Understand the **context** of the verse, correct interpretation.
- **Don't be hasty** or treat Bible as “spin the wheel” - be patient.

Prov. 19:2 “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor be hasty and miss the way.”

- If you believe it is a promise regarding God's will, or a specific direction God is saying for you to go...Check with how you think God is speaking with other means of following guidance.
 1. Clear commands, many, mostly what we use and rely on.
 2. Inner conviction of Spirit, impressions on heart.
 3. Wise counsel of mature believers.
 4. Critical thinking, use mind, wisdom skills from God.
 5. Circumstances.
- In time, God will confirm (or not) this promise to you from his Word.

Summary... Most of the time we will find great strength and encouragement from God's general promises and we fervently use those in prayer.

And occasionally God impresses upon our hearts a passage of Scripture (which may be beyond normal interpretation of that verse) but God uses it to give us a promise for a specific situation or need.

Pattern for Praying a Promise

1. **Demonstrate humility.** Come to God in humility and expectancy.
2. **Confess sin.** Acknowledge any disobedience and confess sins.
3. **Describe concern.** Bring before God the details of our concern/situation.
4. **Proclaim God's character.** Remind God of his character related to our concern.
5. **Pray a promise.** Make a specific request based on promises in the Word.

6. **Trust God.** Yield to God's will, finally, trust God, he will answer his way in his timing.
 - a. *Waiting* - some prayers and promises may take years, very hard to wait.
 - b. *Yielding* - God says "no" to a request, or answers it completely differently than expected. "Thy will be done!" I am going to trust in you!

Old Testament Examples, people who prayed this general pattern, pleading for God to keep his Word.

- Jacob (Genesis 32:9-12) - before meeting Esau again.
- Moses (Exodus 32:11-14) - after the people sinned, making golden calf.
- David (2 Samuel 7:18-29) - after receiving promise from prophet Nathan.
- Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1-11) - prayer for God's help in Jerusalem.
- Daniel (Daniel 9:4-19) - prayer for God to act on behalf of Israel in exile.

Example applied to life now - anxiety over a presentation @ school/work, or big test

1. **Demonstrate humility.**
 - a. Come to you in humility today, you are God. I am not, I need you.
2. **Confess sin.** Acknowledge any disobedience and confess sins.
 - a. I admit I have been very anxious, nervous, forgot to pray, scattered.
3. **Describe concern.** Bring before God the details of our concern/situation.
 - a. Test/presentation coming up, worried about it, how I may do, people think.
4. **Proclaim God's character.** Remind God of his character related to our concern.
 - a. You are the God of Peace, You are Sovereign and in Control.
5. **Pray a promise.** Make a specific request based on promises in the Word.
 - a. "Cast your cares upon him because he cares for you"
 - b. "Do not be anxious about anything...peace of God transcends"
 - c. Give you my anxieties, help me to concentrate, give me confidence, peace
6. **Trust God.** Yield to God's will, finally, trust God, he will answer his way in his timing.
 - a. No matter what happens, you love me, you care for me, you are for me.
 - b. I trust with my test/presentation...work and my life

Promises when Discouraged and in Pain

- God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)
- He gives strength to the weary & increases the power of the weak. (Psalm 40:29)
- We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Col 1:28-29)

Life Verse Promises

Examples of a Life Verse

(one I go back and back to - claim and cling to, heart for equip, college/local church)

- It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Eph 4:11-12)

(one I keep coming back to in pain)

- "Keep me from becoming conceited...thorn... pleaded to take away...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness...so that Christ's power may rest on me. (boast/delight in weakness). For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor 12:7-10)

Promises and Our Identity in Christ

Reminders - we are united with Christ and have a wonderful identity of Sons and Daughters of the King of Kings!

We forget this as we can easily believe the lies of the world:

- God really does not care for you or love you.
- God does not want you to have any fun or enjoyment.
- You won't be happy unless you live for yourself.
- You are no good unless you have a lot of money, fame, and success.
- God has left you, you are not that important.
- God will never work in you, you blew it this time. You are such a loser.
- You sinned again, you are worthless.
- It's all because you are because you are nothing but a filthy sinner, It is who you are, you are no saint, that's for sure!
- You will never amount to much of anything. You are a failure.

Replace these lies with God's truth, our identity in him!

You have great worth -

You are **accepted fully, completely secure**, and have **great significance!**

D.L. Moody the famous 19th century evangelist, preacher regularly prayed the promises of God in his Word and encouraged others to do so. And God worked mightily in his life. He urged people to carry their Bibles and carefully mark God's promises that they find.

Application idea: take a color and begin to do this in devotions, regular reading. Green

Here is what DL Moody said about the promises and prayer:

“Take the promises of God...feed for a month on the promises of God...read from Genesis to Revelation and see all the promises made by God...if you would spend a month feeding on the precious promises of God - you wouldn't be going about complaining... you would lift up your head and proclaim the riches of His Grace, because you couldn't help but do it!”

Groups

Take the “who I am in Christ” and pray through them in groups.