

THE

PROMISED

LIFE

30 DAYS OF EXPERIENCING GOD'S PROMISES

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The Promised Life: 30 Days of Experiencing God's Promises

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PREFACE

2 Peter 1:3-4, “3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

In the Bible, we learn that God keeps His Word. Many past saints didn't see God fulfill His promises the way they thought He would; nonetheless, God always kept His Word! Too often, in modern society, we get discouraged because we don't see God's promises instantly fulfilled in our lives. Yet, we know without hope in these great promises, life is meaningless.

Often, we wrongly try to hold God to our timetable and cry, “foul” when He doesn't perform on our schedule. Old-timers used to say, “He may not come when you want Him to, but He's always on time.” I believe we need to refocus our lives, again, on God's great and precious promises and believe, because of His power, He will give us everything we need. We will escape the evil desires of this world as our prayers match His “Kingdom” needs in our lives.

We should avoid the traps of impatience and doubt when it comes to God's promises. This basically means that if we don't see the promises of God the moment we pray, God is either not real or doesn't love us.

We too often forget that God's pattern of answering prayers is to allow a certain amount of time between the prayer and the fulfillment of the promise. This happens for the benefit of increasing our perseverance, which results in greater faith.

I believe in God's promises, not because I think of Him as my “magic genie,” but because I trust Him as my loving Father. When I reject worry and fear and choose to have faith in what I cannot see, I find solace and peace under God's mighty wings. My prayer, for the reader of this book, is that over the next thirty days you will find shelter under the loving promises of God and know that everything He does is good, because He is good.

Every promise that God has made will come to pass in this life or the one to come. Let us take these wonderful promises to heart by praying, meditating and waiting for their completion. In the journey of waiting for their fulfillment, I believe we will see that God isn't far away or hiding from us, but walking alongside us, bearing our burdens and bringing joy along the way.

What is God's most important promise that grounds all of His other promises? It is the promise of Him being with us forever. He said in Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV), "I will never leave nor forsake you." He is our shelter from the storms of life. Start believing His promises and get ready to receive more than you ever imagined.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

1. Read a lesson each day, consistently, for 30 days.
2. Prayerfully consider the reflection at the end of each lesson.
3. Put into practice the three actions listed for each lesson.

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DAY 1: THE PROMISE OF SALVATION

Romans 1:16, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”*

In this verse, Paul promises that everyone who “believes” in the gospel “receives” salvation from God. If you believe in the gospel, you are saved and have the great promise of salvation no matter who or what you are facing in life. The “gospel” is the “good news” about Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection to be the “once and for all” sacrifice for all of mankind’s sins.

Salvation means to be saved from Satan’s power, your sin, physical death and eternal damnation. Because of Jesus, you are saved from the power of the Devil. You are no longer forced to be his slave and live in fear of his lies, because Jesus defeated the Devil for you (1 John 3:8)!

You are saved from your own sin. It no longer has presence, power or penalty in your soul. You have been washed clean and forgiven by the blood of Jesus. You are now saved from sin to be righteous and holy (1 John 3:9)!

Jesus saved you from physical death. Though your body may die, Jesus promised to raise it up in the last day, to be an immortal, indestructible body (1 Corinthians 15:53). Death can no longer sting you because you are going to live forever, in bliss, with Jesus upon the new earth. Jesus saved you from perishing in eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). The moment your body dies, you will be with Jesus in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8); and, after the resurrection, you will live forever with Jesus on the earth (Revelation 21:3).

Max Lucado wrote, “Though the Bible was written over sixteen centuries by at least forty authors, it has one central theme; salvation through faith in Christ.” Believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, today, because it is God’s promise of salvation for you and all who believe it!

REFLECTION

Have you received the promise of salvation?

ACTION

1. Examine your heart to see if you have the assurance of being saved.
2. If you lack assurance, search your heart to see if you are in sin or doubt, then repent and believe God's Word. When you receive assurance from the Holy Spirit, praise God for His wonderful, saving work in your life.
3. Share the gospel, God's promise of salvation, with someone today!

DAY 2: THE PROMISE OF SANCTIFICATION

1 Corinthians 6:11, *“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Sanctification means to be made holy and separated from sin. In the verses prior to today’s passage, Paul declared to the people of Corinth that although some of them had been greedy, sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers, they were now washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)!

It doesn’t matter who you used to be or the sins you used to commit; you have a promise, in the Word of God, that the moment you were saved, you were sanctified from your sins! You are no longer who you once were. You are a new creation, in Christ, created in righteousness and holiness.

Stop believing you are “half-dirty,” “half-clean” or that God has to wash you, again and again, for you to really be clean. You are clean now. You are sanctified now. You are justified now!

Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:3, “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.” Jesus said it, I believe it and that settles it. The great preacher from the Azusa Street revival, William Seymour understood this and said, “Sanctification makes us holy and destroys the breed of sin, the love of sin and carnality. It makes us pure and whiter than snow. Bless His holy name!”

Justification means to be declared righteous, by God, because of the work of Christ. You are lacking no good thing in life, today. The Spirit of God has saved and sanctified you, 100%, through and through. Stop doubting God and believing the lies of the devil. Trust in the promise of sanctification that God has given you and live, by the Spirit of God, the new life He created for you!

REFLECTION

Do you believe you are sanctified?

ACTION

1. If you have doubts about being 100% sanctified from sin, repent of unbelief and declare out loud, 1 Corinthians 6:11, until you believe God's Word over your thoughts and the Devil's lies.
2. When you sin and act outside of your new nature, repent and renew your mind to believe you can obey Jesus in all that you do.
3. Make it your goal, everyday, to live free from all sin by the power of the Spirit.

DAY 3: THE PROMISE OF A NEW HEART

Ezekiel 36:26, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”*

Ezekiel was a powerful Jewish prophet who lived in the 6th century, B.C., before the time of Jesus; however, even then he was given a life-changing prophecy concerning the New Covenant that Jesus would establish. In the days of Ezekiel, the Israelites were waiting for the Messiah to come, in the line of King David, and set them free from their enemies.

However, God saw their need to be saved from the enemy, within, to be a greater priority. When Jesus came, as the promised Jewish Messiah and King of David, He didn't first fight an earthly battle and defeat the natural enemies of Israel. Instead, Jesus first came as the sacrificial Lamb of God to start a new covenant relationship with not only the Jewish people, but with all the people in the world (Matthew 28:18-20).

As a result, today, when someone believes in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they are given the promise of Ezekiel which is, “a new heart and spirit.” The biblical understanding of the “heart” is the same as for the “soul,” which is man's “mind, will and emotions.” Man's spirit is his “life force and connection to the spiritual world.” Man's spiritual soul is what God breathed into Adam, at creation, to make him in His own image (Genesis 1:27; 2:7). God promised Ezekiel, over 600 years before Jesus, that He would give a new mind, will and emotions, at spiritual rebirth, to all who believe in Jesus (John 3:3-8). A.B. Simpson wrote, “May God so fill us today with the heart of Christ that we may glow with the divine fire of holy desire.”

Jesus told His disciples about this promise to come, in Luke 22:20 at the Last Supper, when He gave out the wine and said, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”* Jesus was declaring to His disciples that His blood that would be shed on the cross was the fulfillment of the promise given to Ezekiel. So, the moment you put your full trust in Jesus, He made your spirit and soul brand new. A wise man once said, “All indwelling sin is washed away when Christ's blood cleanses you

within.”

You were born naughty by nature because of Adam and Eve, but you were born again in divine nature because of Jesus (2 Peter 1:4)!

Jesus took out your heart of stone and gave you a new heart of flesh. He gave you a spiritual rebirth so you could be born again and no longer be separated from Him because of your sin.

REFLECTION

Do you believe your heart and spirit are new?

ACTION

1. Remind yourself, today, that your heart and spirit are new in Christ Jesus.
2. Repent of any excuses you have made to remain in your old ways.
3. Thank Jesus for His blood that was shed on the cross for you.

DAY 4: THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

The Bible’s most famous verse, John 3:16, is power packed with the goodness of God in four lessons. First we learn, *“God so loved the world.”* This means that because of God’s love, the Father will always do what is best for us. He deeply cares for all of His creation and desires to be in a close relationship with every one of us. He is not like the immoral false gods of Hinduism, the mindless and emotionless force-like god of Buddhism or the angry works-based god of Islam.

Second, we learn, *“that He gave his one and only Son.”* This means we were given the greatest gift of all- Jesus Himself. Jesus didn't come to be served, but rather to serve. His gift to us was not only His sinless life on earth, but His loving sacrifice for our sins upon the cross. Now, we can be with the Father forever and never be separated from Jesus’ love (Romans 8:35-39)

Third, we learn, *“that whoever believes in Him shall not perish.”* This means that God doesn’t require our good works to be saved. Instead, He simply desires us to, *“believe in Him.”* Everyone can be saved from perishing, forever, in the lake of fire with the simple act of faith in Jesus. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul also taught, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

Fourth, we learn, *“but have eternal life.”* This means because of the other three lessons you have a great promise today from Jesus, backed up by the Father and enacted by the Holy Spirit that you will have eternal life.

Your eternal life started the moment you were born again and even though your earthly body will die one day, your spiritual soul will live on and be united to a new heavenly body, at the resurrection, to live forever with God.

Sadly, those who do not believe in Jesus will suffer eternal death by punishment in the lake of fire. This is why the promise of eternal life is so special and should be received by everyone. Billy Sunday said, "God keeps no half-way house. It's either heaven or hell for you and me." The Father sent Jesus to die on the cross so that everyone could believe and have eternal life. Jesus said, in John 17:3, "*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*" Decide, today, to receive your eternal life and preach to others so they can receive it too!

REFLECTION

Do you have eternal life?

ACTION

1. Take a few moments to mediate on John 3:16 and consider the great love God has for you.
2. Begin to praise and thank God for His precious gift of eternal life.
3. Live, everyday, for Jesus; for eternal life is knowing the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit.

DAY 5: THE PROMISE OF HEAVEN

Philippians 3:20, *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Have you ever traveled out of the country? I’ve had the great honor and privilege of going on four missions trips, outside the U.S., since being in ministry; three times to India (with a stop in Nepal) and once to Mexico. With each returning trip, I had to go through customs to be allowed back into the country. Each time I approached the custom’s officer, I had to show him my U.S. Passport, which rightly identified me as a U.S. citizen. After the officer’s examination and approval of my passport, he stamped it and let me back into my country.

Words cannot express how excited I have been, standing in that line, especially when the airport was in my hometown. Usually, by the time I arrived, I’d been up all night (flying over 15 hours); and, I know, in the pick up lane waiting for me is my wife and kids. When I finally get through customs, get my bags and see them, for the first time joy fills my heart because I know I am finally home.

In the same way, Paul gives every Christian, in the above verse, the same hope, not for an earthly country, but a hope of heavenly citizenship. Paul boldly declared that a Christian’s citizenship is in heaven.

Can you imagine what that homecoming day will be like... when for the first time, the angels verify your name in the Lamb’s Book of Life and you are welcomed into the presence of God?

It will be so utterly amazing that whatever you have faced in this life will disappear in the light of God’s love and grace. Charles Spurgeon said, “There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below.”

I pray that you will be encouraged, today, knowing you have God’s promise to one day be in heaven with Jesus. Whenever you face “traveling trials,” don’t give up because you’re just passing through to your real home and final destination in heaven!

REFLECTION

Have you thought about your home in heaven lately?

ACTION

1. Meditate on what it will be like the day you meet Jesus face-to-face for the first time.
2. Encourage yourself, today, by considering your hardships in life mere “travel trials.”
3. Invite someone new to go to heaven with you. There is always room for more!

DAY 6: THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 1:4-5, “4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told the disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity. He called the Holy Spirit, “The Father’s promise.” Jesus said that as John the Baptist baptized people in water, He was going to baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus declared that the reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to receive power to be His witness in all the earth; *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* Later, in Acts 2:4 (after Jesus ascended to heaven) Luke, the writer of Acts, recorded, *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”* Everything Jesus said, beforehand to the disciples, happened because they were given the Father’s promise by being baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

If the disciples who spent three years learning directly from Jesus never could have been the leaders God called them to be unless they were first endued with power and spoke in new tongues, how much more do you think today’s disciples need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? We don’t need more secular style leadership conferences in the church; we need Pentecostal power!

Jim Cymbala wrote, “The key is not money, organization, cleverness or education. Are you and I seeing the results Peter saw? Are we bringing thousands of men and women to Christ the way he did? If not, we need to get back to His power source.”

Have you received the Father's promise since being born again? If not, ask Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fill you with His power right now. After you have prayed, patiently wait on the Lord to confirm His gift by listening in your heart for a language you have not learned. Once you hear this new language, in your spirit, begin to speak it out with boldness because you have been given the gift of speaking in tongues as the evidence of your baptism in the Spirit.

From this moment forward, pray in your new heavenly language as often as you can because Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 14:4, "*Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves.*" The word "edify" means to, "build up." When you pray in tongues you are building up your most holy faith (Jude 1:20). Now, as a spiritually empowered and edified disciple, live as a witness for Jesus wherever you go!

REFLECTION

Have you received the Father's promise?

ACTION

1. If you haven't received the Father's promise, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues make time, today, to receive it.
2. If you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit pray in other tongues, today, to be empowered and built up for God's service.
3. Be a witness for Jesus everywhere you go!

DAY 7: THE PROMISE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:7, *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

I find it disappointing when I hear well-intentioned Christians teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were only for the first disciples or, that today, only a certain chosen few are given the gifts. The Bible teaches the exact opposite. Paul said, in the above verse, that the manifestation or appearance of the Spirit is given to each one and is given for the common good.

Paul also went on to teach, in 1 Corinthians 12:11, after naming the nine gifts of the Spirit that, *“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”* Notice that each one (person) is distributed a gift from the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit chooses.

Peter preached, on Pentecost, when the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given for the first time, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, *“The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call”* (Acts 2:29).

You and I have a promise, today, to be given not only the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but also all the gifts of the Spirit as the Holy Spirit chooses.

On one hand, Paul taught that the Holy Spirit determines, at any particular church service or time, who is given the following nine spiritual gifts, (1) the message of wisdom, (2) the message of knowledge, (3) the gift of faith, (4) the gifts of healing, (5) the gift of miraculous powers, (6) the gift of prophecy, (7) the gift of distinguishing between spirits, (8) the gift of speaking in different kinds of tongues and (9) the gift of interpretation of tongues.

On the other hand, every Holy Ghost-filled believer is eligible to use all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for the common good, whenever the Spirit wills it. For example, in a church service everyone may not be given the gift of prophecy, but everyone is eligible for the gift. Also, everyone may not

have a message of wisdom for a lost person, but everyone can be given it.

A.W. Tozer wrote, “The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.” Our responsibility is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (with the evidence of speaking in other tongues) and desire to be used in all nine of the spiritual gifts. Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 14:1, “*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.*”

REFLECTION

Do you eagerly desire to be used by the gifts of the Spirit?

ACTION

1. Ask God to remove any doubt or false teaching concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. If you have yet to receive it, pray and ask God for you to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. If you have received it, pray in tongues and build up your inner man.
3. Eagerly desire to be used by the Spirit to operate in the spiritual gifts. When you sense God has given you a gift, use it for His glory!

DAY 8: THE PROMISE OF HEALING

1 Peter 2:24, *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’”*

In my pastoral experience, the most difficult promise for people to believe is God’s promise of physical healing. The reality of suffering and excruciating pain, in the form of sickness and debilitating disease, can sometimes cause the strongest Christian to question God’s goodness. A parent having to cope with a child who has cancer can raise more doubt about God’s existence and goodness than all of the greatest atheistic arguments combined.

Here are just some of the questions I hear from people concerning God and suffering, “Why does a good God allow the world to have sickness and pain?” “Why does pain and suffering affect children?” “Why do bad things like sickness and disease happen to good people?” These kinds of questions were even asked by people in the Bible. The answer? Sin.

The reason for sickness is sin. The reason for pain is sin. The reason for evil is sin. Sin caused the universe to experience what God never intended.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the perfect world was affected with sin and sin brought sickness, sickness brought suffering and eventually those who suffer will die (Hebrews 9:27). Remember, the curse of sin doesn’t mean people who are sick, today, are being punished because of their personal sins; God forbid. However, sickness was unleashed upon the earth, along with natural disasters and evil, because of man’s sin. Today, God uses what was meant for bad for our good (Romans 8:28).

This kind of wrong thinking affected some of the most faithful disciples. They asked Jesus concerning a blind man, *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* Jesus replied, *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him”* (John 9:2-3). God has allowed mankind to live in a fallen world so that all who come to Him, in faith, might experience His

works of love and grace.

The Bible teaches, in Romans 1-7, that because of Adam's sin, the penalties of sin, sorrow and sickness have been dealt to all mankind. We might experience these things differently, but no one is immune to them. At some point in their lives, everyone will be sick, have sin and face sorrows. For this reason, Jesus came to die on the cross and break the curse of sin. Matthew Henry wrote, "Come, and see the victories of the cross. Christ's wounds are thy healings, His agonies thy repose, His conflicts thy conquests, His groans thy songs, His pains thine ease, His shame thy glory, His death thy life, His sufferings thy salvation."

According to Peter in the above passage, the prophecy of Isaiah 53 (which He is quoting) referred to Jesus and the promise to remove all of our sins, sorrows and sicknesses. When we pray to God, in faith, we can be healed because of the wounds Jesus received on the cross, just like we can receive forgiveness of our sins and comfort in our sorrows. After a crippled man was healed, Peter declared in Acts 3:16, "*By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.*" Pray in faith, today, for Jesus to heal you and those who are sick around you!

REFLECTION

Do you believe Jesus is your Healer?

ACTION

1. Ask God to remove any doubt or offense you may have towards Him because of the sickness you or others have faced in life.
2. Pray for God to heal all of your sicknesses and diseases.
3. Have faith in God that He is your Healer in this life and the one to come.

DAY 9: THE PROMISE OF FAITH

Romans 10:17 (KJV), *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

Have you ever lost your faith? Maybe there was a situation you faced, it didn't go the way you prayed and, afterward, you didn't have the same kind of faith in God that you did before? Well, never fear. God's Word is here! Faith is not a mysterious substance that comes and goes without explanation. Paul, in the above passage, taught that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, so if you're hearing the Word of God, today, faith is coming to you!

Unbelief comes when the Word of God isn't being heard and believed. If you're not meditating and believing God's Word you will start to believe and meditate on your own doubts and lies of the Devil.

As a result, you will not have faith but unbelief. Unbelief will never please God, because only faith in His Word pleases Him. The author of Hebrews wrote, *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6). Faith says that God exists and rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Unbelief, either doubts God's existence, or His desire to reward those who seek Him. Blaise Pascal wrote, *“Faith is a sounder guide than reason. Reason can go only so far, but faith has no limits.”*

If you have stopped having faith in God in any area of your life, don't remain in unbelief. Repent and go to the Word of God to receive new faith. Paul said that faith comes whenever you hear the Word of God, so listen to the audio Word of God, read the Word of God and go to church, regularly, to hear preaching from the Word of God. God has promised you that faith will always come to you when you hear the Word of God, so go get faith!

Since having faith in God is essential to receiving all the other promises of God, think about faith in God's Word as a promise to receive all the other promises. Whatever you are facing today in life, God's Word's promises to give you faith to make it!

REFLECTION

Do you lack faith in any area of your life?

ACTION

1. List any of the areas you lack faith in God's Word.
2. Repent of all of your unbelief.
3. Read the Word of God, specifically in the areas you doubt God, and let faith arise in your heart!

DAY 10: THE PROMISE OF HOPE

1 Peter 1:3, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

Today, we face unprecedented violence, global catastrophes and despair with every news report. However God, the Father, promised, when we were born again, He gave us a living hope through Jesus Christ. This living hope is the certain expectation of God’s salvation and deliverance from all our troubles. Amy Carmichael wrote, “Give me the love that leads the way, the faith that nothing can dismay, the hope no disappointments tire, the passion that will burn like fire, let me not sink to be a clod: make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.”

Troubles will come to everyone, but we shouldn’t lose our hope when we face all kinds of troubles in this world because Jesus said, in John 16:33, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* As God’s children we can have full confidence in Jesus to give us His peace and make us overcomers.

What kind of troubles are you facing in your life today? Marriage troubles, money troubles, family troubles, work troubles, sickness troubles or inner troubles?

No matter what troubles you’re facing today, God promised to give you hope beyond the scope of your human limitations. God’s supernatural power is able to intervene in your natural circumstances and perform mighty deeds.

Don’t waste your hope on things that will never work, instead place your hope on who God is! God is a good, good Father. David said, in Psalm 25:3, *“No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame!”* Pray and ask Jesus to fill your heart, today, with hope in the plan He has for your life!

REFLECTION

What troubles are you facing today?

ACTION

1. Write down all your troubles in life.
2. Search God's Word and ask Him, through prayer, to give you hope, through specific verses, for each trouble.
3. Confess the Word of God, in prayer, over all your troubles every time you think about them.

DAY 11: THE PROMISE OF LOVE

Psalms 23:6, “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Psalm 23 is the most famous Psalm in the world because of its powerful imagery and the extraordinary comfort it brings. It starts out with the powerful phrase, “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,*” and ends with the passage above. From beginning to end, the Psalm is power packed with God’s promises.

Today’s passage, at the end of Psalm 23, reminds us that God’s goodness and love will follow us wherever we go. Take just a few moments to consider this wonderful promise that God has given all of His sheep. God personally promised, no matter what you face in life, His goodness and love will always follow you through those situations.

You cannot outrun God’s love, or get so lost that His goodness can’t find you. You have a powerful promise, from your Shepherd, that He will always love you and give you the goodness of His will. You will never face a time in life where God’s love is not present.

God displayed His great love for us, on the cross, by having Jesus die in our place. A.W. Tozer wrote, “The cross is the lightning rod of grace that short-circuits God's wrath to Christ so that only the light of His love remains for believers.”

Paul also wrote, in Romans 8:38-39, about God’s great love for you, “*38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 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.*” Decide, today, to believe and receive the great love God has for you.

He promised that His love is with you right now. His presence has been following you since the moment you were born!

REFLECTION

Are you aware of God's love for you, today?

ACTION

1. Take some time to meditate on God's great love for you.
2. Remember to never allow your present troubles to make you forget that God's love is always with you.
3. Share God's love with others, today!

DAY 12: THE PROMISE OF JOY

Psalms 126:5-6, *“5 Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. 6 Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.”*

The above verse is not a lighthearted answer to your hurts, but a timeless promise, based upon the very nature of God and the work of Jesus on the cross (Isaiah 53:4). This is why God doesn't want you to hold back your tears, pretend something doesn't hurt or try to run away from the pain. He wants you to take your problems head on with Him because He will turn your tears into seeds of joy. God promised to give you a harvest of joy for every tear you cry.

In this world, you will get hurt and suffer great pain. You will bury loved ones, hear of innocent people being abused and face situations that will crush your heart into a million pieces. During those times you may cry and bleed on the inside like you never thought possible. Sometimes the pain will last far longer than the tragedy itself. However, as much as you weep and experience pain, is to the degree that God promised to heal you.

In this world you will have sorrow but, because of Jesus, you can have great joy that will overcome all your sorrows. The Spirit of God is able to fill you with inexpressible joy and remove all of your hurts (Psalm 16:11). David said, in Psalm 30:5, *“Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning!”* There will most certainly be times of hurt but, as surely as the sun rises, there will also be times of great joy. This doesn't mean you will forget your pain; however, it does mean that you will not live with the feeling of your pain forever. Joy is also a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and should be present in our lives, no matter our troubles. Billy Sunday said, “If you have no joy, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.”

In God's presence, He will overcome your sorrow with joy and conquer your turmoil with peace beyond your understanding. You will have

so much joy that others around you will want to know your secret. God's overflowing joy, in you, can actually bring others to know Jesus as their Healer, too, because they will want to know why you are facing the same kinds of things they are but having different results. The reason you have victory is because God promised that you would reap His healing and bring forth songs of joy!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God's joy is greater than your pain and sorrow?

ACTION

1. Think of the painful things you are facing in life right now and ask God to heal your broken heart and give you His overflowing joy.
2. Remember to patiently wait on the Lord, in prayer and confession of His promises, until your night passes and the morning comes.
3. Share God's joy with others today!

DAY 13: THE PROMISE OF NEVER BEING ALONE

Deuteronomy 31:6, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

In the Old Testament, God promised His people that although they were going to face many enemies and hardships, He was never going to leave them. As you read the Old Testament, it is clear that God kept His Word. In the New Testament, Jesus gave a similar promise to His disciples in Matthew 28:20; “*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*” In Hebrews 13:5, the author reiterated Deuteronomy’s promise to all of God’s people. From the front of the Bible to back, in both Covenants, and for every child of God, we are promised that God will never leave us.

Your friends will not always be around, your parents will grow old and pass away, even your children and spouse will fail to always be with you. However, God will never leave you. Never! He will always be with you in each and every situation you face. He will be present at every moment and in every stage of your life. As a matter of fact, when you die and are separated from everyone you have ever known, God will bring you to be with Him forever in His presence.

You will never be alone, forsaken or abandoned by God either in this life or the one to come.

Be strong and courageous during whatever situations you face because your God is with you. Corrie ten Boom wrote, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” Don’t let fear or terror take over your thoughts. Instead, meditate on all His promises. Remember that you are so loved and precious to God that He called you the “apple of His eye” and His “treasured possession” (Deuteronomy 7:6; 32:10).

REFLECTION

Do you believe that God is with you right now?

ACTION

1. Acknowledge the presence of God, right now, by praying something like, “God, I know you are with me and I will not be afraid. Your Spirit strengthens, comforts and encourages me.”
2. Learn to be more sensitive to God’s presence in your everyday life by directing all your thoughts toward Him.
3. Encourage those who are not in a relationship with God, to repent of their sins and be born again so they can be close to God, too.

DAY 14: THE PROMISE OF STRENGTH

Isaiah 40:31, *“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

The above passage is one of my favorite passages in the Bible. I love it so much because it speaks directly to the kind of person I am. I planted my first church at the age of 22 and, since then, have always believed in hard work and passion. No matter how young and strong I was in my early years, I would still find myself getting tired and weary in ministry. I had to learn to place my hope in the Lord and receive His enduring strength. Andrew Murray wrote, “Abide in Jesus, the sinless One- which means, give up all of self and its life, and dwell in God's will and rest in His strength.” No matter how strong you are, you will eventually reach the end of your strength; everyone eventually does.

Whether you're a parent feeling worn out because of the constant energy needed to keep a happy home or a person providing for your family and facing increasing pressure and fatigue on your job, there will be times in life when you lose your passion and motivation. At those times God promised to renew your strength.

The word “renew” means, “to make new again.” God promised to make your strength new, again, as if you had never used it all. God is able to give your mind and body rejuvenating strength that will carry you like the eagle’s wings! You will be able to walk through hard situations in life without growing faint and you will run with passion to achieve your goals while others get tired and give up.

Don’t take on life’s challenges with your own strength and endurance. Instead hope in the Lord so He can make you like the eagle that effortlessly soars for miles on the wind by using its God-given wings. Stop striving in the flesh and be renewed by the Spirit!

REFLECTION

Are you renewed in your strength today?

ACTION

1. Place your hope in God for all that you need.
2. Confess to God, in prayer, the places where you have become tired and weak.
3. Make time, everyday, to be renewed in God's presence by reading His Word, worshipping Him and speaking the Word of God to yourself — especially when you feel tired.

DAY 15: THE PROMISE OF PEACE

John 16:33, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

I love the fact that Jesus didn't promise a world without trouble but promised peace in the midst of trouble; otherwise we'd think He lied to us when we faced things in life. Jesus knew that trouble would be with us until He came back and judged the world, so He wanted us to be confident that God has our back.

Troubles come in all shapes and sizes and in various ways at different times. Once you overcome one trouble, there always seem to be two more waiting to take a shot at you. Take heart, have courage and don't be afraid of your troubles because Jesus has already overcome them.

Before you had a problem, Jesus was the Problem Solver. Before you were sick, He was the Healer. Before you were broke, He was the Provider. Before you were a sinner, He was the Savior. Jesus has always been all you ever needed, He has just been waiting for you to believe it.

C.S. Lewis wrote, “God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” Sadly, in our troubles, most of us lose our peace because we react to the troubles we are facing with fear, anxiety, worry, anger or doubt instead of responding with God's Word. We need to learn to trust Jesus in our troubles because our conquering King overcame every trouble we face. Jesus defeated Satan, death, sickness, hell, sorrow, poverty, loneliness and sin. There isn't any trouble that you and I can face that Jesus hasn't already conquered.

Don't let the troubles of this world take away your peace but rather let your troubles draw you closer to Jesus in prayer. Paul wrote, in Philippians 4:6-7, *“6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Guard your peace by setting your thoughts

on Jesus and in prayer cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you!

REFLECTION

Do you have the peace of God?

ACTION

1. Cast all of your anxious thoughts on Jesus in prayer with thanksgiving.
2. Confess that the peace of God is within you by the Holy Spirit.
3. Courageously guard your peace with God's Word by thinking and speaking the Word.

DAY 16: THE PROMISE OF PROTECTION

Psalm 91:4, *“He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”*

In the above Psalm, the author encourages the righteous to believe and trust God to protect them from all the harm of the enemy. Some have taken this Psalm to mean that nothing bad will ever happen to good people, but people like David would never have thought that. David was in many battles and saw good people die and suffer for the cause of God’s Kingdom. Before sending his men into battle, David would most likely have encouraged them with these kinds of words to remind them that no evil would harm them, even if they were killed or injured because they were on God’s side.

All throughout this Psalm, God used the imagery of a battle and incorporated it into spiritual terms.

Today, you should be comforted by the fact we will have divine protection in life no matter what attacks we face from our satanic enemies.

Paul used the same imagery of warfare in Ephesians 6:12-13, *“12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”*

Though I believe the direct application is for us in a spiritual sense when the Devil attacks, I still believe we can pray for protection in this life from whatever is trying to harm us. One time I was driving to church and the car in front of me crashed into the car in front of it. I slammed on my breaks and began to pray. Within moments, I could see from my rearview mirror, that the cars behind me were going to crash into me. Instead, God shielded me and the cars crashed all around me. I was untouched. I witnessed God’s physical protection.

Another time, I was in a serious car crash (because a man ran a red light) and my wife's ankle was broken; however, all four of my children were safe. Protection looks different at different times but, even if we die, we are protected from God's judgment. I will trust God, in each and every situation, and believe He covers both my body and my soul. Max Lucado wrote, "With time you can learn where to go for nourishment, where to hide for protection, where to turn for guidance. Just as your earthly house is a place of refuge, so God's house is a place of peace."

God promised to protect and guard us from the Devil and all of his spiritual attacks; and, He has even given us hope to pray in all dangerous situations — like war, accidents and natural disasters. Whatever we face in life let us put on the full armor of God and stand our ground, because God is with us and promised His faithfulness will be our shield!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God can protect you from all the attacks of the Devil?

ACTION

1. Thank God, through Jesus Christ, for His salvation which brings protection from all the Devil's spiritual attacks.
2. Declare God's victory in your life, with the Word of God, over whatever spiritual battle you may be facing.
3. Live courageously because God is your Protector.

DAY 17: THE PROMISE OF BIBLICAL WEALTH

Proverbs 10:22, *“The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it.”*

Did you know that God promised to bless you with wealth? Before you misunderstand me and start thinking the Bible promised that you will be a millionaire, let me define biblical wealth.

Biblical wealth is to have enough to meet your needs, to store up an inheritance for your children (and your children’s children) and to have “extra” to share with others in need.

No matter where God’s people live or what the economic times are like, His people can ask Him to give them biblical wealth according to the proverb above. You should pray that God “blesses you to be a blessing.” Remember in the “Our Father” prayer Jesus said, *“Give us our daily bread?”* Notice the word, “us” is not “me,” because God wants you to have “extra” to give to others. God wants to give things to you so they can go “through” you.

All the saints in the Bible knew that God not only wanted to bless their heart, but also their wallet (Genesis 13:2). In the book of Acts, it records that people who owned houses and land sold them to help meet the needs of others (Acts 5:34-35). You can’t sell a house or land for charity unless you first have the wealth to own the house and land in the first place!

Money is not evil, but to love money is. Warren Wiersbe wrote, “Material wealth is either a window through which we see God or a mirror in which we see ourselves.”

As a disciple, you must learn to see money as a tool for the Kingdom of God and not an idol for the flesh.

Think of God’s kingdom, first, when asking for blessings, because every thing else comes second; even family. When Christians do what Jesus said, in Matthew 6:33, and seek first God’s kingdom, He promises to meet

all of our other needs; especially those of our family (1 Timothy 5:8)! David said, in Psalm 37:25, “*I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.*”

When you put God’s business first, He will take care of your business.

Start seeking God’s kingdom by being faithful to give your tithes (10% of your total income) and offerings (gifts above your tithe) to the church every time you make money. You can never out give God, because He said when you give to Him it will be given back to you with good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over (Luke 6:38). Save as much as you can for a future inheritance. Use self-control and good budgeting to control spending. Don’t let greed and overspending keep you in an endless cycle of never having enough.

Pray for God to bless all that you do to gain wealth. Someone is going to invent the next must have product, get the promotion, start a great business, get that great job with benefits. Why not you? When God’s people have the blessing of biblical wealth they won’t have the troubles the world has, “More money more problems,” because they will be “too blessed to be stressed!”

REFLECTION

Are you blessed with biblical wealth?

ACTION

1. Pray, everyday, for God to bless you with biblical wealth and the patience to wait until you receive it.
2. Live by the financial principles in the Bible (tithes, offerings, savings and good budgets) and repent of any greed, overspending or waste.
3. Work hard and never give up by doing all things as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

DAY 18: THE PROMISE OF PERSECUTION

Mark 10:29-30, “29 ‘Truly I tell you,’ Jesus replied, ‘no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.’”

I would like to share a promise that many might wish God never made. However, to be faithful to the promises of God, I felt it necessary to share this one as well. The reason for me sharing the promise of persecution is not to discourage or frighten you, but rather to give you hope and encouragement.

If you were to read this series and only think that God promised pleasant things, and then suffer unpleasant times, you might be tempted to lose your faith in God because you believe He is not trustworthy. At the same time, when I am faithful to share both God’s pleasant and unpleasant promises, you will have courage to face the hard times when they come; and, trust me, they will come.

Let us look to the above passage in its context and be encouraged with the promise of persecution. First, we read that Jesus promised great blessings to His new disciples. He said that whatever they leave, for His sake, they will receive back a hundred times in this present age (that’s the good news)! We can rightfully pray for new houses, land and family, if we have left them for Jesus.

The bad news is, along with our blessings, we will suffer persecution for being Jesus’ disciples. The persecution can come from your family, co-workers, false religions, your community or governments. History has shown us that many people in this world hate Jesus so much that they will even murder His followers. During these times (even unto death), let us all remember God’s other promises to never leave us, to always protect us from evil and to give us great joy and peace in His presence.

Though, in this world, we will be greatly blessed, let us remember that this world is not our home and that persecution will sometimes

accompany our blessings.

Paul wrote, in 2 Timothy 2:12, “*If we endure, we will also reign with him.*” Let us rejoice in our sufferings because, in the same way they persecuted Jesus and the prophets, they are achieving for us eternal rewards!

REFLECTION

Have you suffered persecution for being a follower of Jesus?

ACTION

1. Ask God to forgive those who persecute you and pray for their salvation.
2. Pray for the Christians around the world suffering for Jesus.
3. Remember what the great missionary Jim Elliot wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

DAY 19: THE PROMISE OF BUILDING THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18, *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be Peter and hear that Jesus was going to use you to build the most important thing on the planet? Jesus declared, to this rugged fisherman, that He was going to make him a living stone, to establish His “hell-conquering church” — what an honor!

The Greek word for church, “*ekklesia*,” wasn’t a new or special word during Jesus’ time, it was a common word that meant, “a gathering of people.” The word could refer to any political or religious gathering of the day. Jesus wasn’t coming up with a “new concept,” but rather a “new gathering” of world changers, history makers and chain breakers!

Why was Peter set apart from the rest of the disciples? Because, when Jesus asked them all, “*Who do you say I am?*” Only Peter answered correctly, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:15-16). The reason Peter was chosen to be the first member of Jesus’ new church was because of his confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Peter was able to hear the voice of the Father concerning Jesus’ identity and confess it clearly.

The reason Jesus promised to build the church was because it was God’s way of establishing His kingdom on earth. The church has received and preserved the Word of God in the Bible, trained up new disciples to preach the gospel around the world, performed the greatest acts of charity of all other organizations and, in our culture, been the pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15). Allen Redpath said, “We need, men so possessed by the Spirit of God that God can think His thoughts through our minds, that He can plan His will through our actions, that He can direct His strategy of world evangelization through His Church.”

When you confessed Jesus as the Messiah, you became a part of the

church of Jesus Christ, also known as the “Body of Christ,” and the “Bride of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:7 & Revelation 19:7). There is nothing more important to Jesus, on this earth, than His church establishing the kingdom of God. If you haven’t already, join a Bible believing church and ask God to build the church through you!

REFLECTION

Are you committed to growing Christ’s church?

ACTION

1. Pray and commit yourself to a Bible believing church.
2. Ask the church’s leadership how you can become a leader and help build the church.
3. Go and do what Peter did and build Jesus’ church with new disciples.

DAY 20: THE PROMISE OF FRIENDSHIP

Proverbs 18:24, *“One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”*

When I was young, my friend called me to meet him and our “group,” at a bridge in the neighborhood, to go skateboarding. When I showed up they weren’t there, but as I looked around I could see them, from a distance, laughing. As I moved closer, they ran away and I realized they were playing a joke on me. I ended up chasing them all over the neighborhood just to hang out with them — some friends!

Despite it being a joke, I never forgot that day because it was the first time I realized my friends weren’t always going to be reliable — even my best friends! My siblings weren’t any better. My siblings were from my Mother’s previous marriage and grew up with their father. They spent much of their lives addicted to drugs and alcohol and didn’t know how to be good friends. I never had close friendships, including with my siblings, until I met Jesus.

When I got saved, I met my best friend (Jesus) and realized how true the above proverb really is. Jesus’ friendship is so real and deep, that no family member nor earthly friendship can compare. Some unbelievers think that I’m referring to Jesus like a child’s imaginary friend, but my best friend is not only real, He is closer to me than the air I breathe.

Jesus knows me from the inside out; and, despite my mistakes He always sees me as righteous. He never gets bored of being with me and He fills my thoughts with His thoughts about me.

As His disciple, I get to make new friends in the church all the time. These new friends have become the best friends I have ever had. Many of these friendships have lasted over twenty years. C.S. Lewis wrote, “Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” I’m glad I have friends that can understand what I am going through in life. My best friend, of all time, is my wife and we get to have a sleepover every night! It never gets old how God

brings new people into my life and lets me share Him with them. Friendship, with God and His people, is one of the greatest blessings I've ever experienced.

I pray that you will make Jesus your best friend and start enjoying friendship with His disciples. You can always spend time, with Jesus, in prayer, worship and reading His Word; and, you can hang out with other disciples in the church and share life together. Be sure to preach to your unsaved friends so they can meet Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him, too. Jesus promised to be a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Doesn't it feel good to know that the God of the universe loves to be your friend?

REFLECTION

Is Jesus your best friend?

ACTION

1. Make Jesus your best friend, in life, by being born again and spending time with Him everyday.
2. Avoid close friendships with sinners because bad company corrupts good character and light has nothing in common with darkness (1 Corinthians 15:33 & 2 Corinthians 6:14).
3. Always be excited to make new Christian friends because you have the most important thing in common!

DAY 21: THE PROMISE OF A SAVED FAMILY

Acts 16:31, *“They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’”*

Paul and Silas gave the person in today’s passage one of the greatest promises of the Bible because they were given future knowledge about what would happen when the man brought them home to meet his family. The promise came to pass when all of the man’s family received Jesus and were saved when Paul and Silas met them and preached the gospel to them.

I believe that the verse is a general promise for all believers, concerning the will of God for lost family members. Paul wrote, in 1 Timothy 2:1-4, *“1 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”* God wants you to pray for your family to be saved, knowing and believing that He strongly desires their salvation because He wants, “all people to be saved!”

For years, my parents prayed for me without ceasing; and, my mother saw her prayers answered when I got saved at her kitchen table.

Our prayers don’t override people’s freedom of choice; however, I believe our prayers make more opportunities for them to hear the gospel and give them protection to have more time.

Charles Finney said, “It is evident that the prayer of faith will obtain the blessing, from the fact that our faith rests on evidence that to grant that thing is the will of God.” And we can trust that it is the will of God to save everyone who believes in Him by giving them many chances to do so.

Take time, everyday, to pray for God to save your lost family members based on His revealed will for all people to be saved. Don’t get discouraged if they don’t get saved immediately or even if they get worse after you pray, because you are fighting for their soul against the Devil and his evil forces (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). I believe God will keep His Word and

make many opportunities for your family to be saved!

REFLECTION

Are you praying for all of your family to be saved?

ACTION

1. If you have doubts that God wants to save your entire family, pray for Him to reveal His love to you.
2. Faithfully pray for your lost relatives to be saved.
3. Preach the gospel to your lost relatives whenever you can.

DAY 22: THE PROMISE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Luke 17:20-21, “20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is in your midst.’”

Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God came upon the earth when He came in the flesh. The “kingdom of God” is, “the active rule and reign of Jesus Christ as King.” God’s kingdom had always been in heaven, but once Jesus came to earth, the Father’s kingdom came with Him. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to start praying to the Father, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the Kingdom of God has been powerfully advancing, to all people, through the church.

As Jesus’ disciples, we should not only hope to one day reign with Him upon the earth in His second coming, but we should receive the kingdom of God in our hearts now and display it for all to see.

When someone repents of his sin and accepts Jesus as the Lord of his life, he is automatically given the kingdom of God in his heart; but, the kingdom of God doesn’t end with salvation. This is where the kingdom begins!

We are told what the kingdom of God is like upon the earth, by Paul, in Romans 14:17. Here, he describes the kingdom of God as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. First, you experience God’s righteousness because Jesus made you righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21). You are who God says you are and can do all that He says you can do. Second, you are promised peace, with God, and with your thoughts. You are at peace with God, by faith in Jesus, because of His sacrifice (Romans 5:1); and, your thoughts are free from worry and anxiety, because the mind of Christ is in you (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Last, you have joy in the Holy Ghost because, no matter what you are facing in life, God's presence is with you (Psalm 16:11). Joy, from a biblical perspective means, "to be blissfully happy down deep in your soul."

Paul also wrote, in 1 Corinthians 4:20, "*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power,*" to remind us that when we have God's kingdom, we have the power of God to do every good work, including operating in the gifts of the Spirit. And, he wrote, in Colossians 1:13-14, "*13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins,*" to ensure that we never forget where we came from and that we should always be thankful for our place in the kingdom of God.

Bill Johnson wrote, "Jesus did not go through all His sufferings so we could go to church; He did what He did to atone for sin. And by doing so He made it possible to raise up a new breed of world changers, those who could maintain the standard He set in love, purity and power. This reality is one of the great prophecies that Jesus spoke: 'Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father' (see John 14:12). Not only does Jesus' life compel us to follow the miracle worker, so do His promises."

Live, today, with the reality of God's kingdom being in your midst and that one day it will come in full display for all to see when Jesus, the King returns!

REFLECTION

Do you believe the kingdom of God is in your midst?

ACTION

1. Ask Jesus to give you the fullness of His Kingdom by His Holy Spirit.
2. Daily guard the righteousness, peace and joy God's kingdom brings.
3. Display the kingdom of God with power, wherever you go — on your job, in your family, in your community, etc.

DAY 23: THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

1 John 2:1-2, "1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

Before becoming a Christian did you ever lie, steal, covet, lust, have ungodly anger, take God's name in vain or put worldly things before church? If you are honest (and are not telling another lie) I am sure, like me, you answered, "Yes," to probably all of the above. Then, by your own admission, you admit you were a "lying, stealing, covetous, lusting, angry, blaspheming idolater," deserving of hell, right? You, of all people, should love the promise of God's forgiveness because you know how much Jesus forgave you and from what He spared you!

If you are not saved or you're living in habitual unrepentant sin, stop whatever you are doing and repent right now. Today may be your last chance! Augustine wrote, "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination."

John wrote, in Revelation 21:8 what will happen to all unforgiven sinners on Judgment Day, "*But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*" Knowing that the fate of sinners is the lake of fire should cause every born again Christian to rejoice because Jesus is our atoning sacrifice.

The word "atonement" means, "to make reconciliation between estranged parties, bringing them into agreement." Jesus' atoning sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God, upon sinners, and made it possible for us to be in a right relationship with Him.

Jesus is not only the atoning sacrifice for those of us who have already repented, but His sacrifice is sufficient for all the sinners of the

world. Sinners have only to confess Jesus as their Lord and repent of their sins to receive the promise of forgiveness, too.

All of us saints are also promised forgiveness for any sins we commit after being saved. John is clear that we shouldn't sin, but if we do sin we can have confidence that the same sacrifice that forgave our sins as sinners, will forgive our sins as saints. There is no excuse for anyone to remain in his or her sins, because God promised that everyone could be forgiven by Jesus' atoning sacrifice!

REFLECTION

Are you forgiven of all your sins?

ACTION

1. Examine your heart to see if you have any hidden or unconfessed sins.
2. If you have any unconfessed or hidden sin, confess them to God and ask Him to cleanse you with the blood of Jesus.
3. Live holy, without repeating the same sins over and over again, by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:8-10).

DAY 24: THE PROMISE OF REIGNING WITH CHRIST

2 Timothy 2:12, *“If we endure, we will also reign with him.”*

Did you know that one day Jesus will establish His kingdom on earth and reign for a thousand years with His people? It is called the “Millennial Reign of Christ,” foretold by John, in Revelation 20:1-6. John wrote, *“Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”* What a wonderful picture of what is to come — we will reign as priests with Jesus on the earth!

Can you imagine what it will be like to rule and reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years as His divine agents? We will be similar to the priests who ruled in Israel during the time of the Old Testament (Psalm 82:6). The Bible teaches that the subjects of the kingdom will be those who didn’t die in the Battle of Armageddon. Though hundreds of millions of rebellious humanity will die in Jesus’ second coming and final battle, He will still allow a portion to survive and live upon the earth in His Kingdom.

Many theories exist, among scholars, as to why Jesus would allow the natural order of life to continue, for a thousand years, before recreating the earth. I believe the best answer, is to show what the Garden of Eden could have been like in the natural world. This act shows God’s heart for restoration and redemption. Instead of just doing away with everything, He first will allow His people to enjoy the fullness of the kingdom of God upon the earth, “the restored and upgraded Garden of Eden.”

Before you get your scepter and start ruling over people, you must take the full context of what Paul is saying in the above verse.

In this life we must endure suffering to reign as priests in the next life. Our rulership is not in this life but the next. We must first endure (suffer and preserve), with Jesus, if we want reign with Him.

In this current age, we as Christians, will be persecuted and suffer many trials, but we should not lose heart and give up because we have a future hope to reign with Christ. John Piper wrote, “This is God’s universal

purpose for all Christian suffering: more contentment in God and less satisfaction in the world.” Let Christ’s promise, to rule and reign with Him for a thousand years; comfort your heart in the midst of whatever you may be enduring today. God is going to reward you for all you suffer in His name!

REFLECTION

What hardships are you enduring in life today?

ACTION

1. Consider whatever you may be facing in life as the “testing of your faith” (James 1:2-4).
2. Ask God for strength to endure all that you are facing in life.
3. Rejoice and find hope in the promise of ruling with Christ one day!

DAY 25: THE PROMISE OF SALVATION FOR ALL

1 Timothy 2:3-4, “3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

What would you say if I told you there are actually some Christians who believe God doesn't love the whole world? They believe He only loves the elect; the ones He chooses and doesn't really want all people to be saved. If you believed this, how would your views concerning God's holy and merciful character change? I know I could not see God in the same light if this false belief was true.

His perfect and merciful nature would be overshadowed by a “Hitler-like” love that only shows kindness to one kind of people (i.e., Arians), but total destruction and hate to another people (i.e., Jews), based simply on His own so-called “sovereign choice.” This kind of love would be even worse, because men's eternal souls would suffer without ever having a chance at salvation. These people would have been born just to be damned forever, in hell, by God's eternal decree. In other words, the non-elect would be “doomed from the womb.”

Believe it or not, the theological belief system of “Calvinism,” founded by John Calvin in the 1500's, actually teaches that God chose some people for salvation and others for eternal damnation. Both, the saved, and the damned were chosen or rejected totally by God's own desires. John Wesley said, in regard to Calvinism, “Such blasphemy... it destroys all [God's] attributes at once: It overturns both his justice, mercy, and truth; yea, it represents the most holy God as worse than the devil, as both more false, more cruel and more unjust.”

Praise God that Paul taught, in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, the direct opposite of this false teaching.

It should give all Christians comfort to know that God promises, to every person, a true desire for his or her salvation. When you pray for a lost soul, you don't have to wonder if God has already predetermined their damnation, but rather you can have total

confidence that no matter who they are- God desires their salvation and has made it possible for them to be saved.

Paul also went on to declare, in 1 Timothy 4:10, “*We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.*” The belief system of Calvinism is false and the Bible, which affirms God’s character, is true. As a result, let God be true and every man a liar! In Paul’s writings, God gives a glimpse of His heart and universal call of salvation. Jesus is the Savior who made salvation possible for the entire world; and, He promises to save everyone who believes and confesses Him as Lord.

We should fervently pray for all people to be saved through Christ-centered preaching and preach with all our might so that everyone has the chance of receiving salvation!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God wants all people to be saved?

ACTION

1. Study the Word of God to learn how to refute Calvinism and affirm God’s unlimited atonement and universal call of salvation. Start with reading John Wesley’s sermon, *Free Grace* (free online).
2. Pray for the people in your life who are not saved and ask God to use you to preach the gospel to them.
3. Be a witness for Jesus, in both word and deed, wherever you go because God wants all people to be saved!

DAY 26: THE PROMISE OF A BLESSED NATION

Proverbs 14:34, *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.”*

In the U.S., we have a saying, “God bless America.” I love this statement and the heritage that comes with it, because it reminds us of the many godly people who came to this country and implored God’s blessings upon it. Our great success, as a nation, has come from God and His exaltation.

Today, in America, although many people still say that cherished statement, they don’t realize “how” God actually blesses and exalts a nation. Today’s Scripture reading states, “Righteousness exalts a nation,” because God will only exalt and bring success to those who do what is right by His standards. The proverb also teaches, “Sin condemns any people,” because God will never bless what He promised to judge and destroy.

For example, in Proverbs 6:17, King Solomon wrote that the Lord hates, *“Hands that shed innocent blood.”* Therefore, when America allows, by its law, the slaughter of unborn children in the womb (over 54 million since 1973), God will not continue to bless us until we repent and abolish this wicked infanticide. Furthermore, in the same passage, Solomon declared that God hates, *“Haughty eyes, a lying tongue... a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil.”* When we, as a nation, act in pride in our successes, have liars and devisors of wickedness in the White House and on Wall Street and possess a generation of young adults who are “quick to rush into evil,” we shouldn’t expect God’s blessing but, rather, His punishment. God said, in Psalm 9:17 (NKJV), *“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”*

We should hold to God’s precious promise, in Proverbs 14:34, and live righteous, in America, so we can receive God’s exaltation and blessings in our nation. As for whatever sins and evil deeds we’ve done, we should repent and plead for God’s mercy and forgiveness. Then, once we are forgiven and made holy by the blood of Jesus, we can rightly sing again, “God Bless America, land that I love. Stand beside her, and guide her through the night with a light from above.”

REFLECTION

Are you doing your part for God to exalt and bless the nation you live in?

ACTION

1. Repent of all sins you commit that bring a disgrace on your nation.
2. Pray and repent for the sins of your nation (whether you do them or not) as Daniel interceded for the Jewish people in Daniel 9:4-19.
3. Live righteous, by God's grace, so God can exalt your nation.

DAY 27: THE PROMISE OF WISDOM

James 1:5, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”*

Since becoming a Christian, have you ever said the following things to describe life’s hardships? “Man, I’ve got some big financial problems.” “My wife and I are having marriage problems.” Or, “I’m struggling in my Christian walk because I’m having major sin problems.” If you have ever described your problems like this since being saved, the first thing you need to know is that your biggest problem isn’t “money, marriage or sin,” it’s your lack of “wisdom.”

You don’t have money, marriage or sin problems. You have a wisdom problem!

The day you received salvation, Peter said God’s divine power gave you everything you needed for a godly life (2 Peter 1:3); and, John said you are an overcomer because the one, who is in you, is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). In Romans 8:37-39, Paul declared that you are more than a conqueror and nothing could ever separate you from the love of God. As a result, you have already been given everything you will ever need to overcome and conquer every one of the problems you will face in life. You just need the wisdom on how to receive and act on God’s abilities and blessings. Wisdom is, “the practical and successful application of knowledge.”

Every disciple should avoid trying to solve their problems the “world’s way,” in foolishness. We should ask God for wisdom to succeed in each and every situation we face. If you ask God for wisdom in your marriage, He will give you the practical steps to take to bring about a healthy and prosperous marriage. Or if you’re facing a problem with your money, ask God for His financial wisdom because He owns everything.

No matter what problems you are facing in life, call out to God and receive His wisdom. Remember, all wisdom comes from God, even if the

people using it don't give Him the credit. Whenever you lack wisdom ask God for it, because He loves to generously give us all the wisdom we need to succeed in life!

REFLECTION

Do you need God's wisdom for a situation you're facing in life?

ACTION

1. Confess to God three problems you are facing right now.
2. Pray and ask God for His wisdom in each of the situations.
3. Apply God's wisdom (practical application of knowledge) until the problem is solved.

DAY 28: THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE

Psalm 72:12, *“For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.”*

The Bible promises God will deliver and rescue all those who call on Him, especially the needy and those who have no one to help. However, today we are witnessing the greatest slaughter of Christians around the world. According to Gordon-Conwell Seminary, over 150,000 Christians are killed for their faith each year. Why doesn't God deliver these precious people from persecution and death?

Also, there are countless millions of children who wake up each day starving and suffering physical harm, not to mention the many around the world who are afflicted with cancer and other destructive ailments. Why doesn't God deliver those needy people? Some Christians say it is, “God's will for people to suffer.” However, if God was a fatalistic Creator and just made everything the way it is and had no intention of intervening, why did He promise to deliver us if we cried out to Him?

These are all tough questions I get asked as a pastor; however, I believe the answer is simple; “God created us perfect, but sin brought death and destruction. For that reason, He sent Jesus to deliver us from Satan's affliction” (1 John 3:8). When we cry out to Him in our suffering, He hears us and delivers us either, in this world, or the world to come.

Think about it. Our greatest need of deliverance isn't from the sufferings in this life but from this life, itself. Consider if you were healed from every sickness and delivered from every affliction in this life; however, you still would die and face God's judgment as a sinner (Hebrews 9:27).

The greatest deliverance isn't the one to keep us safe and healthy in this world, but to rescue us from sin's destruction upon our soul for eternity (Matthew 10:28-31). This is why, when we cry out to be saved, we can trust that God will always save us.

At the same time, if we can trust that God is going to save us in the world to come, then we can also believe that He cares about our daily needs

in this life, too (Matthew 6:32-33). Francis Frangipane wrote, “To win the war against fear, we must know the true God as He is revealed in the Bible. He works to give us lasting peace. He receives joy, not from condemning us but in rescuing us from the devil.” So whenever you are needy and afflicted cry out to God because He promises to deliver you!

REFLECTION

What do you need deliverance from today?

ACTION

1. Other than sin, think of two things you need to be delivered from.
2. Cry out to God and ask Him to save and deliver you from the things you are facing.
3. Trust God to deliver you in this life or the one to come!

DAY 29: THE PROMISE OF COMPLETION

Philippians 1:6, *“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Have you ever started something and didn't finish it? Maybe you made a New Year's resolution and couldn't even keep it for a month. God is the exact opposite; He completes everything He starts. Concerning our salvation, Paul wrote in today's passage that it is God who started it and God will complete it. We just need to wait patiently, until the rapture of the church to receive the final part; the redemption of our bodies. Then after the seven years of tribulation, Jesus will return to rule the earth for one thousand years; and we will live on the earth with the same nature as Jesus (Luke 14:14 & 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Your new body will be forever perfected and unified with your inner self (soul). Paul wrote, in 1 Corinthians 15:49 concerning this promise, *“And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.”* When the Lord raptures the church and brings us to heaven, He will also change our bodies to be like Him. Paul wrote, in 1 Corinthians 15:52, *“In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”*

Be encouraged to know that God will finish on the outside what He started on the inside. You will not always carry around this “body of death,” that has sickness, weakness and earthly impulses to sin (Romans 7:24-25); but, it will be rescued and transformed by Jesus. On that day, your saved and sanctified soul will be forever joined with a glorified body.

When Jesus returns all believers will be given a new spiritual body, so until that day, think of your salvation as a treasure in a jar of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7). Your new “inner nature” is the treasure in the jar of clay of your earthly body; and one day, when Christ comes, you will be given a new

body that's made perfect for all eternity. Fredrick Robertson said, "He alone can believe in immortality who feels the resurrection in him already." Jesus is not only going to finish what He started in you, He is also going to finish what He started with the human race. Jesus will re-create a perfect people to spend eternity with Him in loving fellowship!

REFLECTION

Are you confident that Jesus will one day give you a new body?

ACTION

1. Rejoice in the work of Jesus that purchased for you your salvation, starting from the inside out.
2. Trust and be confident, in God, that one day you will forever be changed in your body.
3. Preach the gospel to the lost so they, too, can be saved in their body, soul and spirit.

DAY 30: THE PROMISE OF BEARING MUCH FRUIT

John 15:8, *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

Jesus promised His disciples, in John 15:1-17, that if they abided in Him, they would bear much fruit, bring glory to the Father and show themselves to be His disciples. There are two main ways a disciple can be fruitful as he abides in Jesus; in his character and in his ministry.

By developing His character in you, also known as the, “fruit of the Spirit,” God makes you bear much fruit to live and act like Jesus. The fruit of the Spirit, which is the character of Christ is; “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). By the Holy Spirit, God wants to disciple others through you (Matthew 28:19). Just as the early church saw the multitudes saved and discipled; God wants to give you much fruit in your ministry (Acts 2:41).

God cares about your character and ministry, so as a Christ-abiding-disciple you should be fruitful in what God does in you and through you.

Consider that the branches cannot produce fruit on their own, but are dependent upon the root and the main vine. In the same way, you cannot change your own character, much less save anyone without God’s power. However, when the Holy Spirit flows through you, like nutrients, in a vine to its branches, you will develop the fruit of the Spirit and see people’s lives changed by the gospel.

From the good fruit in your character, God will use you to bring forth fruit in ministry. Then, those who are saved, as a result of your faithfulness to God, will be considered fruit in your ministry. Paul used the illustration of “fruit,” in Philippians 1:22 when he wrote, *“if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.”* He understood, that what God was doing “in him” would be fruitful labor that would go “through him.” F.B. Meyer said, “Let each of us learn to abide in Christ with the heart open

to Him on the one hand and, open to men, women and children on the other.” Likewise, we should all desire to be fruitful in our character so we can be fruitful in our ministry. Abide in Jesus, because Jesus is all you need and the Father will bring forth fruit in you and through you!

REFLECTION

Are you bearing fruit in your character and ministry?

ACTION

1. Seek God about the areas He wants you to grow in your character and ministry.
2. Pray for God to use you to win one soul a week.
3. Be a disciple who makes new disciples!

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