

# Making DECISIONS Based on God's SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISES

*Jerry & Marilyn Fine*

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## *Dedication*

**T**HIS BOOK IS DEDICATED to our dear friend E. F. “Preacher” Hallock, who taught us to seek, receive, and stand on God’s *specific personal promises*, although he simply called them *promises*. He consistently modeled a way of life that placed emphasis on God’s Word, prayer, and God’s promises. If it were not for the way God used Preacher in our lives, we are confident that we would not be writing this book on the *specific personal promises* of God.

In an article written some thirty-five years after Preacher Hallock’s retirement, Mike Fleischman, then-pastor of the church Preacher had pastored for forty-six years, wrote the following words about him. He titled the article “Transformed by a Supernatural Book.”

*Sometimes the best way to move toward the future is to remember the very best things from our past.*

One thing I’ve been mulling over is the way Preacher Hallock was transformed by his understanding of Scripture. You see, back around 1910 when he received his ministerial education, he was trained under something called “modernist thinking.” It was a hot, new idea—how we as “modern” thinkers should discard “simple” and “outdated” views of the Bible to move on to more “enlightened” ideas.

Over time, young Preacher bought into this philosophy hook, line, and sinker. He started regarding the Bible as just one of many sacred books in the world, filled with mythical stories. For instance, Jesus had been a great

example who died a martyr but not a Savior who died for sinners. He still considered the Bible an excellent source for sermon material but not authoritative or inspired by God. Ultimately he came to think that it was his responsibility to pick out “the best parts” in the Bible worth believing.

Then in 1921 Preacher Hallock came to a crisis of faith. He was pastoring a church in Kansas when a traveling revivalist preached from Titus 2:13-

***“Whenever I have  
needed particular  
guidance in any  
direction, it has come  
from some verse  
in God’s Word.”***

*Preacher Hallock*



14 and gave a plain explanation of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Although the message seemed simple, Preacher was tormented by it. He was convicted that he had been misled and might not even be saved. The next night, swallowing his pride, he went forward at his own church to confess that he had now put his faith in Jesus Christ.

And from that day on, his commitment to the Word of God became legendary—the way he read it...the way he believed it...the way he preached it...the way he lived what it said. In his own words,

*I have continued through all the years this business of reading the Book, and more and more God has opened up the path of walking with Him in the light of His Word. When I have needed warning, I have received it from the Book. When I needed exhortation, He has given it from the Book. When I needed comfort, it has come from God’s Book. Whenever I have needed particular guidance in any direction, it has come from some verse in God’s Word.<sup>1</sup>*

I don’t know what I could possibly add to words like those from a preacher like that. ***He was a living example of a life transformed by an unshakable commitment to the truth of God’s Word.***

*Sometimes the best way to move toward the future is by reflecting back on the very best things of our past.*

Pastor Mike Fleischman

Preacher Hallock's simple messages on prayer, promises, and Bible reading made a tremendous impact on the lives of those who were privileged to be blessed by his ministry. Marilyn's mother, Ettie Marie Milam, emphasized how God so powerfully used one person totally "transformed by an unshakable commitment to the truth of God's Word" to impact so many lives when she said that she could tell when someone had sat under Preacher Hallock's ministry—just by listening to that person talk. In fact, she was once on an elevator overseas and heard two ladies talking. After listening to them for a moment, she asked if they had ever been under Preacher Hallock's ministry, and they both said that they had!

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED** to Marilyn's father, Reverend Don J. Milam, who stood on God's *specific personal promises*, and other pastors and godly people who have encouraged us on this journey of making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises* as a way of life.

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED** to our parents, A.E. and Ruby Fine and Reverend Don J. and Ettie Marie Milam; to our children, Steve and Terri Fine and Don and Daphne Fine; to our grandchildren, Sarah, Rachel, Grace, Glory, and Hunter Fine; to future generations of our family; and to all others who would dare trust God and invest their lives in seeking, receiving, and standing on both God's general and *specific personal promises*. We will be eternally grateful for the spiritual lessons and truths passed on to us by previous generations and how they have impacted our lives. Sometimes the spiritual lessons and truths learned by one generation are not passed down to the following generations of that family, and, therefore, the next generation and future generations go through the same learning curve or entirely miss those lessons or truths. In

an attempt to be faithful to pass on the important lessons and truths we have learned about making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises* to the future generations of our family, we have written and dedicate this book to them.

**THIS BOOK IS ALSO DEDICATED** to anyone who might be asking the question Thomas asked, "How can we know the way?" After reviewing the manuscript of this book, our friend Charles Tope, who served as our pastor, a foreign missionary, and then teacher for the Billy Graham Association for many years, wrote, "This book is, in my opinion, much needed because everywhere I go people are still asking the question of Thomas: 'How can we know the way?'"

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## *Acknowledgment*

**W**E GIVE A SPECIAL THANKS to Paula Corley for her hard work and joyful spirit in formatting and editing and to Mark Mumma who has been a great help with his computer and website expertise. Both Paula and Mark have encouraged us and wanted to see that this book was finished and put into the hands of people who were interested in discerning God's will through *specific personal promises* from God.



## *Foreword*

**“READ IT THROUGH! WRITE IT DOWN! PRAY IT IN! LIVE IT OUT!”** This was the challenge repeatedly shared by E. F. “Preacher” Hallock with eager audiences of every age. Preacher firmly believed that the plans of God are revealed to the man or woman of God, by the Spirit of God, through the Word of God.

Preacher walked into my life when, as a sixteen-year-old youth eager for any excuse to drive an automobile, I accepted the assignment of transporting him from the hotel where he was staying to the church where he was speaking, a church my father then pastored. Like others before and after me, I immediately felt at home with Preacher and opened my heart about the struggles faced by almost every person my age. His wry sense of humor, thoughtful demeanor, and sage advice captivated me. What’s more, he gave me the impression I was an “insider,” one of his close friends.

Two years later, following a week at the Arkansas Baptist campground in which Preacher led the morning Bible studies, God gave me my first “Bible promise,” speaking to my heart and calling me to the ministry through a specific passage of Scripture. From that moment until this very day, every significant decision of my life has turned on specific instruction by the Lord through His Word.

Until Preacher Hallock’s death, I sought to maintain close contact with him, calling him to discuss specific issues related to life and ministry, inviting him to share in the churches I pastored, and, in his final years, periodically taking

our staff to his home where we literally sat at his feet as he taught us from his life and God's Word. Like my mentor, I believe and teach that God's plans are revealed to God's man or woman by God's Spirit through God's Word.

The book you now hold in your hand, *Making Decisions Based on God's Specific Personal Promises*, is authored by two friends whose lives were also radically impacted by Preacher Hallock's teaching. Jerry and Marilyn Fine have done us an enormous favor by clearly defining what is meant by Bible promises, explaining the underlying premise (the *what*) behind both the term and the concept, and pointing to the urgent necessity (the *why*) of living by God's promises.

In this book you will discover that living by the promises of God is not some reckless abandonment of sound theology but the very manner by which God's children are enabled to live by faith. Every area of the Christian life operates by faith. But faith is not something the believer merely thinks or feels. Faith is acting on the revealed will of God. Jerry and Marilyn Fine show us how the will of God is clearly revealed to the believer who is surrendered to the Lordship of Christ.

Get ready for a new and refreshing spiritual journey. As you read, you will be impressed with the simple fact that the Fines have hammered out these principles on the anvil of their own lives. This book moves us beyond the theoretical and into the practical application of God's truth. It is a book you will both treasure and share, a book to which you will return again and again. So turn the page and let the journey of faith begin.

Tom Elliff  
President, International Mission Board  
Southern Baptist Convention

## Preface

**W**E HAVE ALL APPROACHED A CROSSROADS or corner where we knew we must make a decision with two or more options and found ourselves asking, “What should I do?” This is especially difficult for Christians who have both surrendered and are committed to living out God’s plan for their lives and don’t want to make a mistake. They desperately want to hear from God so that they can follow His will. They are committed to obey as soon as God speaks.

Although we are desperate to know God’s will, it seems that most of the time we are not at our wits’ end when asking God for a *specific personal promise*. But sometimes we find ourselves at a point that Don J. Milam, Marilyn’s father, simply called “Wits’ End Corner.” He once told Marilyn, “Look at Psalm 107!” Then he chuckled and said, “O sweet girl, God will take you to Wits’ End Corner and sometimes scare you half to death doing it, but He will always meet you there.”

*“God will take you  
to Wits’ End Corner  
and sometimes scare  
you half to death  
doing it,  
but He will always  
meet you there.”*

Don J. Milam



*He spoke, and the winds rose,  
stirring up the waves.*

*Their ships were tossed to the heavens  
and plunged again to the depths;  
the sailors cringed in terror.*

*They reeled and staggered like drunkards  
and were **at their wits’ end**.*

*"LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.*

*He calmed the storm to a whisper  
and stilled the waves.*

*What a blessing was that stillness  
as he brought them safely into harbor!*

—Psalm 107:25-30 NLT

For more than fifty-five years, God has met us many times at Wits' End Corner with precious *specific personal promises* from His Word, the Bible, to give us His guidance, direction, or instruction that brought us "*safely into [His] harbor.*" But more often He has met us with a *specific personal promise* when it was not nearly so dramatic. At these times we have simply asked Him for a *specific personal promise* related to what we should do in order to live out His plan for our lives, and He has responded with His guidance, direction, or instruction in some way. But we are especially excited when God speaks directly to us by giving us a *specific personal promise.*

He will do the same for you. We pray that this book will help and encourage you on your journey.

*—Jerry & Marilyn Fine*

*Our concern...  
our hope...  
our purpose...  
in writing this book*

**O**UR CONCERN in writing this book is that we have provided so much information that you might see living by *specific personal promises* as a set of rules and regulations. That is far from the truth because living by *specific personal promises* has given us real freedom in Christ.

**OUR HOPE** is that in this book you will discover a path that leads to making right decisions and be freed from the consequences of making bad decisions. Please see the Scriptures and the personal experiences in this book as our testimony of God's faithfulness, stepping-stones to real freedom in Christ, and a way to experience the confidence that comes when we know that we have obeyed God and are living out His plan for our lives.

**OUR PURPOSE** in writing this book is to provide you with sufficient Scripture to understand the truth concerning *specific personal promises* and then to share our experiences of how God has used these promises in our lives. We pray that this might encourage you and others to begin or to continue living by *specific personal promises*. Making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises* has been a great way for us to discover and live out God's plan for our lives. On this path we experience real intimacy and fellowship with Jesus—and so will you because God is faithful.

—The Authors





**PART 1**

# ***Making Decisions***



## CHAPTER 1

# *What This Book Is and Is Not About*

**P**ERHAPS THE BEST WAY to begin is by making a few comments concerning what this book is about and what it is *not* about.

**THIS BOOK IS** about walking with God in the light of His Word. It is about knowing God deeply, intimately, and personally. It is about knowing Him so well that we recognize His voice and follow Him when He speaks to us personally through His Word. In John 10:11 KJV Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd,” and in verse 4 He explained that the sheep follow the shepherd because “they know His voice.” We pray that this book will challenge each one of us to know Jesus so well that when He speaks to us in His Word, the Bible, through *specific personal promises*, we will recognize His voice and understand what He wants us to do. This book is about the joy and excitement of walking daily in the light of His Word through *specific personal promises*.

*This book is about  
the joy and  
excitement of  
walking daily in the  
light of His Word  
through specific  
personal promises.*



**THIS BOOK IS** about recommending a pattern for living that becomes a way of life. Based on the daily devotional reading of God’s Word, we read the Bible to hear God speak to us personally, and as we do, it opens up the path of walking with God in the light of His Word. In this lifestyle God speaks to us as we read His Word to give us whatever we need, whether it is warning, ex-

hortation, comfort, encouragement, or guidance. We call these special verses *specific personal promises*. This devotional approach to reading God's Word is for the purpose of receiving and applying what God is saying to each of us personally.

**THIS BOOK IS** about encouraging everyone to devotionally read through the Bible each and every year of our lives, allowing the constant flow of the entire Word of God over our lives each year. Reading through the Bible each year helps to bring all of the many truths and principles in God's Word into balance and keeps us from getting off on some tangent. It helps us to know God intimately, understand His ways more clearly, and recognize His voice when He softly whispers, "...This is the way, walk in it..." (Isaiah 30:21 NKJV).

**THIS BOOK IS NOT** an exhaustive study of all the different ways that people make decisions, although several will be discussed briefly.

**THIS BOOK IS NOT** a shortcut to instant maturity in the Christian life, nor is it intended to suggest a quick fix for making decisions. It is also important to understand that we are not suggesting that a Christian is not spiritual if he or she does not practice receiving and standing on God's *specific personal promises*.



Since 1970 we have been involved in making disciples and producing disciple-makers. In 1975 we began writing and sharing a discipleship book called *One on One with God* ([www.ONEonONEwithGOD.org](http://www.ONEonONEwithGOD.org)). It is a fifteen-week process for making disciples and producing disciple-makers. *One on One with God* is a path that leads to knowing Jesus deeply, intimately, and personally. It is a lifestyle of walking daily in intimate fellowship with Him, and it is a tool for making disciples and producing disciple-makers.

In *One on One with God* many people around the world have learned or are learning the principles from God's Word that are important when making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises*. The principles we share in

this book and in *One on One with God* lay the biblical foundation for receiving and standing on God's *specific personal promises*.

We think that as you read through this book and go through *One on One with God*, you will agree that it is extremely important to practice these principles as a normal part of your life. And when you do, it becomes easier and more natural to make decisions based on God's *specific personal promises*.

We pray that in this book you will hear and feel the desperate cry from our hearts to God for guidance, direction, or instruction in one of the most important areas of our lives: making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises*.

This book was written by Jerry and Marilyn Fine in the first person plural for easy reading flow. But we also note when we are speaking specifically about either one of us.



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- This book is about the joy and excitement of walking daily in the light of His Word through *specific personal promises*.
- The principles we share in this book and in *One on One with God* lay the biblical foundation for receiving and standing on God's *specific personal promises*.



## CHAPTER 2

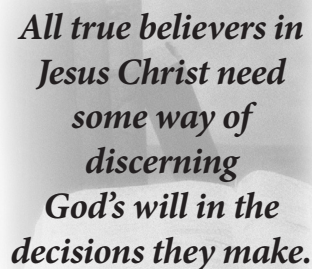
### *Introduction*

**I**S IT POSSIBLE to make decisions and know with confidence that we have made the right decision? All true believers in Jesus Christ need some way of discerning God's will in the decisions they make so that they may live out God's plan for their lives and fulfill His purpose for them by walking on the path He has chosen for them.

Seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *specific personal promises* from His Word, the Bible, is one way God has provided for true believers to know with confidence that they are following His plan, purpose, and path for their lives. To live without this confidence in discerning God's will is like sailing on a ship without a rudder, aimlessly floating and being blown by the winds of life, first one direction and then another, when facing decisions.

There is nothing that affects our lives more than the decisions we make, yet most people do not follow God's instruction on how to make decisions. Most people make decisions by following their five senses, their desires, and their own intellect, or they simply follow the crowd and do what others do.

Like a loving father, our heavenly Father gives us important instruction in His Word on how to make decisions because He wants to protect us from the



***All true believers in  
Jesus Christ need  
some way of  
discerning  
God's will in the  
decisions they make.***

wasted time and consequences that follow wrong decisions. Yet many times we rush in and make decisions without consulting God.

*Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.*

—Proverbs 3:5 AMP

God wants to lead us in the decisions we face, and He wants us to have confidence and know that we have made the right decision. He is willing to give us direction, and we often find that He gives us that direction and confidence through *specific personal promises* from His Word.

## **Beginning to live by *specific personal promises***

About halfway through my freshman year in college, I (Jerry) began staying at school on weekends and attending a church near the campus. I soon joined that church, and that decision has forever changed my life.

The pastor of that church, E. F. Hallock, liked to be called “Preacher,” and he modeled what he preached. God had given him a passion, wrapped in a quiet, gentle spirit, for three truths: prayer, reading God’s Word, and living by promises. God used Preacher Hallock to mark my life with a passion for these three life-changing truths.

**Beyond this point of the book, most text references to *specific personal promises* will be shortened to *promises*. When the word is not italicized, we are referring to general promises.**

When Preacher spoke of promises, he included, of course, the general promises that apply to all of us, such as John 3:16. But usually when he spoke of promises, he was referring to *specific personal promises*, which he simply called *promises*, something I had never heard about before.

## **Does God really want to give us direction through *specific personal promises*?**

We must admit that we stand in awe of our God, who loves us so much that He is willing and desires to be involved in every area of our lives—including the decisions we make.



*Promises* are given to us by God at times when we, as individuals, stand at a crossroads, trying to decide which way to go—or sometimes when we are not even aware that we are approaching an important decision time. God speaks directly through a specific verse or series of verses in the Bible to give clear direction concerning the path He wants the person to take.

When we stop to think about some of the general promises God has given us in the Bible, it shouldn't surprise us that He wants to lead us in the individual decisions we face and that He is capable of doing just that by speaking to us directly through His Word. In fact, our Lord promises that He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7 KJV) and that He will meet our every need (Philippians 4:19 KJV). And what greater need do we have than that of the Lord's help in the multitude of decisions that we face?

God says to “call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15 NKJV). He reminds us that nothing is too difficult for Him (Jeremiah 32:17 NASB). He tells us that He is faithful to exercise His power on our behalf (Deuteronomy 7:9 KJV) and that the things impossible with men are possible with God (Luke 18:27 KJV).

We know that He has promised us that He loves us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3 KJV), that we are His prized possession (Deuteronomy 7:6 MOF), and that He is watching for opportunities to show Himself strong on our behalf if we are loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9 NEB).

He reminds us that He cares about everything we care about, for He says,

*Cast all your care upon him...*

—1 Peter 5:7 NIV84

Doesn't that sound like a God who wants to be involved in every part of our lives—including the decisions we make?

Yes, the Lord our God is with us, and He is mighty to save. He takes great delight in us and quiets us with His love as He rejoices over us with singing (Zephaniah 3:17 NIV84). When we struggle at a crossroads, trying to make an important decision, we need to remember that the Lord our God is with us,

He is mighty in power, He takes great delight in us, and He wants to quiet our anxious spirits with His love.

## God's plan, path, and purpose for our lives

God is more concerned than we are that we make right decisions because *He has a great plan for our lives* that gives us hope for a great future (Jeremiah 29:11 LIV). God's plan for our lives is where we always find the greatest peace, joy, and contentment because God is the One who made us (Psalm 139:13-15 LIV). He knows even better than we do what we need and when we need it. He knows where, when, and how we will find the greatest joy, peace, and contentment, simply because He knows us better than we know ourselves (Psalm 139:1 NLT). He is omniscient, and His plan for our lives is flawless. We did not say his plan is without trials, difficulties, or hard times, but we did say it is flawless. It is the best plan because it is the plan our loving Heavenly Father has chosen for us.

Simply stated, *God's plan for man is for man to live out God's plan.*

God not only has a great plan for our lives, but He has provided a path for each day that will enable us to live out His plan. Every day we face many decisions, and with every decision comes the opportunity to make the right choice(s) to keep us on His path. That is why the Bible says we are to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not to lean on our own understanding; in all our ways we are to acknowledge Him, and He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV). God's Word becomes a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths (Psalm 119:105 NKJV), and He will be our guide even to death (Psalm 48:14 NKJV). He will guide us continually (Isaiah 58:11 NKJV), and because our God is faithful to fulfill His promises (Hebrews 10:23 NKJV), we are to believe and stand on His promises that lead us upward on the path He has provided and chosen for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28 NKJV).

*God is more  
concerned than  
we are that we  
make right  
decisions because  
He has a great  
plan for our  
lives...*



It is important that we understand that God's plan—His path for our lives—is not without purpose. His purpose is that we know Him deeply and intimately (Philippians 3:10 AMP) and that we glorify Him in every motive, thought, attitude, word, and action (1 Corinthians 10:31). His purpose is that we are to become like Him in our will, to the extent that we always pray, "Not my will, but Your will be done" (Matthew 26:39 NIV84), and in our character so that when others see us, they see a pure reflection of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT). Our lives are not to be selfishly lived out but are to be lived out to fulfill God's purpose for giving us life. Life is not about us but about God. Max Barnett, long-time director of the Baptist Student Union (now known as Baptist Collegiate Ministries) at the University of Oklahoma, said it well: "The purpose of man is to serve the purpose of God."

We see the importance of seeking God's path as we hear David cry out in Psalm 25,

*Show me the right path, O LORD;  
point out the road for me to follow...  
The LORD is good and does what is right;  
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.  
He leads the humble in what is right,  
teaching them his way.  
The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness  
all those who keep his covenant and obey his decrees...  
Who are those who fear the LORD?  
He will show them the path they should choose.*

—Psalm 25:4, 8-10, 12 NLT

***Remember that we are here to live out God's plan for our lives.***

You see, life is to be lived according to God's plan, and when we do that, our lives take on meaning. We can accomplish nothing of eternal significance if we are simply making up the plan for our lives as we walk through life. Here is the point: If we want our lives to count for eternity, they must be lived by following God's plan for our lives. And how do we know His plan if we are not seeking His direction in the decisions we face and then, by faith, following the direction He gives?

## Faith is essential.

In 1990 our pastor, Dr. Anthony Jordan, spoke these words in a sermon: ***“When we march by sight, we get what we can see. When we march by faith, we get what God promised.”***

At least four times in Scripture we find the phrase “the just shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4 KJV, Romans 1:17 KJV, Galatians 3:11 KJV, Hebrews 10:38 KJV). The abundant Christian life (John 10:10) is a life of faith where we trust God for everything every day—including salvation, deliverance, strength, comfort, needs, direction, and forgiveness. Did you notice that we are to trust God every day for direction? That means we are to seek Him and trust Him to lead us as we make decisions. If we are faithful to trust Him, He will show us His path.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

If we are to live by faith, we must learn to take God at His word and not doubt His promises. When we ask God for something, whether it is direction or anything else, we must believe and not doubt that He will answer our prayers.

*...when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord...*

—James 1:6-7 NIV84

Therefore, if we want to receive, we must believe that God will answer our prayers for direction or whatever we ask.

So where do we find this confidence to pray, believing that we will receive what we have asked? This confidence comes from knowing God—not just intellectually but being intimately involved with Him each day by following Jesus, our example.

## **Understanding God's character helps us have faith and confidence in Him.**

It is much easier to have confidence in God when we understand the moral character, or nature, of God.

### **✿ *God is holy.***

When we begin to view God as holy (1 Peter 1:15 KJV), we see God as absolutely pure in every aspect of His being. We begin to recognize His pure, loving nature as He consistently extends to us His mercy and grace. Because He is holy, we can have confidence in Him.

### **✿ *God is love.***

God is love (1 John 4:8 KJV), and He loves us because that is His nature. Love originated with God (1 John 4:10 KJV), and we can do nothing to deserve His love. Even when we were living apart from Christ, excluded from God's people, without God and without hope (Ephesians 2:12 NLT), God loved us. We can trace God's love for us back 2,000 years when He allowed His only Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. The fact that God values, honors, and loves us (Isaiah 43:4 BBE) can even be traced back before the crucifixion to the very beginning when He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4 WEY). As the objects of His love, we are precious in His sight (Isaiah 43:4 RHM), and the love with which He loves us is everlasting: "...Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love..." (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV). Therefore, because of God's great love for us, we can have confidence in Him.

### **✿ *God is righteous.***

God is totally and absolutely righteous, upright in every way (Deuteronomy 32:4 NASB). God is always right, and we can never be right in His sight (Romans 10:3 NLT) apart from believing in His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10 KJV). Our claim to righteousness is

based solely on what Jesus did for us on the cross (Isaiah 53:11 KJV). Because God is always right, we can have confidence in Him.

✿ **God is truth.**

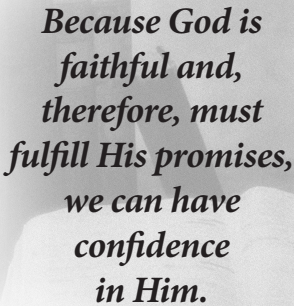
Jesus said of Himself,

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

—John 14:6 NKJV

Jesus is truth personified. Truth is the nature of God; therefore, He cannot lie (Titus 1:2 KJV). Because God is truth and cannot lie, we can have confidence in who He is and what He says.

✿ **God is faithful.**



***Because God is faithful and, therefore, must fulfill His promises, we can have confidence in Him.***

God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9 KJV), for it is His nature and who He is. It is comforting to know that God must always fulfill His promises because He is faithful. Faithfulness of just 99.999 percent is unfaithful because *faithful* means 100 percent of the time, without exception. And that means we can absolutely and totally trust God to do what He says He will do. Because God is faithful and, therefore, must fulfill His promises, we can have confidence in Him.

Hopefully we have come to the point of understanding that because of God's perfect nature and character, He is totally trustworthy; therefore, we can have confidence in Him. This confidence in God is extremely important when we are making decisions and trusting Him to keep His promises.

**Our confidence in God grows as we follow the example of Jesus.**

Jesus Himself is our model of trusting and having confidence in the Father, so let's see how Jesus demonstrated His confidence in God the Father. In the

Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus struggled with the most difficult decision He ever faced. Three times He prayed,

*"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

—Matthew 26:39 NKJV

Jesus modeled tremendous confidence in the Father when He simply presented His request to the Father in prayer and then essentially said, "Father, what I want more than anything else is for You to have Your will accomplished in this decision; therefore, not My will but Your will be done." Jesus had great confidence in the Father because He knew the Father deeply and intimately; therefore, He knew that the Father was totally trustworthy. The challenge for us is to demonstrate this same kind of confidence in God by involving Him in all our decisions.

Understanding the nature and character of God and then following the example of Jesus gives us a biblical basis for our confidence in God as we invite and encourage Him to speak to us through His Word with a *promise* concerning a specific decision we face.

### **We cannot put God in a box, nor does He put Himself in a box.**

God does not put Himself in a box that would prevent Him from blessing us. He promises us that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5 KJV) and that He will stay with us, strengthen us, help us, and uphold us (Isaiah 41:10 KJV). He says,

*"Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

—Joshua 1:9 NKJV

And He comforts us with these words:

*"Since you are precious in My sight,  
Since you are honored and I love you...  
"Do not fear, for I am with you..."*

—Isaiah 43:4-5 NASB

There is no question that God wants to direct us through the decisions we face because He repeatedly tells us to ask.

“...Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

—John 16:24 NKJV

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

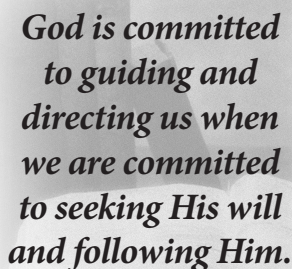
—Matthew 21:22 NKJV

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

—Luke 11:9 NKJV

“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

—John 14:14 NKJV



**God is committed to guiding and directing us when we are committed to seeking His will and following Him.**

Doesn't this sound like God strongly desires for us to come to Him with every problem—including when we stand at a crossroads needing direction? God is always willing to lead us when we seek His direction. Sometimes He chooses to lead us by giving us a *promise*, and at times He chooses to lead us in other ways, but He *will* lead us. God is committed to guiding and directing us when we are committed to seeking His will and following Him.

### **Paul received direction from God through a *specific personal promise*.**

You might be wondering if we have an example in the Bible of someone who made a decision based on a *promise* he or she had received from God's Word. The answer is yes, and it was a very important decision. In Acts 13, Paul speaks of an experience that he and Barnabas had at Antioch when the truth they were preaching was rejected by the Jews.

*Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us:*

*‘I have you as a light to the Gentiles,*

*That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

—Acts 13:46-47 NKJV

What did Paul mean when he said, “For so the Lord has commanded us”? He was speaking of a *promise* God had given him and Barnabas from the book of Isaiah.



*"Indeed He says,  
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"*

—Isaiah 49:6 NKJV

There are two important things to notice here. First, notice that Paul and Barnabas received a *promise* from God, telling them that He was sending them as a "light to the Gentiles." Second, notice that the *promise* they received from God was not even an entire verse. God highlighted just a portion of a verse for Paul and Barnabas so that they would know what He wanted them to do. These things are important because today God still gives us *promises* to provide direction for us, and often a *promise* is just a portion of a verse.

Paul and Barnabas did not believe that God could be held in what Preacher Hallock called "a dark cell of context." They believed God spoke to them directly by giving them a *promise* as they stood at a crossroads, and this *promise* from God was clear direction of what God wanted them to do in the decision they faced. They were to go to the Gentiles.

How many times has God spoken specifically to us to give us clear direction for our lives from a letter written to the believers in Rome (Romans), Corinth (Corinthians), Galatia (Galatians), Ephesus (Ephesians), Philippi (Philippians), or Colossae (Colossians)? Consider, for example:

*And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

—Ephesians 4:32 NKJV

If, while reading this verse, God illuminates my mind and convicts my heart that I have not been kind, tenderhearted, or forgiving in my dealings with another person, am I to receive that as a word from God encouraging me to confess the sin, repent, and correct the wrong I have done? Of course I am to do this because it is a general promise that applies to all of us. In the same way, God speaks to us specifically when we are crying out for help and sincerely asking Him to give us a *promise* as we stand at a crossroads, not know-

ing which way to go and not wanting to make a mistake. Wouldn't you do that for your own child?

## **General and *specific personal promises* described and defined**

Before we leave this section, let us share with you the difference between God's general promises and His *specific personal promises*.

### ***General promises from God's Word***

A general promise is a promise God gives to us in the Bible. It is offered to all and is usually intended to give instruction or direction. It may be claimed or taken by those who are willing to receive it, obey it, and stand on it.

In response to a promise given to God's people in Habakkuk 2:4, Matthew Henry writes, "Those who are truly good, and whose hearts are upright with God, will value the promise, and venture their all upon it; and in confidence of the truth of it, will keep close to God and duty in the most difficult trying times, and will then live comfortably in communion with God, dependence on him, and expectation of him."<sup>1</sup>

### ***Specific personal promises from God's Word***

A *specific personal promise* is a word of guidance, direction, or instruction or simply a *promise* spoken directly from God to you or me through the Bible. It is usually in response to our desperate cry for God to help us by meeting us at our point of need, but sometimes God gives us these *promises* even before we know we have a need.

*Specific personal promises* share these characteristics:

1. They may consist of nothing more than the *promise* from God through the Bible about what He has done, is doing, or will do on our behalf.
2. They may consist of words of guidance, direction, or instruction from God through the Bible, accompanied with His *promise* of what He will do if we obey.

3. They may consist of words of guidance, direction, or instruction from God through the Bible, without mentioning the promise of blessing that will come to us if we obey. In this case the person to whom the *promise* is given looks to one of God's many general promises where He always promises blessing for immediate obedience.

## God always promises blessing for obedience.

Here are a few of the general promises upon which we base our assurance of blessing for obedience to His *specific personal promises* (see *Nave's Topical Bible* under "Blessing—Divine, Contingent Upon Obedience"<sup>2</sup> for many more Scripture references):

*"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine."*

—Exodus 19:5 NKJV

*"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."*

—Deuteronomy 7:9, 12-14 NKJV

*"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God..."*

—Deuteronomy 11:26-28 NKJV

*"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God."*

—Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NKJV

*And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."*

—1 Samuel 15:22 ESV

*"Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed."*

—Joshua 1:8 NLT

*But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the law that sets you free—and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

—James 1:25 NLT

## Why do we call them *specific personal promises*?

A *specific personal promise* is *specific* in that it applies to a specific situation. It is God's precise, exact, and timely response to meet us at our point of need.

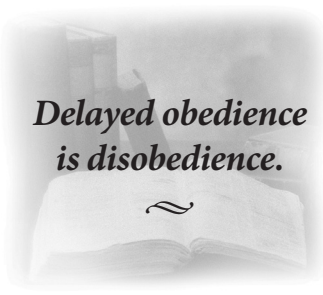
A *specific personal promise* is *personal* because God addresses it to you or me as individuals to help us in a particular situation.

A *specific personal promise* is a *promise* in that it is a guarantee of what God will do if we obey.

1. It may be a promise without conditions.
2. It may be a conditional promise where God says, "If you do this, I will do this."
3. It may be guidance, direction, or instruction from God with no accompanying promise of what He will do if we obey. But we know from many of God's general promises that He blesses immediate obedience even though He may not specify what type of blessing we will receive.

## Why is there an emphasis on immediate obedience?

Immediate obedience is important because God teaches us an important principle in Numbers 13:30-14:45: Delayed obedience is disobedience.



***Delayed obedience  
is disobedience.***

God had given the children of Israel the Promised Land, but they refused to obey and take possession. Because of their disobedience, God pronounced His judgment on those who had been disobedient and then gave them a second command (Numbers 14:22-25). They did not immediately follow even this second command, which was to go another direction. Instead, they presumed upon God and decided to ignore His second command and follow His first command to go in and take the Promised Land. The children of Israel were defeated, and the rebellious disobedient among them were never allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Immediate obedience should be important to us because it is important to God.



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- All true believers in Jesus Christ need some way of discerning God's will in the decisions they make.
- Seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises* from the Bible is one way God has provided for true believers to know with confidence that they are following His plan, path, and purpose for their lives.
- *Promises* are given to us by God at times when we, as individuals, stand at a crossroads, trying to decide which way to go or sometimes when we are not even aware that we are approaching an important decision time.
- What greater need do we have than that of the Lord's help in the multitude of decisions that we face?
- God is more concerned than we are that we make right decisions because He has a great plan for our lives that gives us hope for a great future (Jeremiah 29:11 LIV).
- God's plan for man is for man to live out God's plan.
- God's Word becomes a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths (Psalm 119:105 NKJV).
- "The purpose of man is to serve the purpose of God" (Max Barnett).
- He will show us the path we should choose (Psalm 25:12 NLT).
- If we want our lives to count for eternity, they must be lived by following God's plan for our lives.
- Life is to be lived according to God's plan.

- God will show us which path to take (Proverbs 3:6 NLT).
- Faithfulness of just 99.999 percent is unfaithful because *faithful* means 100 percent of the time, without exception.
- Because God is faithful and, therefore, must fulfill His promises, we can have confidence in Him.
- Jesus had great confidence in the Father because He knew the Father deeply and intimately; therefore, He knew that the Father was totally trustworthy.
- God is committed to guiding and directing us when we are committed to seeking His will and following Him.
- Paul and Barnabas did not believe that God could be held in a dark cell of context.
- God always promises blessing for obedience.
- Delayed obedience is disobedience.

## CHAPTER 3

# *Common Ways of Making Decisions Mentioned in God's Word*

**E**VERY CHRISTIAN FACES MANY DECISIONS every day. Does God provide sufficient guidance, direction, and instruction for us to make the right decision every time? If so, how is this possible? Let's start with a brief overview of five common ways of making decisions found in God's Word.

### **Five ways that God has given us direction**

God has primarily used five different ways to either lead us or to confirm that He is leading us. In these ways we have found God's leadership when we were standing at a crossroads seeking His direction. Notice that we are not saying that these are the *only* ways by which God leads His people. We are merely describing the ways God has used to lead us or give us confirmation of His leading.

Please understand that in this book we are not trying to present an exhaustive study of all the different ways God leads His people. This book is about making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises*.

The five ways by which God has personally given us direction are *specific personal promises*, godly wisdom, putting out the fleece, receiving the counsel of others, and open doors and circumstances.

#### **1. Specific personal promises**

*Specific personal promises* are given to us by God at times when we as individuals stand at a crossroads trying to discern God's will. God speaks

directly to us at the crossroads through a specific verse or verses to give clear direction concerning the path He wants us to take. This is a primary way that God speaks to us. It is also our favorite way because when God has given us a *promise* and we later experience hard times, we can go back and draw strength by reading the *promise* again, confirming the fact that we made the right decision. These *promises* cover a wide range of subjects. Some relate to major decisions, but other *promises* address decisions you might consider minor. We share some of these *promises* in detail in Chapter 4 of this book.

## 2. *Seeking godly wisdom*

*He hides away sound and godly Wisdom and stores it for the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with Him); He is a shield to those who walk uprightly and in integrity...*

—Proverbs 2:7 AMP

Seeking godly wisdom is the other primary way that we look for direction from God. In fact, we make most of our decisions by simply asking God for

godly wisdom and trusting Him to shield us from making a mistake. Proverbs 4:11 AMP defines godly wisdom as “comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God.” Therefore, when we ask God for godly wisdom, we are asking for His wisdom to make the decision just as Jesus would make it so that it is in agreement with God's will, His ways, and His purposes. Seeking godly wisdom is how we find the answer to the question, “What would Jesus do?” We often acknowledge to God that we do not know what to do or how to do it and

that we are going to take Him at His word and just trust Him to give us godly wisdom as we make the decision facing us. You see, God has invited us to ask Him for godly wisdom in making decisions.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

—James 1:5 NKJV



Therefore, we are simply being obedient to what God has told us to do when we make decisions based on seeking the godly wisdom He has promised to give if we ask Him for it. But God has further words for us concerning this matter.

*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.*

—James 1:6-7 NKJV

The clear instruction here is that when we ask God for godly wisdom in making decisions, we must believe that He will give us that wisdom. If we doubt that we will receive the godly wisdom for which we have asked, we definitely will not receive it. Therefore, when facing decisions for which God has not given us a *promise*, we ask Him for godly wisdom to make the right decision and then make the decision, trusting Him for the wisdom He promises. We never look back and wonder if we made the right decision because God has told us that we must believe that He gave us the godly wisdom for which we asked. We are simply trusting Him as He told us to do and not doubting. We can be confident because we are seeking His will and not our own.

You may wonder why we rely so much on seeking godly wisdom in making decisions when our favorite way of making decisions is to receive a *promise* from God. We do this because many times a deadline for making the decision comes and God has not yet given us a *promise*, and we do not want to simply rely on our own understanding. We want God to direct us (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

Another thing you might wonder is why God doesn't always give us a *promise*. We believe the answer is that both receiving *promises* and relying on godly wisdom require faith, and God wants us to be continually growing in and exercising our faith. This is because "the just shall live by faith" (in the NKJV: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). Faith is a new dimension where true believers live beyond their five senses, beyond their own desires, beyond their own intellect, and

beyond simply following the crowd and doing it the way others do it or because others do it. Faith is how God commands Christians to live: "The just shall live by faith."

### 3. *Putting out the fleece*

Putting out the fleece is usually not a primary way that we seek God's leadership. Instead, we more often use it as a way to confirm a *promise* God has given us. The idea of putting out the fleece comes from the book of Judges where God spoke to Gideon and told him,

*"Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"*

—Judges 6:14 NKJV

God had spoken to Gideon, and because Gideon wanted to know for sure that he understood God correctly, he asked God to let something happen that would confirm this was what He wanted him to do. He placed a fleece, a piece of sheepskin, on the ground and asked God to let the fleece be wet from dew while the ground around it remained dry when he arose the next morning. The next morning the fleece was just as Gideon had requested. Then Gideon asked God for a second confirmation. This time he asked God to let the fleece remain dry when the ground around it was wet. And the next morning that is exactly what had happened when Gideon checked the fleece (Judges 6:36-40). At that point Gideon considered that he had understood God correctly. He obeyed God, and God gave the Israelites victory.

After we believe God has spoken to us by giving us a *promise*, we sometimes ask God to confirm that we have understood Him correctly by asking Him to let a specific thing happen. This is called "putting out the fleece." When putting out the fleece, we do not ask God to bless us at another person's expense. Instead, if another person is involved in our seeking a confirmation with a "fleece," we often ask God to bless him or her in a specific way, with the understanding that his or her blessing will be our confirmation.

First, we must emphasize that when God has spoken to us and we ask Him for confirmation, it is because we want to walk in the very center of His will and do not want to make a mistake. It is not because we doubt God or want Him to change His mind. We simply want to know for sure that we have understood Him correctly.

**Example 1:** Several years ago, we were not sure whether God was leading us to buy a certain home we had seen or, instead, was leading us to build a home with that specific floor plan on some lots that He had given us a *promise* to buy. We needed confirmation from God about what He wanted us to do because we didn't want to make a mistake. So we put out the fleece: We asked God to bless the Christian people who owned the home by giving them a better offer than we had given them if He wanted us to build a home like theirs on the lots He had given us a *promise* to buy. The next day I contacted our realtor, and that very day the owners of the home had received three offers better than our offer. This news was pretty exciting because before that day, our offer had been the best offer they had received in the preceding ninety days. This was the answer to our fleece and the confirmation that we were to build on the lots God had given us a *promise* to buy. It worked great for both the Christian couple selling their home and for us because they sold their home, and we were able to discern God's will in what He wanted us to do.

**Example 2:** Abraham sent his servant to his country and his relatives to find a wife for his son, Isaac. The servant arrived and stood by the spring, and when it was time to make this important decision, he put out the fleece.

*He prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, guide me today. Be faithful to my master Abraham. Here I am, standing by the spring, and the daughters of the people who live in the town are coming out to draw water. I will say to a young woman, 'Please lower your jar so I may drink.' May the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac reply, 'Drink, and I'll give your camels water too.' In this way I will know that you have been faithful to my master."*

*Before he had finished praying, there came Rebekah with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah [Milcah was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor]. Now the young woman was very beautiful. She was a virgin; no man had ever had sexual relations with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came back up. Abraham's servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a sip of water from your jug." "Drink, my lord," she replied, and quickly lowering her jug to her hands, she gave him a drink. When she had done so, she said, I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have drunk as much as they want." She quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw more water until she had drawn enough for all his camels...*

*Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "This is the LORD's doing. Our wishes are of no concern. Rebekah stands here before you. Take her and go so that she may become the wife of your master's son, just as the LORD has decided."*

—Genesis 24:12-20, 50-51 NET

**Example 3:** When Jonathan, the son of King Saul, faced an important decision, he put out the fleece.

*Jonathan replied, "All right! We'll go over to these men and fight them. If they say to us, 'Stay put until we approach you,' we will stay right there and not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come up against us,' we will go up. For in that case the LORD has given them into our hand—it will be a sign to us."*

*When they made themselves known to the Philistine garrison, the Philistines said, "Look! The Hebrews are coming out of the holes in which they hid themselves." Then the men of the garrison said to Jonathan and his armor bearer, "Come on up to us so we can teach you a thing or two!" Then Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up behind me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel!"*

*Jonathan crawled up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer following behind him. Jonathan struck down the Philistines, while his armor bearer came along behind him and killed them. In this initial skirmish Jonathan and his armor bearer struck down about twenty men in an area that measured about half an acre.*

—1 Samuel 14:8-14 NET

#### **4. Receiving the counsel of others**

*Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*

—Proverbs 11:14 NKJV

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

—Proverbs 15:22 NIV84

Receiving the counsel of others is not a primary way we use to discern God's will, but we are often greatly influenced by the counsel of others. We use this counsel in two ways:

1. We use it to help us discern the question we are to ask God as we seek a *promise*.
2. We lay the counsel we received from others before God and ask Him if this is what He wants us to do. Or we ask for godly wisdom to know what to do in light of the counsel we received from others.

The person receiving the counsel of others should remember to do these three things:

1. Pray for godly discernment.
2. Check out the counsel in light of Scripture. Follow the example of those in Acts 17:11 NLT, who evaluated what they were told to see if it was true:

*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

3. Remember that if you are the person receiving counsel from other people, you are still responsible and will be held accountable for making the right decision.

God's Word tells us that there is safety and success in seeking the godly counsel of others. But it is important to pray for discernment because often we receive conflicting counsel and must discern what God wants us to do. Let us give you an example from 1 Kings 12:6-14 NIV84:

***Remember that if you  
are the person  
receiving counsel from  
other people, you are  
still responsible and  
will be held  
accountable for making  
the right decision.***



*Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.*

*They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."*

*But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us?'"*

*The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'—tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"*

*Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions."*

Rehoboam rejected the wise counsel of one group and followed the unwise counsel of another group. For this act of rebellion, for his lapses into idolatry, and for his failure to put God first, God took the kingdom from Rehoboam.

We have found that receiving the counsel of others is an important way to gather the facts. Getting another person's perspective often helps us see the situation more clearly, especially in highly specialized areas like the law, medicine, taxes, etc.

Others who accurately give godly counsel usually point us to the Word of God, supporting their counsel with principles from God's Word, and they are usually not too quick to tell us exactly what to do. They want us to take their advice, check it out in light of principles from God's Word, pray for godly discernment, and then make the decision.

The biggest problem in seeking the counsel of others is that many Christians turn to others for counsel as their first and final choice rather than turning to God first.

*"Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,  
"Who take counsel, but not of Me,*

*And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,  
That they may add sin to sin..."*

—Isaiah 30:1 NKJV

## 5. *Open doors and circumstances*

We suggest that if you are going to use open doors and circumstances as a primary way of making decisions, you should pray desperately, persistently, and specifically while, in faith, believing that God will be the one who opens and closes the doors. For many Christians, however, open doors and circumstances seem to be the primary criteria upon which they base their decisions—often with little or no prayer involved in the process. They simply follow the path of least resistance by always looking for open doors rather than desperately seeking to live out God's plan for their lives.

In 2 Corinthians 2:12 KJV Paul speaks about a door (an opportunity) that was opened for him by the Lord. Therefore, we know that God does open doors. But Paul also said,

*...we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and time again—but Satan hindered us.*

—1 Thessalonians 2:18 NKJV

This verse lets us know that Satan is also in the business of opening and closing doors. Therefore, we decided that if we used this method of making decisions, we would have to be very prayerful, careful, and discerning.

When relying on open doors and circumstances as a way of making decisions, we must still discern who opened the door and whether or not it is God's will for us to walk through it. Our experience has been that if we had tried to walk through every open door we have encountered, we would have

***When relying on open doors and circumstances as a way of making decisions, we must still discern who opened the door and if it is God's will for us to walk through it.***



missed God's best for our lives. There is simply no way to walk through every open door; therefore, those relying heavily on open doors and circumstances as their primary means of making decisions need to pray for godly discernment because there are many opportunities for making a mistake on this path. Maybe we can see more clearly the great need for godly discernment when we see how Paul responded to a door (an opportunity) that was opened for him by the Lord:

*When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.*

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 ESV

Even though God opened a door for Paul to stay and preach in Troas, Paul went on to Macedonia.

The order in which we personally have the greatest comfort and confidence in making decisions is:

1. *Asking God for a specific personal promise.*
2. *Asking God for godly wisdom.*
3. *Putting out the fleece.*
4. *Receiving godly counsel.*
5. *Seeking an open door.*

## **Reasons for sharing our priorities in making decisions**

We have been asked why we think that making decisions based on *promises* is superior to any other way of making decisions. In our minds the answer is very simple:

1. The primary way that God speaks to us today is through the Bible (Psalm 119:105 KJV). The Bible admonishes us to saturate our lives with God's Word (2 Timothy 3:15-17 AMP). It commands us not to depend on our own understanding but instead to trust God totally and completely in every area of our lives (Proverbs 3:5 KJV). It teaches us to ask in prayer, believing that we will receive that for which



we ask (James 1:5-7 KJV) because we only ask for God's will to be accomplished and not our own (1 John 5:14-15 KJV). If we believe these truths, then it is logical for us to go directly to God through prayer and expect Him to speak to us in the most common way that He speaks to us today: through the Bible (Romans 15:4 MSG).

2. Asking God for godly wisdom is a close second as a way of making decisions for us because this is something we are told to do in Scripture. The key here, however, is that we must believe that we will receive this godly wisdom or we will not receive it (James 1:5-7 KJV). Asking for godly wisdom, therefore, requires the same amount of faith as simply asking God for a *promise*.
3. Putting out the fleece (Judges 6:36-40; Genesis 24:12-15) requires us to place a lot of emphasis on asking God to let things happen, which can, unfortunately, easily involve our pride and selfish nature. When using this method we must make sure that we are yielded to God, only seeking His will, and that our purpose in asking God to respond to the fleece is to bring honor and glory to God. We are cautious when using this method and do not usually employ it as a primary way of discerning God's will, but we often use it as a way of asking God to confirm what we believe He has told us to do.
4. Making decisions based on receiving godly counsel is even less important to us than putting out the fleece. This is because if you ask two or three godly people for advice, you will usually receive two or three conflicting answers. Yet "in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14 KJV). Therefore, we receive godly counsel as an important means of gathering the facts before asking God for a *promise* or for confirmation. Remember that after receiving the good or bad counsel from others, we still remain ultimately responsible to God to make the right decision, and it is very important that we always prize God's counsel more than receiving the counsel of others (Isaiah 30:1 KJV).

5. Seeking an open door is also a legitimate way to make decisions (1 Corinthians 16:9 KJV), but it is the least important to us because we know that Satan also opens and closes doors to hinder and deceive us (1 Thessalonians 2:18 KJV). Our experience has been that there is no way we could have walked through every door that was open before us. Even when a door is open, we must still discern whether it was God or Satan who opened the door or is hindering us before we walk through it.

## **Two important confirmation tests**

Regardless of how God leads us in making a decision, there are two tests we can apply to give us confidence that we are making the right decision or to give us warning that we are about to make the wrong decision.

### ***1. Confirmation in Our Spirit Test***

When we as Christians progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Jesus by consistently saturating our lives with God's Word and meditating on the principles and truths therein, we become very familiar with the Great Shepherd's voice. We recognize His voice when He speaks to our hearts as He spoke to Isaiah to confirm, "...This is the way, walk in it..." (Isaiah 30:21 NKJV) and just as He spoke to Elijah in "a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12 KJV). Although He may lead us in different ways at different times in our lives, He still confirms in our hearts that He is the one giving us direction and that this is the right decision.

***Example:*** How many times have we struggled with a decision or confirmation that we are making the right decision and then thought to cry out to God for help, finding that He responded by confirming in our spirit, "...This is the way..." (Isaiah 30:21 NKJV) and giving us, at that point, a tremendous peace and confidence?

Still, we must exercise caution because Satan is constantly whispering in our ears, trying to get us to think or do things that would be dishonoring

to God. So we must be sure that the ears of our hearts are trained to discern and understand the Great Shepherd's voice. This training takes place as we invest time with Him in His Word and in prayer each day until we become like sheep that are able to recognize and distinguish their shepherd's voice—even when there are many other voices calling out to get our attention (John 10:4 KJV).

*...we must be sure  
that the ears  
of our hearts are  
trained to  
discern and  
understand the  
Great Shepherd's  
voice.*



## **2. The Three Lights Test**

In this test, we first look at the life of Jesus to make sure that what we think God is saying to us is consistent with the life of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, and the character of Jesus.

**Example:** We become very much like the captain of a ship who must steer his vessel through a very narrow and dangerous channel. To do so, he lines up three separate lights on three separate buoys, out in the distance and beyond the dangerous area. The captain understands the value of keeping these three lights in line. He knows that the purpose of the lights is to guide ships safely through the dangerous area by keeping them in the center of the passage, as far as possible from the rocky shores on either side where many ships have crashed. He knows that if he keeps these lights lined up, he, his ship, and his crew will sail safely through the narrow and dangerous waters and reach the other side.

Decision times can be dangerous times for us, so we must use caution and keep three lights in line. If they do not line up, we are about to make a serious mistake.

In making decisions the three lights represent:

***Light #1: How Jesus lived (His actions)***

***Light #2: What Jesus taught (His teachings)***

***Light #3: Who Jesus is (His moral character—He is truth and love, and He is holy, righteous, and faithful.)***

If what we think God is telling us to do is inconsistent with how Jesus lived and what Jesus taught or with the moral character of Jesus, then we can be confident that what we think God is telling us to do is not from God. In other words, if at least one of the lights is not in line, we are in danger of making the wrong decision. We need to immediately make an adjustment and get all three lights in line.

The Three Lights Test is a great test to let us know that we are about to make a mistake in the decision we are struggling with. But it is important to remember that the test on its own does not provide sufficient grounds for making a decision. We cannot make a conclusive decision based merely on the fact that the three lights are lined up.

***Example:*** A young man may be praying about asking a young lady to marry him. The young woman may be very Christlike in her actions (Light #1). It may be obvious that she is committed to follow and obey the teachings of Jesus (Light #2), and she may be very Christlike in her character (Light #3). But these things alone do not mean that God has chosen this young lady to be the wife of the young man.

As a result of these limitations, for the most part we use the Three Lights Test to make sure that we are not headed in the wrong direction.

We must remember to apply these two tests—the Confirmation in Our Spirit Test and the Three Lights Test—and we will save ourselves a lot of grief in having to face unnecessary consequences for making bad decisions.

The rest of this book focuses primarily on making decisions based on God's *promises* when we have a confirmation in our spirit that God is guiding and all three lights are in line.



## *Chapter takeaways:*

- Please understand that in this book we are not trying to present an exhaustive study of all the different ways God leads His people.
- Most of our decisions are made by simply asking God for godly wisdom and trusting Him to shield us from making a mistake.
- Remember that if you are the person receiving counsel from other people, you are still responsible and will be held accountable for making the right decision.
- When relying on open doors and circumstances as a way of making decisions, we must still discern who opened the door and whether or not it is God's will for us to walk through it.
- The primary way that God speaks to us today is through the Bible (Psalm 119:105 KJV).
- Satan also opens and closes doors to hinder and deceive us (1 Thessalonians 2:18 KJV).
- We must be sure that the ears of our hearts are trained to discern and understand the Great Shepherd's voice.
- In the Three Lights Test, we first look at the life of Jesus to make sure that what we think God is saying to us is consistent with the life of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, and the character of Jesus.
- We use the Three Lights Test to make sure that we are not headed in the wrong direction.



PART 2

# *Specific Personal Promises*





## CHAPTER 4

# *Sharing Some of Our Specific Personal Promises*

When God speaks, it is important to listen carefully and do our best to remember what He says. When we listen to sermons or lessons or when we read the Bible in our daily quiet times, we take notes so we can meditate on the truths we learned. In similar fashion, when God gives us *specific personal promises*, we journal those *promises* to keep a record of these precious words from Him.

Many times Marilyn chooses to simply journal *promises* in the Bible she is reading by noting and dating God's answer to her question. Sometimes, however, she writes them out on a separate piece of paper.

Jerry prefers to write down each *promise* on a separate piece of paper to keep. He almost always follows this format:

- At the top of the paper, Jerry writes that day's date. Then he asks God to help him know how to phrase the question. Once God clarifies the question in his mind, he writes it down just below the date, and sometimes he describes the situation.
- When God answers, Jerry records the *promise* from God's Word.
- Throughout the process of seeking and receiving a *promise*, Jerry sometimes adds a note concerning things of particular interest.
- Often Jerry asks God for a first or even second confirmation of His answer to make sure he is not making a mistake. If God gives confirmation, Jerry records it.

- Jerry and Marilyn both note the rest of the story, which usually includes anything special concerning the *promise* or the circumstances surrounding the *promise*.
- Jerry and Marilyn both note the truth(s) God is reinforcing in their lives.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The situation and/or question I am asking God: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

God's answer/*specific personal promise*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes I asked God for a confirmation *promise*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

God's confirmation *promise(s)*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: (Special notes may appear anywhere on this page. ) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The rest of the story: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The truth(s) God is reinforcing in my life: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Truly God's Word is

*...a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.*

—Psalm 119:105 NKJV

So with the psalmist we pray,

*[LORD], guide my steps by your word...*

—Psalm 119:133 NLT

When we seek a *promise*, we are fleeing to God for refuge and help, and it is our responsibility to maintain steadfast forbearance and enduring confidence as we hold to the hope (assurance and expectation) of what lies before us in the fulfillment of His *promise*.

*My soul, wait only upon God and silently submit to Him; for my hope and expectation are from Him.*

—Psalm 62:5 AMP

Note about our *promises*: To allow each of us to tell about our *promises* in first person, we have identified the recipient of each *promise*. Our promises are not necessarily in chronological order.

For ease of reading *promises* taken from older Bible translations, we have taken the liberty of updating some of the original archaic words (e.g., *thee, thou, and ye* are now *you*).



## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #1 (JERRY)

### The situation:

I was in college and on a committee to set a goal for our summer missions offering. The most we had ever received in the past for that offering was approximately \$800, but the offering the past year had only been about \$300. At the same time, we were sitting under Preacher Hallock's

ministry and constantly being challenged to live by *promises*. We believed that God was leading our committee to set the goal at \$1,600. None of us, however, had any money, and that seemed like an impossible goal. So we asked God for a *promise*. For me personally, this was the first time that I had ever asked God for a *promise*.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“God, do You want us to set the goal at \$1,600?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

As I was reading God's Word, a verse stood out to me, and this is what God said to me:

*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

—Psalm 118:8 KJV

### **Note:**

It was just as if God was shining a spotlight on this particular verse and emphasizing to me that I was not to put my confidence in what we could or could not do. Instead, my confidence was to be in God and God alone. What I have always remembered about this verse is that I was not to put my trust in myself or any other person; my faith, trust, and confidence were to always be in the Lord. I cannot count the times I have relied on this verse in all kinds of circumstances and situations since God first gave it to me. I am just as confident in that *promise* now as I was at that moment, and I would not be more confident if God had spoken to me in an audible voice. My heart was becoming trained to hear, recognize, and understand the voice of the Good Shepherd because I was beginning to saturate my mind and heart with God's Word.

### **The rest of the story:**

We set the goal at \$1,600, and that year we collected \$1,625 for the missions offering—from students who didn't have any money. You can imagine our excitement as we saw God demonstrate His faithfulness to His *promise* and do what He said He would do. He told us to put our confidence in Him and not in our own ability to raise the money. When

we did, He provided the money. This was a huge turning point in my life that encouraged me to put all of my faith, trust, and confidence in God and God alone.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is faithful to His *specific personal promises*.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #2 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

Marilyn and I were in college and were praying about marriage. We definitely did not want to make a mistake in this very important major decision.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to ask Marilyn to marry me?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

—John 16:24 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

I had struggled with this decision for several months, but from the moment I read the *promise*, I knew that Marilyn was the one I was to marry and that when I asked her to marry me, she would accept. Now looking back over the years since our marriage in 1958, I can assure you that God was right: My joy has been full!

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is faithful and can be trusted to help us with our most important decisions.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #3 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

Marilyn and I were facing a major decision concerning my vocation. We had been out of college for over two and one-half years. The success-

ful government contracting company I was working for had decided to dissolve its partnership. My father, who was in the food brokerage business, invited me to come into business with him. This was especially inviting to Marilyn because her father had traveled for ten years and was gone most of the time while she was a child. As a result, she had decided that she did not want to marry anyone whose work required him to travel so much. We also had some other options to consider, but the government contracting business was very exciting to me. This was a major decision we were facing, and we certainly did not want to make a mistake. So we decided to ask God for a *promise* to show us what He wanted us to do. It is also interesting to note that although we wanted children and had been married for over two and one-half years, Marilyn had not become pregnant.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want us to go into the government contracting business?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Blessed is every one that fears the LORD; that walks in his ways. For you shall eat the labor of your hands: happy shall you be, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of your house: your children like olive plants round about your table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that fears the LORD. The LORD shall bless you out of Zion: and you shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Yes, you shall see your children's children, and peace upon Israel.*

—Psalm 128:1-6 KJV

### **The rest of the story:**

When I read this, I realized that God was speaking specifically to me. He was saying to me, “This is a conditional *promise*. This *promise* is good as long as you fear Me and walk in My ways. You are to eat the labor of your hands, you will be happy, and you will prosper. This is the way you will be blessed as long as you fear Me. You will see the good all the days of your life, and you will see your children's children.”

Of the options we were praying about, the government contracting business was the one most directly related to eating the labor of my

hands. Especially when we first started, I often worked beside my men and with my hands.

We had watched Preacher Hallock and witnessed the peace and confidence that he experienced as he received and stood on God's *promises*—even when the *promises* took him out of His comfort zone. But when God gave us this *promise*, I was very fearful because we had only saved \$2,500 that we could use to live on, buy equipment, and compete with large companies for jobs all over the United States. In addition, I did not think I knew enough to compete with the large companies. But because God had given me this *promise*, I was afraid that if I did not stand on it, He might not ever give me another *promise*. I had already tasted the confidence, joy, and peace that came with His previous *promises*, and that's what I wanted. My fear that God might choose to never give me another *promise* overcame my fear of failure, and we started in business, based on His *promise*.

Many years ago I was sharing with a group about *promises* and told the group that within a year after God gave us this *promise*, we had our first child, in fulfillment of part of the *promise*. Marilyn, however, corrected me and reminded me that it was actually just nine months after God gave us the *promise* that we had our first child.

The first three years in business were very hard, and if we had not had God's *promise* to cling to, we would have quit. At one point when everything was so hard, we told God that if He wanted us to fail, that was okay with us. But if we failed, we would fail with all our faith, trust, and confidence in Him—confidence that we were doing exactly what He had called us to do. After the first three years, God began to bless us in that business, and His *promise* of blessing concerning the business was fulfilled.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Usually God's *promises* are very specific. Some are conditional and are dependent on our being obedient to what He has told us to do before He will fulfill His *promise*.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #4 (JERRY)

### The situation:

This was a situation in which God chose to give me a promise when I wasn't asking for one. I was flying a lot, and one day in my quiet time, God freely gave me a *promise* about my flying.

### The question I was asking God:

None.

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.*

—Psalm 121:8 KJV

### The rest of the story:

This *promise* was given to me while I was in college and at the same time getting my pilot's license. After college I was manager of a government contracting company that owned its own plane, and I sometimes flew the partners in the business to the job sites. Later, when Marilyn and I started the business God gave us, we could not afford our own airplane, and I began flying commercially. After we came to the point where we could afford to own a plane, I either needed to work or sleep when it was necessary for me to fly, so we continued flying commercially. For many years I have flown throughout America and different parts of the world with absolute peace and confidence, just resting in God's *promise*.

### A related story:

Years ago I was working on a job in Indiana, and as was my practice, I visited a local church on Sunday. The pastor invited me home for lunch along with the man who had preached in his church that day. As I recall, the man who preached that day was working with the state association in Indiana. After lunch we visited for a while and then began talking about *promises*.

About twenty years later we were working on a job in Maine. As usual, Marilyn and I visited a church on Sunday. That morning the church had a



guest speaker by the name of Dr. James Currin, who was with the Baptist Convention of New England. As we were leaving, Dr. Currin called me by name and reminded me of our conversation twenty years earlier in Indiana. He told me that after our conversation, he had begun living by *promises*. Then he told us about an interesting experience.

A short time after our meeting in Indiana, Dr. Currin was in Arizona en route to Mexico. He was about to board a small commercial airplane for the trip when he noticed some people almost dragging a very attractive, well-dressed woman to the plane. He found out later that she was a diplomat from somewhere in South America who had a terrible fear of flying. When she boarded the plane, she sat next to Dr. Currin. She was so fearful that Dr. Currin shared my flying *promise* with her, which God had now given him as his own *promise*. This seemed to calm her down and allowed Dr. Currin the opportunity to talk to her about the Lord. As they got off the plane, the lady asked Dr. Currin when he was flying back to Arizona. He told her the time and date, and she said, "I will make sure I am on that plane." On this trip, or shortly afterward, she accepted Jesus as her personal Lord and Savior. Dr. Currin said that sometime after she got back to her home in South America, she wrote him to let him know that she had gone home and led her entire family to the Lord. And it all started with Dr. Currin's sharing his *promise*.

We were really blessed to hear that God had used the sharing of my experiences concerning God's *promises* with a man in Indiana to help him lead to Christ a woman from South America on a trip to Mexico and then to hear that she had gone back to her home in South America and led her entire family to Christ. It is exciting to know that when we share our experiences based on God's *promises*, He is faithful to use those experiences in the lives of others to draw them unto Himself.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When we are faithful to share about God's goodness, mercy, and grace in giving us *promises*, God is not only willing to bless us but also others.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #5 (JERRY)

### The situation:

In 1966, we were living in a small home with our two young sons. Since my office for our business was in our home, we were very crowded. I was finding it very difficult to work at home, and my workload was getting heavier. So Marilyn and I began talking about the possibility of finding a slightly larger home that would provide a separate room for me to use as an office. My uncle was a realtor, so we contacted him to see if he had anything for us to look at. He told us about a very nice home that he had listed, but I told him that it sounded like it was much nicer than what we were considering. He said that it would be good for us to look at it because it was a quality home, and it would help us know what to look for as we looked at other homes. So we agreed to go with him to look at this home, having already made up our minds that it was not for us.

Of course we were very impressed with the home, but I still felt that it was much too expensive for us. We came home and decided that Marilyn would pray for me as I asked God for a *promise* about whether or not we should make an offer on the home. I must admit that I expected God to tell me, “No, this is not the home I want you to buy.” But to my absolute amazement, God said yes. And He gave me this *promise* very quickly. In fact, I had never received a *promise* so quickly. Sometimes we pray for several months for a *promise*, but this time, in less than ten minutes, God had spoken to me and told me what to do.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want us to buy this home?”

### God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:

...*Buy it for yourself...*

—Ruth 4:8 KJV

### Note:

God led us through a maze to accomplish His will in giving us the home He wanted us to have. He had given us a *promise* to buy the home,

so we made an offer. This was the best offer that the owners had received on their home, but they did not accept our offer. They surprised us with their refusal to sell because we felt that it was the best offer we could make.

We continued to casually look at other homes, not really sure what God was doing. We found some wooded lots on a street that we really liked, but they were not for sale. Soon after that, I had to leave to perform a contract in Nebraska, but while I was gone, Marilyn drove by the lots again and saw that they were for sale. She called me and gave me the name and phone number on the sign.

As I was thinking about the situation, I began to wonder if God was telling me that He wanted us to build on these lots a home like the one on which we had made an offer.

I called the name and phone number on the sign to get more information on the lots. The lady who answered said that the lots were owned by her father and had been purchased for her and her husband to build a home. But since she was a twin, she had decided that it would not be fair to her twin for her to be so close to her parents when her twin was farther away, so they were going to sell the lots. She told me the price they were asking for the lots. Then she told me I would need to talk to her father about buying the lots and gave me his phone number. The more I prayed about it, the more convinced I became that God wanted us to build a home like the one on which we had made an offer, but we were to build it on these lots. It was also interesting that the contractor who had built that home was currently building a home across the street from the lots we were considering buying. So we asked God for a *promise* about buying these lots.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want us to buy these lots?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...a parcel of land...Buy it before the inhabitants...*

—Ruth 4:3-4 KJV

**Note:**

There was no doubt that God had spoken clearly to me about what He wanted us to do. But I still felt that this was a nicer home than we should have, and I didn't want to consume His blessing upon our own selfish desires. We needed confirmation about buying these lots and building a home like the one we had looked at in another area, so I asked God to let us know for sure by letting me put out the fleece, asking Him to answer.

We had been told that the owners of the home were good Christian people who had been transferred to Atlanta and had been out of the home for about four months. During that period they had not received any offer better than ours. It was Sunday, and I put out the fleece by asking God to give these people a better offer than ours as a way to confirm that He wanted us to buy and build on the wooded lots. The next morning I called my uncle, the realtor, to inquire about the home, and he told me that over the weekend the homeowners had received three offers better than ours.

I was looking over the two *promises* God had given us and thinking about how He had answered the fleece I had put out. I was about to ask Him for another confirmation when He spoke to me from His Word.

*...If you will redeem it, redeem it: but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know...*

—Ruth 4:4 KJV

No one had to explain to me what God was saying. I knew in my spirit that it was a stern rebuke. God had given me two *promises* and had answered when I put out the fleece. Now God was simply saying, "Jerry, you either obey what I have told you to do, or forget it. I have spoken to you for the last time on this matter."

I picked up the phone and called Mr. McClure, the owner of the lots. During our conversation I asked him if he would take less for the lots. He was a very fine gentleman and told me that the developer in the area had already offered him that amount for the lots so he couldn't take less. I said, "That's fine. I will take them at that price." I told him that I could not

get back to close the deal and asked if he could work with my banker on the details. He said he would, and the deal was made.

Mr. McClure became our next-door neighbor, and many years later he told me that he could not believe that I had bought the lots over the phone like I did. I said, "Mr. McClure, what you didn't know was that God had told me to buy the lots, and I didn't have any choice. I had to obey quickly."

**The rest of the story:**

We built that home God chose for us on those wooded lots provided by Him and have lived there since 1967. It has been wonderful to know that God had a better plan for us than we had for ourselves and to know that we have lived and raised our family in the home at the exact location He chose for us.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is patient with us when we are committed to live out His plan for our lives and are desperately seeking His perfect will. But sometimes He is ready for us to stop asking for confirmation and stand on His *promises*.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #6 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

When I was a young girl, my parents taught me to pray for God's perfect will for my life (Romans 12:2b). I prayed many times that God would work out in my life His perfect will for the husband that He had for me. My parents had been praying this for my life partner from the time I was born. God walked Jerry into my life, and as we dated and became more in love with each other, we sensed that we were to marry. We covenanted to pray that God would show us if we were the life partners God had for each other.

**The question I was asking God:**

"God, is Jerry the one in Your perfect will whom You have chosen for me?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

—Matthew 18:19 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

Repeatedly God has proven that His perfect will is wonderful when I trust and follow Him. I could never have known all that I would need or desire in a husband for my whole life. But God knew, and He answered my prayer. The longer we are married, the more I see God's perfect will being worked out in our marriage. The prayer my parents taught me to pray for my husband was huge, and I thank God for their godly care, direction, and prayers for me.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God, and He will lead us to His perfect will.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #7 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I was a young mother with two little boys, and we had not lived in our new home very long when Jerry was led by the Lord to go with my dad on a mission trip to Africa for one month. Jerry had never been out of the country, and this was overwhelming to me to have him so far away. In dealing with my fear of being alone with the boys at night, the Lord comforted me with this precious *promise*.

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep,  
For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.*

—Psalm 4:8 NASB

**The rest of the story:**

Each night I slept peacefully—even though one night a tornado touched down just a few blocks from our home. My “mother-in-love”

called me the next morning to make sure we were okay, and she had to tell me what had happened. When she knew that I had slept through the tornado, she said, "Well, bless your heart!" The Lord had truly blessed my heart with His peace.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God. He is the one who makes it possible for us to dwell in safety.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #8 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I was praying for a retreat where I was to speak, and God placed this verse in my heart.

*"Then he said to Him, 'If Your presence does not go with [me], do not lead [me] up from here.'"*

—Exodus 33:15 NASB

**Note:**

That verse described exactly how I felt.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, I believe You have told me to speak at this retreat. Would You please lead me and go with me in a powerful way?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle...the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

—Exodus 40:34-35 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

The weekend was filled with the presence of the Lord as He was obviously working in my life and also in the lives of the other ladies. There was such joy as women testified to the Lord's moving in their hearts. When it was over, we knew the Lord had filled the meeting with His presence and His glory.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God. Follow His leading, and watch His power at work in our lives.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #9 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

The Lord spoke to me one morning in my quiet time about working with the married young adult women of our church. We were working with the college and career group at the time, and I didn't understand why God was saying this to me.

**The question I was asking God:**

None.

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...encourage [teach] the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible [discreet], pure, workers [keepers] at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.*

—Titus 2:4-5 NASB (bracketed words from KJV)

**Another question I was asking God:**

“How, Lord? I work with the college and career girls, and I do not even know the young married women in our church.”

**Note:**

I was not being sarcastic, but I was puzzled by what the Lord was speaking to my heart. At that time Jerry and I had been working with the college and career group at our church for several years. I loved serving the Lord alongside these precious guys and gals, and the Lord was prospering our ministry with them. The door to our home was a revolving door as the group came in and out of our home weekly. We saw many of them disciplined, and some of them are now in full-time ministry; others are faithfully serving the Lord where He has placed them.

A short time later, Jerry announced to me that he would have to step down from working with the college and career group because his other



duties in our church—being chairman of the deacons and serving on the pastor search committee—were going to take more time, and all of this was happening at the busiest time of the year in our business.

Jerry and I had worked well as a team, using our spiritual gifts with this group, and all of a sudden I felt abandoned. He encouraged me to continue working with the college and career group if God was leading me in that direction, but for now he would not be able to work with them. I continued for awhile, but there was a growing restlessness in me that this was not what God wanted me to do. I did not have peace.

**Note:**

Right after this, I attended a women's conference with some friends, and in one of the sessions, a woman sang a song using the words from Exodus 3:1-4:17 where God deals with Moses about laying down his rod.

The Scripture being sung was a very intense dialogue between God and Moses, packed full of emotion as God talked with Moses. As the song progressed, I felt like my heart was going to explode because I knew that the Lord was dealing with me in a profound way through the Scripture in the song.

When the Lord told Moses to lay down his rod, I knew He was speaking to my heart and that His time for me to work with the college and career young people was over. The rod I was holding in my hand was the college and career young people, and God was asking me to lay them down. There was a tremendous battle going on in my heart, but a wonderful peace and joy swept over me when I surrendered to God and said yes to His will and way for my life.

I thanked Him for the joy that He had given us through the years in working with the college and career young people, and I simply returned to Him the young people He had so graciously given to us for those years. Tears of joy and peace flooded my heart as I surrendered my life once again to His will and His way.

I believe that surrendering to God's will and laying down the college and career young people was the first part of what God wanted me to do.

## **How God was simultaneously at work in our young married women:**

When we got back home from the trip, our phone was ringing as I walked in the door. When I picked up the phone, Sally, one of the young married women of our church, said, “Marilyn, some of the young married women at church have been talking, and we were wondering if you would teach us how to be lovers of our husbands, to love our children, and to be keepers at home.”

I replied, “Sally, I do not have to even pray about it. God has already told me to do it.”

I had surrendered to God’s will, and now He was telling me, “... ‘This is the way, walk in it...’” (Isaiah 30:21 NKJV). At the same time He was reminding me of His promise in Titus 2:4-5. The call from Sally was another confirmation to me that the Lord was working all things for my good and His glory. I will be eternally grateful for His promises, “...for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13 NASB).

## **God’s confirmation promises:**

*“Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children...I have also seen the oppression ...Come now, therefore, and I will send you...”*

*But [I thought] “Who am I that I should go...?”*

*So He said, “I will certainly be with you...”*

*“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”*

*So the LORD said..., “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”*

—Exodus 3:9-4:12 NKJV

## **The rest of the story:**

I didn’t know how God was going to work all this out, but He did.

For many years I worked with the young married women of our church, teaching them from God’s Word how to love their husbands, love their children, and be keepers at home. Now, in our home, in churches, and as

we travel, I continue to teach and encourage young married women to live by these principles from God's Word.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Practice the attitude of obedience—"Lord, I will obey; You just speak," (see Luke 5:5) even when from our perspective it doesn't seem possible. When God tells us to do something, He has a plan, a path, and a purpose, and He will provide a way.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #10 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

Our boys had both left home to go away for college, and I was really missing them. I knew that their leaving home was just a part of growing up, that this was life, and that my desire was for them to be mature, godly men. But there was still emptiness within me since they had moved away. Early on in those days of their being away from home, I began to talk to the Lord about their being gone.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Father, I love being Steve and Don's mom. Now they are grown and gone, and I am missing them so much. Please speak to my heart."

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"...Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them'..."*

—Matthew 21:2-3 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

This *promise* has kept me on track praying for my sons and releasing them to the Lord, repeatedly praying that God would use them for His purpose as His servants and as godly husbands and daddies. They live in other cities, and it is a huge blessing to know that the Lord has need of them where they are and that they are surrendered to Him, living out His plan for their lives. I acknowledge God's entire ownership of our boys—they were on loan to us from God as children, but we are to release them

now that they are adults. It is a joy to release them to God and, as their mom, to pray for them and to observe their lives before the Lord as men of God.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God loans our children to us to love and enjoy but also to teach and train to live for God and serve Him. The time comes when we are to give them back to the Lord because He has need of them.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #11 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

In this situation I thought I knew exactly what God wanted me to do. To me, my plan made perfectly good sense. I had been asked to go into a bad situation and solve the problem. I surveyed the situation and decided that there were three leaders who needed to be relieved of their positions of responsibility. They had created a serious problem in which the atmosphere was far from loving and accepting. There was no chance for growth while they held positions of leadership. So I decided that I would simply get rid of them, I am sorry to say, without any regard for their feelings.

**Note:**

Through this experience I learned that, regardless of the situation, I should always have regard for others' feelings and that it is better to ask God what He wants me to do rather than telling Him what I am going to do.

**The question I was asking God:**

This time I made a serious mistake in the question I was asking God. In fact, I wasn't asking God a question. I was telling Him what I was going to do. This is how it sounded: "Lord, unless You speak to me as I read your Word, I will assume that I know what You want me to do. I will get rid of these leaders who are causing the problems." In my own mind I felt justified to disregard their feelings, although now I regret my insensitivity.

**Note:**

These are the first words God said when I picked up my Bible to read.

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Behold, I am against you...*

—Nahum 2:13 KJV

**Note:**

I said, "Okay, Lord. I'll let You handle it." And He did. If I had handled things my way, the people would have been offended and hurt and would probably have died with bitterness in their hearts toward me. God had a better plan with better results, and no one was hurt.

**The rest of the story:**

Within three months, two of the people who were creating the problem were transferred away from our city. When that happened, the other person among the three became a real asset to us.

I am thankful that, to this date, the three people I had planned to remove from their place of leadership do not know what I had planned to do. God's way was the best way, and no one got hurt. God's way is always the best way.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Don't assume that I know what to do in any situation. Do not lean on my own understanding. Always ask God for guidance.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #12 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

We had a friend about my age who was the pastor of a church in a neighboring city. He became very ill, and the doctors could not diagnose the cause of his illness.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, would You please give me a *promise* about Gary and his illness?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"For by Me [his] days will be multiplied,  
And years of [his] life will be added to you."*

—Proverbs 9:11 NASB

**The rest of the story:**

When I read that *promise*, I was confident that God was going to heal Gary and add years to his life. After he was released from the hospital, Marilyn and I went to visit Gary and his wife, Doris. After we had visited for awhile, I shared with Gary the *promise* that God had given me. He said, "Jerry, when did God give you that *promise*?" I told him, and he said, "Let me tell you what was going on at that time in the hospital. I was in my room alone and could not breathe. I reached for the cord to call for help and fell over the side of the bed but not completely to the floor. I was gasping for breath when a young intern walked by my door and heard the commotion inside my room. He had been down in a small study room reading about how to perform a tracheotomy if he ever ran into a situation where that procedure was needed. He came in, immediately performed the tracheotomy, and saved my life."

Gary went to be with the Lord a few years ago but not until God had added years to his life just as He had promised He would. In fact, God added about thirty years to Gary's life.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God can even speak to us about the health and welfare of others if He chooses. He is faithful to what He promises.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #13 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

In June of 1970, my brother was thirty-nine and had been out jogging with his family when he collapsed by the side of the road. They got him to the hospital and later found that he had cancer scattered throughout his body. I asked God for a *promise* about my brother.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, would You please give me a *promise* about Ronald?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*

—Isaiah 40:31 KJV

### **Note:**

The only part of this verse that God gave me was the part that said, “They shall walk and not faint.” If I was ever going to be tempted to take rather than receive a *promise*, it would have been here. Earlier in the year God had given me the *promise* about our friend Gary and added years to his life. Now my brother was facing death. We knew God had the power to do what He wanted to do, but we were convinced, as we are now, that God knows what is best. So we rested in the *promise* God gave us even though He did not promise a recovery.

### **The rest of the story:**

Ronald, my brother, had the stroke in June when he was thirty-nine. He turned forty in July and died in August. But before he died, God allowed him to get up out of bed, go to his office, and work about half a day for several days to get his affairs in order. God was faithful to the *promise* He had given me. He allowed Ronald to walk again and not faint.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When praying about the healing of a loved one or friend, God does not always promise a recovery.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #14 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

I remember a situation in my life where I didn't want to ask God to give me a *promise*. It was about buying a hunting dog, a dog to hunt quail and pheasants. In fact, I didn't even want to pray about it.

My dog had died, and it was close to hunting season. When the thought of buying another dog came into my mind, I didn't even want to consider God or what He thought. I rationalized that it was just replacing something God had already given me—so why pray about it? I am sure that subconsciously I was fearful that God might say no.

I contacted a friend of my brother who raised hunting dogs and sold them. He told me that he had sold a dog the previous week that sounded like just the dog I needed. Two men had bought the dog for the purpose of running her in field trials, although they had expressed some concern about whether she was stylish enough to run in field trials. He gave me their names and phone number, and I called them to see if they had decided whether or not to keep the dog. They were still undecided, but they invited me over on Saturday when they were going to run her again and make a decision.

I had already made up my mind to buy the dog if they would sell her. At this point God began to convict my heart about what I was doing. I knew that if someone offered me several million dollars for my fellowship with God, it would not be a difficult decision because I valued my fellowship with God as priceless. I would not take any amount of money for the fellowship I enjoyed with God. Yet I was about to deliberately leave God out of a decision that was going to break my fellowship with Him because I was unwilling to pray about this matter and seek God's will.

I began thinking about how foolish it was for me to sacrifice my fellowship with God for a \$200 bird dog when I would not take millions of dollars for the fellowship I enjoyed with Him. I asked God to forgive me and told Him I no longer wanted the dog if He did not want me to have her. I emphasized to God that my fellowship with Him was more important to me than anything else in my life. At that point I became totally neutral about whether or not God would give me the dog.

### **The question I was asking God:**

None.



### **God convicted my heart:**

I don't remember a specific verse or passage, but I do remember the conviction in my heart and the sick feeling in my stomach when I realized how I had treated God and how my fellowship with God was in jeopardy because of my sin. I confessed the sin, and God forgave me and cleansed my heart.

### **Note:**

I had put myself in a difficult situation because I had told the men that I would buy the dog when I came over on Saturday if they decided to sell her. So the only thing I knew to do at this point was to put out the fleece. I told God that I only wanted this dog if it was exactly what He wanted for me, and I asked Him to block the transaction if He did not want me to have her. I asked God to put it in the hearts of the men who owned the dog not to sell the dog if He did not want me to have her.

### **The rest of the story:**

That next Saturday when I went to meet the men and watch the dog work, I had perfect peace that God was going to have His way although I didn't know what He wanted for me. After the dog had worked, one of the men told me they would sell the dog, and I bought her.

God had given me His answer by responding to the fleece I had put out and giving the owners a desire to sell me the dog. For many years there has been a picture hanging on the wall of my office of that dog pointing a covey of quail. It is a constant reminder to me of how foolish I was and how close I came to settling for less than God's best. It has made me more determined than ever to always include God and always seek His perfect will for my life in every decision.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God's love, patience, mercy, and grace can overcome our disobedient spirits if we do not harden our hearts when He convicts us that we are sinning and headed in the wrong direction. Do not be foolish and sacri-

fice fellowship with God for anything. There is nothing in life more valuable to us than our intimate and personal fellowship with God.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #15 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

I was on a job in San Antonio, Texas, and had been praying about hiring a superintendent to help us in our work. One of my biggest competitors was working on the same government base where we were working. One day I ran into their best superintendent. He was a man who had worked for the same company I worked for when I first got out of college. We decided that in the near future we would meet for coffee.

Before we met for coffee, I put out the fleece and asked God to let this man approach me about a job if He wanted me to hire him. We were working about fourteen hours a day, six days a week, and I was very tired. So on the day we met for coffee, I forgot that I had turned this over to the Lord. When we got ready to leave, I got ahead of the Lord and said to the man, "If God should lead us, would you be interested in coming to work for us?" He responded by saying, "If you hadn't mentioned it, I was going to!" We agreed that we would both pray about it and left.

On my way to the car I realized that I had turned this matter over to God and then grabbed it back out of His hands. So I said, "Lord, all I know to do now is to ask you to forgive me and give me a *promise* to confirm what you want me to do. All I want is Your perfect will in my life."

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, do You want us to hire Milton as a superintendent?"

### **Note:**

It was several months before God gave me an answer. Then one day He answered my question.

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Yet now be strong...work: for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you; do not fear...I will fill this house with glory...The glory of*

*this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of hosts.*

—Haggai 2:4-9 KJV

**Note:**

I doubt that the above passage means much to you as you read, but God was speaking very clearly to me through it. This is what he was saying to me: “Jerry, be strong and continue to work, for I am with you. I gave you a *promise* to bring you into this business, and My spirit remains with you. I have blessed you up to this point, but now I want you to hire this man, and I promise to bless you even more than in the past.”

**The rest of the story:**

I called the man, whose name is Milton Hamilton, and told him how God had spoken to me. He shared with me how God had been leading him in the same way, so he came to work for us. God was true to His *promise* and blessed us even more than He had in the past. Milton and his wife, Gracie, love the Lord, and he was a great superintendent for the business God had given us. They also became great personal friends and a tremendous blessing to Marilyn, our boys, and me.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When I have been impatient and gotten ahead of God, I must stop and wait on Him, because He will lead when the time is right. God is interested in working everything for our good and His glory—in His timing.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #16 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

Our son, Steve, was engaged to Terri Howell. Terri and her family are friends of ours who had been members of our church in Oklahoma City but *had* moved away when she was seven. When she started college, she came to the University of Oklahoma in Norman, and after her graduation from OU, she moved back to Oklahoma City to work for an accounting firm. God led Terri back to our church, where we reconnected with her,

and I had the privilege and the joy of discipling her in *One on One with God* and *Evangelism Explosion*. During the time I was discipling Terri, it never entered my mind that she and Steve would some day be husband and wife. In fact, it never entered my mind that they would date. Steve was away at school at the time, and I know now that God blinded my eyes to the thought of Terri dating Steve because I have a tendency to want to be a matchmaker. Nevertheless, God had the plan, and He brought them together. They began dating when Steve returned to Oklahoma City after he graduated from college. I am so very thankful to God for His leading in their lives! Right before they were to be married, I asked God if He would confirm for me that Terri was the one whom He had prepared for Steve and the one I had prayed for since Steve was born.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, is Terri the girl whom You have prepared for Steve to marry, the wife for Steve whom I have prayed for since he was born?”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*This was the LORD’s doing;  
It is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day the LORD has made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.*

—Psalm 118:23-24 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

We are thankful for the day the Lord brought Steve and Terri together. Steve and Terri’s marriage is indeed “marvelous in our eyes,” and we rejoice and are glad in it. We thank God that He spoke so clearly and that Terri is the wife He has for Steve. Terri is a beautiful, godly woman, and we are thankful for her deep love for the Lord. We thank God for how He has blessed Steve and Terri with two daughters, Sarah Elizabeth and Rachel Anna, our precious granddaughters.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is not only willing but faithful to speak to His children to confirm His will and give us peace. This marriage was the Lord’s doing, so we could rejoice.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #17 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

In 1990 we were in Chicago where Jerry had a contract. One evening after he had returned home from work, we were out jogging around the complex where we were staying. Jerry said that he had something he needed to share with me, but because of the way he said it, my mind was gripped with, *Oh no! What?* Jerry proceeded to tell me that in his quiet time that morning, the Lord had spoken to him that we were to retire. He shared the *promise* with me, and the Lord convicted my heart that He had spoken. It was a very fearful thing to me since we were not yet at retirement age. My mind was racing with all kinds of questions: *How will we make it? What will we do?* So many other questions flooded my mind. As I thought about it, I thought, *Jerry and I are one*, and began to think back to what the Lord had been saying to me in my times alone with Him. As I thought about the notes I had made just that morning, I was reminded that the Lord had been speaking to me about complete and absolute obedience. I had jotted down several pages on this subject.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, would You like to take away my fear by confirming this?”

### Note:

The next day in my quiet time, the Lord comforted my heart with this precious *promise*.

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

—John 10:4 KJV

### Note:

I was reading through my dad's King James Version Bible when God gave me this *promise*. I shared this *promise* with Jerry, telling him that we had been “put forth” and “He goes before us.” Then the Lord confirmed

that we were to retire from our business with these encouraging confirmation *promises*.

**God's confirmation promises:**

*"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared."*

—Exodus 23: 20 NKJV

*"So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water..."*

—Exodus 23: 25 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

God encouraged my heart with these words from F. B. Meyer's *Our Daily Walk*: "As you climb the crest of the hill and begin to descend into the plain, not knowing what lies before, veiled in the mist, *fear not*, tighten your girdle—put your hand in His and walk with Him to be His instrument to bless the world of men."<sup>1</sup>

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Obeys and follow God. Continue to listen for His voice. God will lead us and bless us.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #18 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

My dad had just had a heart attack and was in ICU in Memphis, Tennessee. I was trying to fly out of Oklahoma City to be with him, but before I got on the plane, I called the hospital in Memphis to see if Daddy was okay. To my surprise, they put me through to speak with him. He was on morphine, but he was coherent. I asked him, "Daddy, how are you?"

Daddy said to me, "O sweet girl, many times God will take you to Wits' End Corner, but He will always meet you there." At first I thought Daddy was just trying to be lighthearted with me, but then he said to me, "Look

at Psalm 107!” Then he chuckled and said, “O sweet girl, God will take you to Wits’ End Corner and sometimes scare you half to death doing it, but He will always meet you there.”

As I waited for the plane and meditated on this precious portion of Scripture, the peace of God washed over me with His presence.

**Note:**

Dad had discovered this principle in God’s Word, and it was an encouragement to him through many trials.

**God’s answer/specific personal promise:**

*Those who go down to the sea in ships,  
Who do business on great waters,  
They see the works of the LORD,  
And His wonders in the deep.  
For He commands and raises the stormy wind,  
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.  
They mount up to the heavens,  
They go down again to the depths;  
Their soul melts because of trouble.  
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their **wits’ end**.  
Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,  
And He brings them out of their distresses.  
He calms the storm,  
So that its waves are still.  
Then they are glad because they are quiet;  
So He guides them to their desired haven.  
Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!*

—Psalm 107:23-31 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

When I read this passage, it was as if God illuminated my mind. Immediately I could see clearly that God was giving this passage to me as a personal gift. At that moment God comforted my heart, and I received this *promise* as my own. God met me at Wits’ End Corner. He calmed the storm and brought Dad through this heart attack.

This *promise* has sustained me through many trials. I am so thankful that Dad shared this with me because it is a general promise that became Dad's *specific personal promise*, and now it is mine.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God sometimes takes us to Wits' End Corner, but don't panic. He will always meet us there.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #19 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

We were working with married young adults in our church. One of our concerns was to help them discover where God wanted them to serve in the church. We shared this with a friend in our home, and her response was that we needed to take our married young adults through SHAPE<sup>2</sup>, which had been developed by Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, is this what you want us to do? Do You want us to take our married young adults through the SHAPE materials so that they can discover how You have SHAPed them for ministry within the body, the church?"

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*"...I will show you what to do..."*

—1 Samuel 16:3 niv84

**Note:**

We may think we know where a person could serve well in a church, but God's anointing for a specific job at a specific time is very important. He has the ability to look into the heart and know when to anoint a person for a specific job.

SHAPE is an acrostic, with S = spiritual gifting, H = heart, A = ability, P = personality, and E = experience. We have found that each of these



parts is important in helping people discover on their own how God has SHAPed them for ministry within the body, the church.

**The rest of the story:**

We ordered the materials and began to study how to take our married young adults through SHAPE. Now many years later, we look back and can see many of our former and present married young adults joyfully serving throughout the church in the areas where God has SHAPed them for ministry—the areas where they have the spiritual gifting, heart/passion, ability, personality, and experience to serve.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God not only tells us what to do, but He will show us what to do. Trust God.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #20 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

My dad was recovering from his first heart attack, and I had gone to Memphis to take care of him and Mother since she was somewhat limited from a stroke she had suffered in the past. I had been in Memphis for two weeks when Jerry called and said he needed to talk with me. Our church in Oklahoma City was involved in a mission project with Jamaica, and they had asked us to go and disciple people there using the *One on One with God* materials we had written.

The deadline for making airline reservations was the next day, and Jerry needed to know if I thought we should make reservations to go or if I needed to stay in Memphis to take care of Daddy and Mother. He needed my perspective. He was not calling to pressure me to make a decision but to simply ask me what I thought we should do. He was okay with the decision either way it was made.

After I got off the phone with Jerry, there was turmoil within me over the decision of whether to go to Jamaica or to stay with Daddy and

Mother. I felt very strongly that Daddy and Mother needed me to be there with them, yet there was a strong sense of urgency within me that we were to go to Jamaica.

### **The question I was asking God:**

I lay in bed that night, praying and asking God to give me peace about the decision I needed to make.

### **Note:**

I went to sleep, and in the middle of the night I woke up. As I often do when I wake up during the night, I went to God's Word to have my quiet time with the Lord. I opened my Bible to my calendar readings for that day, and the Lord spoke to me immediately.

### **God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*... "LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU."*

—Acts 7:3 NASB

### **Note:**

I immediately knew the Lord was speaking to me about going to Jamaica. Still everything in me shouted, "But Daddy and Mother need me!" As I continued to read, the Lord comforted me that He indeed was leading us to Jamaica and that he was Daddy and Mother's keeper.

### **God's confirmation promises:**

*"Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;  
I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.  
He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.  
With a long life I will satisfy him  
And let him see My salvation."*

—Psalm 91:14-16 NASB

*The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree,  
He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
Planted in the house of the LORD,  
They will flourish in the courts of our God.*

*They will still yield fruit in old age;  
They shall be full of sap and very green,  
To declare that the LORD is upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

—Psalm 92:12-15 NASB

### **The rest of the story:**

The next morning while having breakfast with Daddy and Mother, I told them how the Lord was dealing with me about going to Jamaica and what He had confirmed in my heart during the night. I explained to them that I did not understand the Lord's leading us to Jamaica at this time, but that He had clearly spoken to me and given me peace. I had written out these *promises* for them, and Dad said to me, "O sweet girl, you don't worry about Mother and me. The Lord will take care of us; you do what the Lord has told you to do." What a blessing for me to go with their blessing and God's peace!

When I arrived in Jamaica, the church there asked Jerry and me to give our testimony on Sunday morning. When I shared with them my story and how the Lord had led in my coming to Jamaica, there were *Amens* all over the auditorium. When we met for *One on One with God* each evening, many of the women arrived one hour early to pray for Daddy and Mother. When I returned home from Jamaica, the Lord wowed me in His provision and care for Daddy and Mother while I was away and with the healing that had taken place with Daddy. He had already been back in the pulpit preaching while I was gone! Our God is good all the time! He constantly puts a new song of joy in my heart. *Promises* had once again been superabundantly fulfilled.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God. He can handle any situation. Obey God, regardless of the circumstances. Always be ready to go tell the next generation about our wonderful Savior. We are to be His witnesses even to the remotest parts of the earth. His presence fills me with gladness. The righteous will flourish

and bear fruit even in old age. We are to proclaim that the Lord is upright. He is our rock, and there is no wickedness in Him.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #21 (JERRY)

### The situation:

We had been awarded a job in a city where an organization had been causing contractors a lot of trouble. In fact, this group had been picketing the entrance to the worksite and harassing the crews of other contractors. Some contractors' equipment had been burned, and it didn't look like an accident. I was, therefore, very concerned and even fearful about starting this job. So I asked God for a *promise* about when He wanted us to start this job.

### The question I was asking God:

"When do You want us to start this job?"

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; do not be afraid, neither be dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go... Prepare... for within three days you shall... go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.*

—Joshua 1:9-11 KJV

### Note:

I called our superintendent and told him to have the men and equipment ready to leave in three days.

### The rest of the story:

We performed the job without any problems except that on the last day, when we were finishing the project, the organization sent representatives out on our job. They were very angry that we had come in and completed our job without letting them know we were there. But they left without causing a problem after telling us to make sure to notify them when we came into town to perform another contract.

Over and over again we have seen God intervene to give us guidance and direction when timing has been a very important factor. It is thrilling to know that God is interested in the details of our lives and then to see Him work on our behalf.

People might ask, "But how did you know that it was God speaking to you?" If I can recognize my wife's voice and the voices of my children because I invest a lot of time with them, why shouldn't I be able to hear, recognize, and understand God's voice when I have become familiar with His voice by investing time with Him in His Word and prayer? We recognize His voice just as Jesus, the Good Shepherd, said we would: "...and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice" (John 10:4 NASB).

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When I have a very specific question and need a very specific answer, I should just ask God because He will tell me when the time is right if I am in fellowship with Him. God is interested in working everything for our good and His glory and is even more interested than I am about doing things on His timetable. Trust God. He always knows what is best and when is best.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #22 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

In 1975 our church had asked me to serve for the second time on a pastor search committee.

The committee had agreed that we would only consider one candidate at a time and that we would not move to the next candidate until a final decision had been made on each man then being considered. At this point in our search, we had considered five men, all of whom seemed to be qualified in every way. Each time we had prayed that God would block it if the particular man we were dealing with was not the man He had chosen to be our pastor. God was faithful and responded to our prayers by blocking each of the five in one way or another.

Now we were considering the sixth person on our list. The problem I was having with this man was not with his preaching; I thought he was a great preacher. It was not a problem with his character; he was a man of godly character. It was not a problem with him as a person; I immediately liked him and knew I would love to have him as a personal friend. It was simply that the year was 1975, and this man had only lived in the United States for eighteen months out of the last fifteen years because he had been serving as a missionary overseas.

The United States had changed in many ways over the last fifteen years, and I just wasn't sure that he would be able to handle the job since he had been out of the country while it was being reshaped. It was certainly not the same country the man had left sixteen and one-half years earlier. But I valued what God wanted more than my personal opinion, so I asked God for a *promise* about calling Charles Tope as our pastor.

The committee had gone through the necessary steps in our search up to that point, so a meeting of just the search committee was scheduled for Saturday. At that meeting we were to vote yes or no concerning whether we would move forward with Charles Tope. If the committee was unanimous in their vote for him at this meeting, it was almost certain that Charles Tope would be called as our pastor even though there were more steps that needed to be taken in the process. So for the next few days, I was in serious prayer, asking God for a *promise* in regard to calling Charles Tope.

Soon it was Friday night, and God still hadn't given me a *promise*. I had reduced my question to one phrase: "Is Charles Tope the man?" I must have asked God that question 1,000 times during the night. I had read through several books of the Bible after asking God where he wanted me to start. I was very tired, so sometimes I got in bed, only to roll out on my knees, repeatedly asking God, "Is Charles Tope the man?" Then I picked up my Bible and started reading again. I did not want to make a mistake and felt that I must have a *promise*. So I went back and forth between resting, reading God's Word, and praying, seeking God's will through

a *promise*. It was about three or four o'clock in the morning when God finally gave me a *promise*.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, is Charles Tope the man You have chosen to be our pastor?"

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused [rejected] him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

—1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV

*"...Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"*

—1 Samuel 16:12 NKJV

### **Note:**

When I first read verse 7, I thought that God was answering my question by saying, "No, Charles Tope is not the man." Then I continued to read, and when I got to verse 12, I fully understood what God was saying to me. It was like God was shining a spotlight on these verses. He was saying, "Jerry, do not look on the outward appearance or lean on your own understanding. You thought that each of the other five candidates was more qualified than Charles since they had been in the United States while it was going through those difficult years. But I look on the heart, and I have chosen Charles to be your pastor."

I was very excited when I understood what God was saying. He had again proven Himself faithful by giving me another *promise* when I was desperate to know His will. I said, "Lord that is good enough for me. I am going to bed."

### **The rest of the story:**

At the meeting later that day, the vote was unanimous to proceed with the process to call Charles Tope as our pastor. When the process was completed, Charles became our pastor, a great pastor who faithfully served the Lord for seven years in our church before God called him back

to the mission field overseas. Charles was a pastor with a great love for God, for people, and for preaching God's Word.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When I am persistent and specific in my prayers, God will be specific with His answers. He is faithful.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #23 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

There was some dissension in the crew of men who worked for us, and it was turning into a big problem. It seemed that two men in the crew were the cause of the problem, and they were two of my best men.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, what do You want me to do about the problem with G and J?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.*

—Proverbs 22:10 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

I told the two men who were causing the problem that I must let them go. When I let them go, the contention and strife ceased, and our crew was back in harmony.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is concerned about everything that I am concerned about, so I am to trust Him to speak through His Word to guide me.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #24 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

This is a situation where I was not asking God for a *promise*, but He gave me one before I even knew I needed it. God spoke to me in my quiet



time, and I wrote down what He had impressed on my heart. I didn't know why He was telling me this until that same day, about mid-morning on July 24, 1982, when the mail came. In the mail was a letter from the government, telling me that our company would be responsible to replace, at our expense, about \$500,000 worth of epoxy patches that had failed.

The previous winter we had completed a contract for a Marine Corps air station located in a desert area. There was a lot of work involved, including a large number of epoxy patches. When we had completed the contract and were ready to leave the base, we were complimented for our professionalism and the quality of our work. They thanked us for the great job we had done for them.

Now it was the middle of summer, and the temperature on the desert was over 115 degrees. With these temperatures, the patches were simply falling apart. The material we had used in the patches was a new material that had been specified by the government. This was the first time this particular material had been used in the desert, and even though the government had specified that this material was to be used, we were being held responsible for the performance of the material under the warranty clause of our contract.

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

This is the *promise* God gave me that morning in my quiet time when I wasn't asking for one and before I even knew that I needed one:

*"So that people may see and know,  
may consider and understand,  
that the hand of the LORD has done this..."*

—Isaiah 41:20 NIV84

*"...I said, 'You are my servant';  
I have chosen you and have not rejected you.  
So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.  
All who rage against you*

*will surely be ashamed and disgraced;  
those who oppose you  
will be as nothing and perish.  
Though you search for your enemies,  
you will not find them.  
Those who wage war against you  
will be as nothing at all.  
For I am the LORD, your God,  
who takes hold of your right hand  
and says to you, Do not fear;  
I will help you."*

—Isaiah 41:9-13 NIV84

### **Note:**

I wrote down the verses out of sequence because that is how God gave them to me. When I got the letter from the government, I realized that what God had given me in my quiet time that morning was His *promise* about this situation. God brought tremendous peace and comfort to my heart through this *promise*. He was faithful to meet my need even before I knew I had a problem.

### **The rest of the story:**

I had identical materials to those used on the job sent to an independent laboratory for testing. The materials were mixed according to government specifications, and the conditions of the desert were simulated—very hot in the day and cold at night. The result was that the patches prepared in the government-approved laboratory disintegrated just like those we had placed on the airfield, proving that the material specified by the government was the problem.

It required a lot of time and work on our part, but after almost two years, we won the case. On March 29, 1984, we received a letter from the government releasing us of any responsibility concerning the failure of the patches. It was determined that the government had superior knowledge in this case and, therefore, had to bear the responsibility for the failure of the patches.

Can you imagine how I might have responded when I got that letter if I had been too busy or had just decided not to have my quiet time that morning on July 24, 1982?

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is amazing and so awesome. He was willing to prepare my heart with comfort, strength, encouragement, and confidence about how everything would turn out before I even knew that I had a problem. God still required that I work hard and be patient while He was working everything out.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #25 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

This is another time when God gave me a *promise* when I wasn't asking for one.

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...buy fields for money...*

—Jeremiah 32:44 KJV

**Note:**

After God gave me this *promise*, I began looking for land to buy, with the limited time that I had, but I never felt that God was leading me to buy any particular piece of land.

**The rest of the story:**

Over a period of time, I almost forgot about this *promise* because I was very busy and couldn't find the "field" God wanted me to buy. It was twelve years later that God gave me another *promise* about buying land for a new shop, which at that time truly was just a field. I bought that field, and it became the location of our new shop.

I still have no idea why God gave me twelve years' advance notice to buy this field—unless it was available twelve years earlier and I wasn't diligent enough in my search to find it.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When God gives me a *promise* that is not specific, I am to be obedient and diligent to do what I know to do and at the same time patiently wait on God to be more specific.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #26 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

A young woman, Daphne Hoaldrige, was on our church staff as music assistant. She wanted to be mentored, and a mutual friend suggested me as a possible mentor for her. We met, and she was very interested in having me disciple her in *One on One with God*, which I did with much joy. Once again the Lord blinded my eyes to the thought of ever seeing our son, Don, and Daphne dating, as He had done when I was discipling Terri, who became the wife of our son, Steve. I love to play matchmaker, but the thought of Don and Daphne dating or being married never entered my mind. Don met Daphne at church, and unbeknownst to me, he asked her out. A while later, Daphne and I had lunch together, and she shared that she and Don were dating. I was shocked but very excited!

Their romance progressed, and Don knew that Daphne was the one God had chosen to be his wife. So he proposed to her on January 22, 1997. Daphne knew that Don was the one whom God had chosen for her, and she said yes. We could not have been more pleased and thankful!

### **The question I was asking God:**

On January 30, 1997, the question I was asking God was, “Is Daphne the girl I have been praying for since Don was born, the one you have chosen to be Don’s wife?”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

...*the Lord has need of them.*

—Matthew 21:3 KJV

### **Note:**

This was an encouragement to me that the Lord was going to use them as a couple.

**The rest of the story:**

Don and Daphne were married on May 3, 1997, and God has used them in many, many ways as they have walked with Him as husband and wife and in their ministries. The Lord confirmed this *promise* to me two other times when they were facing difficult situations in ministry: "...the Lord has need of them." Each time God used those difficult situations for their good and His glory.

We praise God for giving Don a beautiful, godly wife and for giving us another beautiful, godly "daughter-in-love." Now Don, Daphne, and the Lord have blessed us with three more precious grandchildren—Grace, Glory, and Hunter—and we are so thankful.

I will forever thank God, omnipotent and blessed controller of all things, for the power of the truth of His Word when our hearts need to hear a word from Him.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God for comfort, encouragement, and confirmation of His will.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #27 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I was burdened with whether I was working in the area of the church where God wanted me at this particular time in my life. I wondered if God had another place where He wanted me to serve.

**The question I was asking God:**

My question was from Colossians 1:9 as I read. "Dear God, please

*...fill [me] with the knowledge of [Your] will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding."*

—Colossians 1:9 NIV84

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified [me] to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued [me] from the dominion*

*of darkness and brought [me] into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom [I] have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

—Colossians 1:12-14 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

This was a huge encouragement and reassurance to me to keep on keeping on with what God had given me to do where I was serving. I am confident that God has me on the path of living out His plan for my life, and He has qualified me to share where I am serving.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When in doubt, ask God, and He will give us encouragement when we need encouragement and reassurance when we need reassurance.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #28 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

After Daddy's death my mother chose to live alone in Memphis. My sisters and I lived far from her. I was concerned for her safety and praying for her.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Father, would You please watch over and protect Mother and keep her safe?"

### **God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear...*

—Psalm 46:1-2 NKJV

*God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;  
God shall help her...*

—Psalm 46:5 NKJV

### **Note:**

I knew God was telling me to trust Him because He would be everything she needed. I was not to fear. He promised to be with her and help

her and assured me that she was where she was supposed to be at that time.

**The rest of the story:**

We watched as God provided for Mother in many beautiful ways. He was our refuge and strength and helped Mother as He promised. It has been said that we are either going into trouble, in trouble, or coming out of trouble. I thank God that He speaks daily to our hearts regarding our needs at the time.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God first and for everything. Trust Him to be our refuge and our strength. Trust God to be with us to help us when we are in trouble. God is with Mother and will help her. Do not fear.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #29 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I woke up early one morning, apprehensive about going to Romania in one month. I asked God to comfort my heart, and this is what He spoke to my heart—and the *promises* that He gave me.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, would You please comfort my heart about our trip to Romania?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*“...move out...follow [the LORD your God]...since you have never been this way before [we would be discipling in Oradea, Romania, and I had not been there before]...Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you...See...the covenant of the Lord will go...ahead of you.”*

—Joshua 3:3-5, 11 NIV84

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

—Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV84

*"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared."*

—Exodus 23:20 NIV84

*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,  
and he delivers them.*

*Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*

*Fear the LORD, you his saints,  
for those who fear him lack nothing...*

*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their cry...*

*The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.*

—Psalm 34:7-9, 15, 17 NIV84

*When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you,  
mighty warrior."*

—Judges 6:12 NIV84

*"...I will not forget you!  
See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands..."*

—Isaiah 49:15-16 NIV84

*The LORD...said, "Go in the strength you have...Am I not sending you?"*

—Judges 6:14 NIV84

## **Note:**

At this point God brought these verses to my mind:

*...The joy of the LORD is [my] strength.*

—Nehemiah 8:10 KJV

*...for [God's] strength is made perfect in [my] weakness.*

—2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV

Then He gave me more *promises*.

## **God's confirmation promises:**

*The LORD answered, "I will be with you..."*

—Judges 6:16 NIV84



*"For the LORD your God...He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."*

—Joshua 4:23-24 NIV84

*So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go...I will go down with you...and I will also surely bring you up again..."*

—Genesis 46:3-4 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

God comforted my heart, and we had a great time discipling the precious people in Romania. We praise God that He is trustworthy and faithful to His *promises*. God continues to use the people we disciplined to make disciples and produce disciple-makers in Romania.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Follow the Lord. God will bring us to a prepared place. He will watch over us and deliver us. He will not forget us. Do not fear to go because God will go with us and bring us back home. Trust God for strength to do what He sent us out to do.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #30 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

After we returned from the trip to Romania, God spoke to my heart, reminding me of how He had taken care of us and what He had accomplished.

### **The question I was asking God:**

None.

### **God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"I brought you to...I gave...and you took possession...I delivered you...I sent...ahead of you...You did not do it..."*

*"He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled...We...will serve the LORD, because He is our God."*

—Joshua 24:8-18 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

The Lord blessed as we saw people in Romania come to know Him as their personal Lord and Savior. Many were disciplined through *One on One with God*, and we knew that God had done it just as He had promised He would. There were smiles on our faces and joy in our hearts because we had seen the Romanian Christians praising God for new truths they had discovered.

Joy comes from spreading the Good News around the world. God was gracious to us and blessed us and made his face shine upon us because we had been involved in making His ways known on earth, His salvation among all nations.

We rejoiced when we saw

*...the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples justly  
and guide the nations of the earth.*

—Psalm 67:3-4 niv84

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is the one who sent us on this trip. He went ahead of us, delivered us, and protected us on the entire journey. Remember that this was all God's doing; we were just the tools He chose to use.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #31 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

In 1982, I was chairman of deacons in our church and, therefore, automatically became an ex officio member of the pastor search committee. We had been involved in the search for several months, and the committee was leaving the next day to meet Dr. Anthony Jordan and hear him preach. At that time he was a pastor in another state.

In my quiet time the morning before we left to meet with Dr. Jordan, I asked the Lord to give me a *promise* about him.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, is Dr. Jordan the man?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...he brought him to be the shepherd of his people...  
[he] shepherded them with integrity of heart;  
with skillful hands he led them.*

—Psalm 78:71-72 NIV84

**The rest of the story:**

From the moment God gave me the *promise*, I knew that God was going to bring Anthony to be our pastor—even before we met him. But I did not tell anyone else on the committee because I knew that since God had spoken to me, He could speak to the other members of the committee. I didn't want to interfere with their discerning of God's will for themselves in this matter. After several days, when everyone on the committee had clearly discerned that God was leading them to vote to call Dr. Jordan as our pastor, I shared with them the *promise* God had given me on the morning we left to go and meet him.

Dr. Jordan came to our church and faithfully served as our pastor for almost fifteen years. Anthony was a great pastor and shepherded our church with integrity of heart and with skillful hands, just as God had promised.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Sometimes God leads us through a maze. But at other times His *promises* are crystal clear, and He tells us not only what He is going to do but is even more specific. In this particular case, He told me that Anthony would shepherd us, his people, with integrity of heart and with skillful hands. However God speaks, the fellowship with Him is great while seeking His will.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #32 (JERRY)

### The situation:

For more than twenty-five years I had taken care of all the details of our business, which had grown tremendously. But because of the combination of details with business, ministry, and discipleship, I needed help, especially with the details of our business. So I prayed and God gave me a *promise* about hiring a young lady, Kathy, to work for me.

After about one and one-half years, Kathy, who had been working for me and doing a great job in the office, completed her education and was ready to move into the field for which she had been training. Therefore, I needed to replace her and find someone to help me in the office.

I was considering a certain lady whom we had known for a long time, but I was wondering if I should broaden my search to include others. As I prayed about this, God spoke to me and said,

*[But] like an archer who wounds all, so is he who hires a fool or chance passers-by.*

—Proverbs 26:10 AMP

I believe God was saying that I should not broaden the search and take a chance on hiring a fool or someone just passing by for this very important position. It must be a person of integrity whom I could trust.

### Note:

I believed God was telling me that there was no reason to broaden the search; therefore, I asked God for a *promise*.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want to give me a word about hiring Florence?”

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*“...‘Why have you [Florence] been standing here idle all day?’...‘Because no one hired us [me]’...‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’”*

—Matthew 20:6-7 NKJV

**Note:**

Florence was without a job at the time.

**The rest of the story:**

We hired Florence, and she was an excellent person for the job. She was a very faithful and competent person who worked for us until God told us to retire. When we retired, I recommended Florence to a friend who needed a qualified person to work closely with him in a large insurance firm. He hired her, and it worked out very well for both of them.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Although it may seem complex to us, God has a way of taking care of all of His children's needs at the same time—especially for those who are trusting in and walking with Him.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #33 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

Our church's pastor and minister of education came to our home to ask Marilyn and me if we would consider accepting a volunteer staff position in our church in which we would be responsible for all the married young adults in our church for the coming year. We told them that we were willing to pray about it.

**The question I was asking God:**

The way I worded my first question was wrong. Basically, my question was "Lord, do you want us to build...?" Quickly, I realized that this was the wrong question, so I changed the question to "Lord, do You want to build through us...?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"...and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem [at home], and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

—Acts 1:8 NKJV

*...And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people...*

—Acts 11:26 KJV

**Note:**

We were already traveling overseas to help other countries in discipleship, but God was telling me that He wanted to continue using us at home as well as abroad.

**The second question I asked God:**

“Lord, is this what you want both of us—Marilyn and me—to do?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...I have called them...*

—Acts 13:2 KJV

*...thus shall it be for them both...*

—Exodus 26:24 KJV

**God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...And this is the thing that you shall do...*

—Exodus 29:1 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

We agreed to serve in this capacity and worked with the married young adults of our church for more than twenty-five years. It has been a wonderful experience to be involved in the lives of hundreds of young couples through the years, seeing them respond to the teaching of God’s Word and now faithfully serving God throughout America and around the world.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Listen to God, practice the attitude of obedience, and enjoy His blessings.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #34 (JERRY)

### The situation:

Several months earlier God had given us a *promise* that we were to replace one of our cars during the year. I had just been at a car dealership and had seen a car from a distance that caught my eye, but because I was in a hurry and did not have time to look at the car up close, I did not know what equipment it had on it. But after leaving, I could not get the car out of my mind. I sensed that God wanted me to ask Him for a *promise* about this particular car and leave the details to Him. Normally I would have gotten more facts before asking God for a *promise*, but this time it was like God was saying to me, “Why don’t you just trust Me and see what I want to give you?”

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want us to buy this car?”

### God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:

*You shall...this...shall fall to you as your inheritance.*

—Ezekiel 47:14 NKJV

### I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, would You like to confirm that?”

### God’s confirmation *promises*:

*“I thank You, and praise You,  
O God of my fathers;  
You have given me wisdom and might,  
And have now made known to me what we asked of You...”*

—Daniel 2:23 NKJV

*“This shall be...”*

—Ezekiel 47:15 NKJV

### The rest of the story:

I called and bought the car over the phone. After we had made the deal, I asked the dealer to read for me the list of equipment that the car had on

it. Of course the dealer was surprised that I didn't know what equipment the car had on it, but he read the list to me. We were amazed that God had chosen for us more than we would have chosen for ourselves.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God constantly amazes us with His goodness and His blessings when we ask Him to take control of our lives and leave everything up to Him.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #35 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

Some members of our family were going through a fiery trial, a trial of faith. As I prayed for them to remain strong and courageous, I was asking God to meet their every need. Then God reminded me of my godly heritage and how my parents had shared with me how God had intervened on their behalf many times when they were in the midst of fiery trials.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, would you please help them to remain strong and courageous and meet their every need during this fiery trial of faith in their lives?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*We have heard with our ears, O God,  
Our fathers have told us,  
The deeds You did in their days,  
In days of old...  
For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword,  
Nor did their own arm save them;  
But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance,  
Because You favored them...*

—Psalm 44:1, 3 NKJV

*For I will not trust in my bow,  
Nor shall my sword save me.  
But You have saved us from our enemies...  
In God we boast all day long,  
And praise Your holy name forever.*

—Psalm 44:6-8 NKJV



**Note:**

God's Word was a precious reminder to me of His power and the promise of His sovereignty in our lives and of how He is our Father God and the God of our fathers. He favors His children, and He saves them. We do not trust in our own resources, but we trust in God alone, and He saves us from the enemy.

**The rest of the story:**

We watched as God superabundantly provided for all their needs. They remained strong and courageous through Christ, and He saw them through the fiery trial of faith in their lives. He worked out all for their good and for His glory. In God we boast all day long and praise His holy name.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Always remember God's faithfulness. Remind our family and others that victory and deliverance are never because of our power and might but because of God's favor. Victory comes from God.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #36 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

We were in the mountains of Colorado and praying for several things that were going on with some of our family members at that time. The Lord comforted my heart once again as we prayed for our family.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Father, would you please comfort, encourage, and meet the specific needs I have named for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*The mountains will bring peace...*

*He will save...*

*And will break in pieces the oppressor.*

—Psalm 72:3-4 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

God is faithful, and He fulfilled these *promises* in a beautiful way. I was comforted and had peace in my heart in the mountains of Colorado, and He brought peace in our family members' lives. He received and receives all the glory and praise for His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence in our lives. We witnessed "the power outflowing from His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10 AMP) being exerted over these precious ones in their trial of faith, and we continue to witness His power repeatedly in our lives.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Always look to God for peace, comfort, encouragement, and victory over those who would oppress. God is our provider, and He provides what we need when we need it. It pays to intercede in prayer on behalf of others.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #37 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

We were in Bucharest, Romania, making disciples. We received a call very early one morning that Rick Cooper, my nephew who was living in El Paso, Texas, had been in a serious train accident. He had lost both of his legs and sustained other serious injuries. I was filled with agonizing grief that morning, and I desperately wanted to be with Rick and my family back in the States. I was convicted in my spirit that I needed to ask God what to do because everything in me wanted to leave the work that He had sent us there to accomplish and return home immediately to be with Rick and my family. But there was a check in my spirit about leaving. In my readings that morning, the Lord spoke to my heart.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Father, am I to leave Romania and go home today to be with Rick and my family?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*...“the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans”...“Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you or forsake you until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.”*

—1 Chronicles 28:19-20 NKJV

**Note:**

At first as I read “be strong and of good courage, and do it,” I thought the Lord was telling me to go because that was my heart’s desire. But as I continued to read, I realized the Lord was telling me to stay and finish the work He had given us to do. The scheduled time we were to leave our assignment in Romania was to be in two weeks. I called my sister, Donna, a woman of great faith, and told her what the Lord had spoken to my heart, and she and her family were very understanding about our staying in Romania to finish our assignment until our scheduled departure time. Our son, Steve, flew immediately from Dallas to El Paso to be with Rick, Donna, my brother-in-law, Carl, and other family members. Our family told us later that Steve was a tremendous blessing, help, and comfort in being there with them, and we were comforted while still in Romania by the fact that Steve was able to go and be with our family during this difficult time.

**The rest of the story:**

We completed the work that God had sent us to do in Romania, and we returned home two weeks later at the originally scheduled time. Rick was still in the hospital when we returned, and we were able to go and be with him, my sister, and brother-in-law. I fall on my face and thank Jesus for His precious Word that gives us instruction because He knows the plans He has for us, and they are plans for good and not for evil to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). God has the great perspective of our lives and how it fits into His big picture, and He is passionate about each one of us living out His plan for our lives.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Don't lean on my own understanding or my instincts. Even when I don't understand, obey God because my perspective at any particular time may not be the same as His. Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be confused because God is with us. God walks with us through every assignment He gives us.

### **A related story:**

This story gives more detail about my nephew, Rick Cooper, who lost both legs and incurred other serious injuries in a train accident.

Rick had graduated from high school and was living close to campus while attending school and studying toward a certification in computer technology. While in high school, Rick was an avid athlete who lettered in football and several other sports. He was a multi-medal winner in hurdles and other track events.

One evening in November 1997, Rick felt ill and left the company of his friends and his ride to walk to his apartment. He came upon a train that was blocking his path, and instead of waiting for the train to move, he decided to climb between two train cars and proceed home. At that moment the train started moving, and Rick had to decide what to do: ride the train to its destination or jump. He decided to jump, but instead of jumping at an angle with the moving train he jumped straight out and was hit by the next car, which caused him to fall under the train.

The wheels of the train severed his right leg high on his right thigh, and his left leg was severed high above the left ankle. His right elbow was so damaged that it had to be repaired with metal rods, a metal pin, and screws. Later because of gangrene, his left leg had to be amputated above the knee.

As the train passed over him, Rick went into shock and became unaware of his surroundings and the pain. As he lay on the tracks, he called for help, but no one heard him at the time. He knew as he lay there that he did not want to die this way. Rick then had the presence of mind to

know that he needed to do something, and he began crawling toward a light over a door that he could see. This door later proved to be about 100 yards away. While he was crawling to the light, he shared that he had help from “D-Daddy,” his godly grandfather who had passed away a couple of years earlier. Later, after examining the door to which Rick had crawled, authorities found that there was no light. As he lay by the garage door, he again called for help. This time a couple living a block away, on the other side of the train tracks, heard his late-night cries and called the police.

Rick recalls that when the police arrived and found him, he told them how cold he was, and one of the officers took off his coat and leaned over and pitched his coat over him. Rick was moved by ambulance to William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. The trauma center for El Paso, Texas, is Thomason General Hospital; however, due to electrical failure, all trauma cases that day were sent to William Beaumont Army Medical Center.

Police went to Rick’s parents’ home to notify them. His mother, Donna, later said,

My husband was out of town. As police came to our door in the early-morning hours, they told me my son had been in a train wreck. I called my husband, and he returned to El Paso within four hours. As the officers and I arrived at the medical center, the doctors met me and told me Rick had been in a train accident and had received much trauma to his lower torso. Doctors told me that they had worked on many young men who had suffered trauma and amputation in military service and could promise me they would give Rick as much mobility as possible, but his blood pressure was 30 over 0. They were thankful he was alive. To my shock, they asked if I would like to see him. They took me to the operating room, and there I saw Rick with a white sheet covering his wounds. He looked as handsome as ever to me. Rick looked up at me and said, “Mom, I am so sorry.”

My words came from above, “Oh, God loves you and is watching over you. I love you—oh, I love you!”

After more than a dozen major operations over the next two months and months of therapy, Rick has experienced years of God's miracles. Today he works with computers for a national corporation in Texas. As the Bible tells us and as the verse in Rick's apartment says,

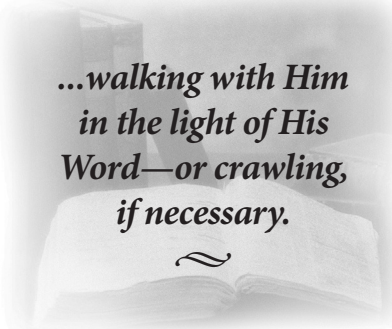
*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

—Jeremiah 29:11 KJV

### Summary by Jerry and Marilyn:

We are very proud of our nephew, Rick, and how he has fought back to live a normal life. He is a very responsible and loving man who has a great attitude. He works, drives, lives alone, and does everything for himself with God's help. His grandfather passed on to Rick a fighting spirit and a great love for God's Word and inspiring preaching.

The reason we have included Rick's story is that it exemplifies the theme of this book: walking with Him in the light of His Word—or crawling, if necessary.



***...walking with Him  
in the light of His  
Word—or crawling,  
if necessary.***

Immediately after Rick's accident, he could not walk. So he crawled with no help from his legs and little help from his arms where the muscles were torn apart and bleeding. He used up precious energy yelling for help, but no help came. So he started crawling toward a light, pulling himself along with his bloody elbows. Later it was confirmed that on that

100-yard-long path where he was dragging himself toward the light, a small bump in the path seemed like a high mountain that he would never get over. It was also confirmed that there was no light—or was there?

Jesus said,

*"I am the **light** of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness..."*

John 8:12 NKJV

The psalmist said,

*Your word is a **lamp** to my feet  
And a **light** to my path.*

Psalm 119:105 NKJV

We are confident that there was a light and that the light was Jesus, who was saying, “Rick, keep on coming. I will help you,” because it was only when he got to the light that his cries for help could be heard.

We believe that God is saying to all of us, “When you can’t run, walk. And when you can’t walk, crawl. But as long as you have breath, give your all to walking with Me in the light of My Word.”

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #38 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

Marilyn’s mother was living alone and was unwilling to move away from Memphis. She had experienced a few mini-strokes in the past year, and we were trying to get her to move into an assisted living facility. We had found a nice new facility that had been open just a few days and only had a few residents.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do you want us to move Marilyn’s mother into this facility now? We just need to know your plan for her.”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*And He says...Come here...into the privacy of an uninhabited place, and rest yourselves a little.*

—Mark 6:30-31 Wuest

### **Note:**

Since this facility was brand new with only a few inhabitants, it was basically uninhabited.

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, would you please confirm this for me?”

**God’s confirmation *promises*:**

*And they went off...to the privacy of an uninhabited place.*

—Mark 6:32 Wuest

*...Uninhabited is the place, and already the hour is late.*

—Mark 6:35 Wuest

**The rest of the story:**

Over the next few days, we moved Mother into a wonderful new facility. It was exactly what she needed at the time, and while she was there, she received great care.

Isn’t it amazing that God is not limited to just giving us a *promise* through one translation? When God gave me this *promise* I happened to be reading through the Wuest translation, yet God met me at my point of need with a *promise*.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God’s love, mercy, and grace always exceed our expectations by giving us exactly what is needed.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #39 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

My mother had just had another stroke and had been moved to a hospital in Memphis. The doctors did not give us much hope for her recovery, and with her living so far away, it was very hard for me and my two sisters to care for her like we wanted to.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, should we move Mother?”



**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*...The helpless commits himself to You;  
You are the helper...*

—Psalm 10:14 NKJV

*"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD.  
You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of  
Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
to be your God: I am the LORD."*

—Leviticus 22:31-33 NKJV

**Note:**

Within a short time, Mother brought up the idea of moving to Houston. She didn't want to move to Oklahoma City because of the tornadoes, and she didn't want to move to El Paso because of the sandstorms. As we followed the ambulance taking Mother from Memphis to Houston, God gave me these confirmation *promises*.

**God's confirmation promises:**

*So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD...*

—Numbers 10:13 NKJV

*..."We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.'  
Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good  
things..."*  
*"I will depart...to my relatives."*

—Numbers 10:29-30 NKJV

*So they departed...to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the  
LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp.*

—Numbers 10:33-34 NKJV

**Note:**

A few days later God gave me this *promise* concerning Mother's move to Houston.

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*..."The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the  
LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land*

*which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people...the LORD is with us..."*

—Numbers 14:7-9 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

We had abided by Mother's wishes and moved her to Houston. She did not live but a few months, but while she was in Houston, my sister, Heather, was able to visit Mother very often, and this precious time was very important to Mother, my sisters, and me.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Be patient. Wait on God. He will lead us in His timing, and He will not forget those who have faithfully served Him like my mother.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #40 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

I was working on a job in Clovis, New Mexico, and having trouble with the car I was driving. On two or three occasions, the car had just stopped on me, and I had to have it towed.

The unreliability of the car was creating problems for me in being able to attend important meetings and be on the job at certain times when we were placing large amounts of concrete. The last time the car had problems, I had it towed to a car dealer who told me my vehicle had some serious damage that would take several days to repair and would cost a lot. Therefore, I just bought a car off the showroom floor.

Even under these circumstances, I wasn't comfortable buying a car without God giving me a *promise* to buy it. Therefore, I told God that if I had gotten ahead of Him in buying the car, I would be glad to take it back because I had purchased the car when I was under pressure and felt that I had no other option. I only wanted this car if it was the one He wanted us to have. So I asked God for a *promise* to confirm that He wanted us to keep the car.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, would You please give us a *promise* to confirm that you want us to keep this car?”

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

...*he will give it you...*

—John 16:23 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

I said, “Thank You, Lord,” and have had peace about buying the car from that moment. We drove the car for several years, and it served us well. We know that God wants us to have peace, and we are so thankful for His faithfulness and for how He continues to show Himself strong on our behalf when we cry out to Him. From this experience God confirmed to us that even though there may be times when we are forced to make a quick decision, it is never too late to ask God for confirmation.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

It was obvious that I had to have a dependable car quickly, so I bought it. But I felt better about it after I asked God to confirm that it was what He wanted me to do, and He gave me a confirmation *promise*.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #41 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

It was spring in 1990, and I did not know that later in the year God was going to tell us to retire. What I did know was that I had bid several jobs, and now I was sensing in my spirit that I should be cautious about bidding other jobs. In fact, God had spoken to me in my quiet time a few days earlier:

...*wait [expectantly] for the Lord, and He will rescue you.*

—Proverbs 20:22 AMP

I was praying about bidding a big job that day.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do you want me to bid this job today?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...tarry here, and watch.*

—Mark 14:34 KJV

**Note:**

Without my asking for a confirmation, God confirmed it twice.

**God’s confirmation *promises*:**

*...Sit here...*

—Mark 14:32 KJV

*...sit down...*

—Proverbs 23:1 AMP

**The rest of the story:**

I did not bid this large contract because it seemed clear to me that God was telling me not to bid but rather to wait. I didn’t understand why He wanted me to wait, but I trusted God and knew that He was watching out for our good.

If we had been awarded this large contract along with the other contracts we were awarded during this period, we would not have been able to respond so quickly when God spoke to us later in the year and told us to retire without delay. Isn’t it amazing that God uses what He knows to help us live out His plan for our lives?

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When we are walking with God and are obedient to Him, He is always working on our behalf to help us and give us the guidance we need.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #42 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

It was the summer of 1990, and I was working on one of our contracts in Chicago. In my quiet time one morning, I asked God to speak to me, although I was not asking Him to speak to me about retirement.

**Note:**

Marilyn and I had always wanted to have more time to serve God during the last few years of our lives, and over the last few weeks, I had occasionally thought about when God might have us retire. I thought it would probably be about five years in the future.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, would You please speak to me as I read Your Word this morning?”

**Note:**

This is really a question I ask the Lord almost every day.

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

At first I did not recognize it as a *promise* from God because I wasn't thinking seriously about retiring anytime soon.

...*retire, stay [delay] not...*

—Jeremiah 4:6 KJV

**Note:**

No light came on to illuminate my path, and there was no immediate confirmation in my spirit that God meant for me to retire now. I thought that God was just getting my attention and would move us toward retirement sometime in the future. But throughout the day, in my spirit I had a growing conviction that God was speaking to me about retiring now.

That night when I came home from work, Marilyn and I were out jogging around the area where we were living, and I shared with her what God had told me that morning because I couldn't get it out of my mind.

Marilyn immediately thought back over what God had told her in her quiet time that morning. She shared with me two or three pages of notes that God had given her about being completely and absolutely obedient to God.

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, would You help me to listen and obey as You speak? If You are telling me to retire now, that will affect a lot of people. Please give me confirmation of Your timing.”

**God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...Walk in the Spirit...*

—Galatians 5:16 KJV

**Note:**

This is what God said to me the next morning in my quiet time. Now the decision to retire was becoming more serious because I understood that God was telling me, “Yes, you heard right. I want you to retire.”

But I still wanted to make sure I wasn’t making a mistake because our business is how we had provided for our own family and the families of our employees and how God had made it possible for us to support ministries for thirty years.

**I asked God for another confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, do you want me to stop bidding?”

**Note:**

The fastest and surest way to get out of the contracting business is to stop bidding.

**God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...Obey my voice, and do...according to all which I command you: so shall you be My people, and I will be your God.*

—Jeremiah 11:4 KJV

**Note:**

The next day God spoke to me again in my quiet time.

**God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...Obey...That I may...give them a land flowing with milk and honey...Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.*

—Jeremiah 11:4-5 KJV

### **I asked God for another confirmation:**

“Lord, would You please confirm that You want us to retire by answering the fleece?”

### **Note:**

You might think that God was getting pretty upset with me for asking Him for so many confirmations, but in this particular instance I don't think so. Two of the men who worked for me had started with me thirty years earlier, and most of the other men had worked for me for many years. I was also thinking seriously about my superintendent and secretary and how all these people needed to provide for their families.

### **I put out the fleece:**

We had already mailed several bids on future projects, so I said, “Lord, if You mean for us to retire as soon as we finish this contract, then please block our bids and do not let us get any of those contracts.”

### **The rest of the story:**

We were not awarded any of the contracts. We were the low bidder on one of the contracts, but it was set aside and awarded to a small disadvantaged business whose bid was actually higher than ours.

So we retired. Why? We retired because of:

1. A conviction that God meant for us to retire now, and
2. A fear of being disobedient to God, which would break our fellowship with Him and cause us to miss the blessings that come with obedience.

It was very difficult for us to walk away from this business that we loved, the business that God had given us and we had nourished and watched grow. We loved the challenge, and we loved the people who worked for us and were so deeply committed to help us. We had made a lot of friends on the bases where we had worked, and during the past thirty years, we had developed expertise in working with the federal government. All of this had become our comfort zone.

This was a time when it was especially important that we had already made up our minds to obey God, even before He gave us the *promise*, because we could have come up with a lot of reasons to give God for not retiring. But we trust God and are convinced that He knows what we need to do and when we need to do it to live out His plan for our lives, and we are committed to obey Him and live out His plan for our lives.

From the moment we obeyed God and stood on His *promise*, we have looked forward and not back, and we have never regretted following the leadership He gave us through His *promise*.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

We are to be committed to obey God even before He speaks because that makes it easier when He calls us out of our comfort zone. Trust and obey God because He sees the whole plan and knows what He is doing. Remember that God loves us, and He is faithful.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #43 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

God had told us to “...retire, stay [delay] not...” and we had obeyed quickly; therefore, we did not have time to find a buyer for our business before we retired. We still had the equipment, two shop buildings, and some land.

First we were concerned about what God wanted us to do with the equipment, most of which was highly specialized for our specialized work. We thought, “Maybe God will bring someone along to buy it all.” In fact, we thought that one of our competitors might buy everything just to keep us out of the business, but that didn’t happen.

A man did come to us and wanted to buy the business, including one of the buildings and the equipment. He apparently had the money, but he was sixty-five years old and had no experience in government contracting or in our specialized work. I would have had to commit a lot of time over the next few years to help him learn every part of the work. It seemed that



if I was going to have to commit all this time to helping someone else, God would have just left us in the business. But God had surprised me many times in the past, so I asked God for a *promise*.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, am I to pledge all the time it would take to help this man get started in this business?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*Take heed...that your heart be not deceived...*

—Deuteronomy 11:16 KJV

*...he hath no part nor inheritance with you.*

—Deuteronomy 12:12 KJV

*...do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.*

—Deuteronomy 12:25 KJV

*Thou shalt not consent unto [agree with] him; neither shall thine eye pity him...*

—Deuteronomy 13:8 KJV

*...do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God [according to the will of God].*

—Deuteronomy 13:18 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

We did not sell anything to this man because God had made it very clear to me that although this was our best potential buyer and there were no other potential buyers on the horizon, we were not to sell to him. Sometimes what appears to be a good business decision based on our own understanding is not how God wants us to handle a situation.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God wants us to trust Him in all circumstances and situations and not lean on our own understanding. We have found that it is best to do what He says even when we do not understand why.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #44 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

Since we no longer had a buyer for our business, I asked God for another *promise*.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to try to aggressively sell the equipment this year?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*...turn it into money...*

—Deuteronomy 14:25 *KJV*

*...release it...*

—Deuteronomy 15:2 *KJV*

### **The rest of the story:**

We began selling off the equipment one piece at a time, but it really caught my attention that the pieces of equipment we were selling were trucks, trailers, and things not essential to perform the specialized work we had been doing in our business.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust and obey God.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #45 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

My mother had died, and on the day of her funeral, I was filled with grief and needing very much the comfort that only God can give.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, please comfort my heart and the hearts of our family as we go through the funeral and the cemetery services for Mother today and then in the days to come.”

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*But as it is written:*

*"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*

*Nor have entered into the heart of man*

*The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

—1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

I was gripped in the depths of my heart with this *promise*, and I wrote in the margin of my Bible next to this passage, "Oh, the wonder of it all...Mother is with Jesus." My heart is so comforted with the picture of Mother seeing her Lord, whom she loved so much. The Lord brought beautiful comfort to me that day, and I am continually comforted with this precious *promise* as I consider the wonder of being in His presence.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God comforts His children in their grief, and when we or our loved ones die, God has promised that those who love Him are going to a wonderful place called heaven that He has prepared for them.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #46 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

While I was discipling a young married woman, she was going through a very difficult time with her parents. They had divorced, and things were very hurtful and stressful for her between her father, stepfather, and mother. She felt very much abandoned by her parents as she poured out her heart to me one day.

The next morning I was praying for her and asking God to comfort her heart. While reading in my Psalm readings for that day, my heart was moved as I read Psalm 27:10 NKJV.

**Note:**

I like to read five Psalms a day after reading in my regular calendar Bible reading plan. I start with the day's date and read the Psalm of that

number. Then I add 30 to each Psalm. On January 1, for example, I read Psalm 1 and then add 30 four times to make the five Psalms for that date: Psalms 1, 31, 61, 91, and 121. It has been said that the Psalms “explore the full range of human experience in a very personal and practical way.”<sup>3</sup> They give praise to God for His wonderful works and ways, and they keep me focused on Him.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Dear God, would You please comfort \_\_\_\_\_ and help me to encourage her with Your comfort?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*When my father and mother forsake me,  
Then the LORD will take care of me.*

—Psalm 27:10 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

I knew the Lord had spoken this to my heart for me to share with this precious young woman. I shared this verse with her, and it brought tremendous comfort to her heart. As always, the Word meets us at our point of need, bringing comfort and peace when we find ourselves in a stressful situation.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God will never forsake us even when others do. God’s love never fails. He will take care of us. Pray on behalf of others.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #47 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I was praying much about our upcoming trip overseas to make disciples and hoping to produce disciple-makers when God placed this question on my heart.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, what do You want me to pray for regarding our trip overseas as we prepare to leave?”

### **God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*Finally...pray...that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.*

—2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 NIV84

### **Note:**

As I meditated on these verses, God spoke to me again.

*But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*

—2 Thessalonians 3:3-5 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 was my prayer. I prayed that God would use us to spread the message of the Lord, that His message would be honored and spread rapidly, and that He would deliver us from wicked and evil men who did not have faith. I prayed for His direction, strength, and protection, and He was faithful to hear and answer my prayer just as He had directed me to pray. I watched while we were there as God answered this prayer, filling us with His love, giving us perseverance under a strenuous schedule, and then hearing from others that at times we were in dangerous places where the Lord protected us from evil.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Our loving God is faithful to share with us what to pray and then hears our prayers and answers. The Lord strengthens and protects us from the evil one. Be confident in the Lord. Pray to the Lord to build into our hearts God's love and Christ's perseverance. Our loving God is faithful to

think His thoughts in our minds, speak His words through our mouths,  
and then hear our prayers and answer.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #48 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

On another trip to Romania, we were facing obstacles in discipling. As I prayed, I was asking God to speak to my heart regarding the situations we were faced with and what we were to do.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, would you please speak to my heart regarding the situation we are facing and tell me what to do?”

### God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:

*Truly my soul silently waits for God;  
From Him comes my salvation.  
He only is my rock and my salvation;  
He is my defense;  
I shall not be greatly moved.*

—Psalm 62:1-2 NKJV

*My soul, wait silently for God alone.  
For my expectation is from Him.  
He only is my rock and my salvation;  
He is my defense;  
I shall not be moved.*

—Psalm 62:5-6 NKJV

*Trust in Him at all times...  
God is a refuge for us.*

—Psalm 62:8 NKJV

### Note:

God is faithful to all His good *promises*, and as we waited and continued to do what we knew to do, keeping our expectation in Him, we were not moved. We watched as He worked all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28).

### God's confirmation *promises*:

*"Then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer, and their supplication, and maintain their cause."*

—1 Kings 8:49 NKJV

*"Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people...according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise..."*

—1 Kings 8:56 NKJV

*Then the LORD appeared..."I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice."*

—2 Chronicles 7:12 NKJV

### The rest of the story:

As we waited, resting in God, and continued to do as He led, He powerfully removed the obstacles. We watched as He did a marvelous work in the hearts and lives of those precious people being disciplined. God is a way-maker when there seems to be no way.

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

Silently wait on God alone. God is my rock, my salvation, and my defense. God is the source of my expectations; they are wrapped up in God's faithfulness. God only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense; therefore, I shall not be moved. Trust in God at all times, regardless of the circumstances. God is our refuge. Bless the Lord, for He is the one who gives us rest and allows us to stand on His *promises*. Trust God because not one word of any of God's promises has ever failed. He hears our prayers.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #49 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

We celebrated our 40th anniversary while on our way home from making disciples overseas. We had purchased Eurail tickets to travel by train in Italy, France, and Switzerland, and we were allowed only one carry-on

bag apiece for the Eurail trip. We had several more bags with us from our long stay in Romania, and we needed to find a place to store our extra bags in Paris. Unfamiliar with Paris and not knowing where we might leave our bags, we committed our baggage to God. I asked Him to give us wisdom to know what to do with the extra bags.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, will You please give us wisdom to know what to do with our extra baggage while we are traveling to these other countries?”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“I removed his shoulder from the burden;  
His hands were freed from the baskets.  
You called in trouble, and I delivered you;  
I answered you in the secret place...  
I tested you...”*

—Psalm 81:6-7 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

This was a test, and God answered my prayer. While in Paris, we stayed in a small hotel near the cathedral of Notre Dame. This hotel had a “secret place,” a room in their basement, and they offered to keep our luggage there while we were traveling outside the country. I am so thankful that God cares about anything that we care about: “...humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7 NKJV). Isn’t it amazing that God cares about even the small things in our lives such as where to store luggage?

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When I put aside my pride in thinking that I can handle a situation and humble myself enough to cast all things—even the little things—I am concerned about upon God, He is faithful and cares enough to meet my needs. When I am in trouble and call out to God, He will deliver.



## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #50 (JERRY)

### The situation:

Several months had passed since we had decided not to sell our business to the first man who made an offer, and we still had all the equipment essential to perform the work we had been doing in our business. One day a man met me at our shop because he was interested in buying our paint-stripping machine. Our shop was full of equipment, and Bruce asked what kind of business we had been in that used all this equipment. I explained about our business and how God had told us to retire.

Bruce told me that he had been in Oklahoma City for a couple of months, looking for a business to buy. He expressed an interest in buying our business. Since Bruce did not have any experience in contracting with the government, it was obvious that I would need to spend time with him to teach him every part of the business.

The next morning I was praying about this and decided to ask God if I was to make a commitment of time to help Bruce get started if he decided he wanted to buy the business. I was thinking about a much smaller amount of time than would have been required with the earlier prospective buyer.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want me to commit a smaller amount of time to help someone get started in the business?”

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*Go therefore now, and work...*

—Exodus 5:18 KJV

### The rest of the story:

I understood that God was telling me to commit some time to help Bruce get started if he decided to buy the business. Otherwise it would be impossible for him to get into the business. Bruce and his wife were relatively new Christians; therefore, even though we needed to sell the

business, I encouraged them not to buy the business unless they were confident God was leading them because this particular business is very risky.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Be patient. Wait on God to reveal His plan.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #51 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

Although I had not asked God for a *promise* in my quiet time, He gave me one about how he had brought Bruce to buy our business.

**The question I was asking God:**

None.

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him].*

—Proverbs 16:33 AMP

**Note:**

At first I did not recognize this as a *promise*, but then I saw it:

- This is wholly of the Lord even though the events seem accidental. Bruce had come to see a paint-stripping machine. It might seem coincidental that he would see and be interested in buying all the other equipment and the business.
- This is really ordered by the Lord.

**The rest of the story:**

Bruce did contact me, and we began discussing the terms of our contract. The contract was signed, and I helped Bruce so that he could get started in the business.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is both trustworthy and faithful, but He operates on His timetable, not ours.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #52 (JERRY)

### The situation:

I had been invited to go on a mission trip but felt that I would not be able to go because I thought I might be needed during that time to help the man to whom we had sold our business. Therefore, I told those who had invited me that unless God gave me a *promise* by the next morning telling me to go, I would not be able to go. So the next morning in my quiet time I asked God what He wanted me to do.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want me to go to Romania with the evangelistic group in November?”

### God's answer/specific personal promises:

*...go...*

—2 Samuel 15:7 KJV

*...Go in peace...*

—2 Samuel 15:9 KJV

*...make speed to depart...*

—2 Samuel 15:14 KJV

### The rest of the story:

God totally surprised me by telling me to go on the mission trip to Romania. I did go on the trip, and it turned out that I was not needed at home during that time. God showed us again how He works everything out when we are willing to obey Him.

God blessed our trip in some amazing ways. Once, several of us were sharing about Christ with an unsaved man who did not speak or understand English. Our unsaved translator was listening so intently that she often forgot to translate what we were saying. Amazingly, the man said, “You do not need to translate. I understand what he is saying.” It was amazing to see God work in such a miraculous way.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Walking with God is never dull or uneventful. There are often new, exciting, and sometimes unexpected experiences on the path.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #53 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

It was time to elect the chairman of deacons in our church, and I felt that this election was very important, although I did not know why.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to vote for \_\_\_\_\_ as chairman of deacons for the coming year?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...this man...*

—Matthew 8:9 KJV

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, would You please confirm this for me?”

**God’s confirmation *promises*:**

*...and I say...this man...*

—Matthew 8:9 KJV

*...so be it...*

—Matthew 8:13 KJV

*...this man...*

—Matthew 8:9 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

The man I voted for was elected, and later that year our pastor resigned. In our church the chairman of deacons carries a very heavy load when we are without a pastor. “This man” was the perfect one for the job at that time. He was the man God had chosen.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God works the pieces of the puzzle for His glory. We simply need to be sensitive to His leading and obey.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #54 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

Our pastor had recently resigned, and I was elected chairman of the pastor search committee in our church.

### **Note:**

On Saturday, April 27, 1996, on my way to my quiet time, God impressed on my heart that He was ready to give me a *promise* concerning our new pastor. I was afraid to ask for one because I didn't know what I would do with the *promise* since it was still early in the process. We hadn't even heard some of our leading prospective pastors preach. Yet every time our search for a pastor came to my mind, I thought of one name: Craig Etheredge.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, it seems very early in the process to be asking for a *promise*, but Craig Etheredge keeps coming to my mind when I think about our new pastor. I sense in my spirit that You are ready to give me a *promise*."

Therefore, on May 5, 1996, I wrote this question down: "Lord, do You want to give me a *promise* about Craig?"

### **God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*...take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers...write every man's name upon his rod.*

—Numbers 17:2 KJV

*And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod [life/ministry], whom I shall choose, shall blossom...*

—Numbers 17:5 KJV

*...to you they [Craig and Liz Etheredge] are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

—Numbers 18:6 KJV

*...to you have I given them by reason of the anointing...*

—Numbers 18:8 KJV

## **Note:**

The thing that the search committee had decided upon from the beginning was that God had already chosen the man to be our pastor, and we just needed to discern whom He had chosen. It was obvious that God had done the choosing.

I did not want to influence the other members on the search committee. Therefore, I did not tell any of them about my *promise* until all of them had come to the same conclusion: that God had chosen Craig Etheredge to be our new pastor. Here is how it happened.

On May 23 I didn't ask God a question, but I felt that He was talking to me about an urgency to move ahead in talking to Craig Etheredge.

## **This is what God said to me that morning:**

*...Go to the mount...*

*...go in and possess the land...*

*...Behold the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*

—Deuteronomy 1:7-8, 21 KJV

## **The rest of the story:**

I knew God wanted us to move ahead, but we had agreed that we would not move to the next step with a prospective pastor until every member of the search committee felt God's leadership to do so. We were waiting for one member of the committee to discern God's will.

Since I felt such an urgency from God, I decided I would go ahead and have the secretary prepare the letters we would send to Craig and just hold them until I heard from the committee member waiting on God's direction. While I was on the phone with the secretary preparing the letters,

the member called and said that God had told him in his quiet time that morning to move ahead with Craig. He had wanted to call earlier but had been tied up in meetings. Therefore, I picked up the letters, signed them, and sent them overnight to Craig.

As usual, God's *promise* came true, and Craig Etheredge became our pastor. As God promised, Craig's life and ministry blossomed in our church. He and Liz were a gift from God and for God.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God has a plan, and we are to simply follow His will. Blessings follow obedience.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #55 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

On a particular morning, I was greatly concerned about the health of our son, Don. Don and his wife, Daphne, were in a new place of ministry, in a new city, and Daphne was pregnant with their third child. They were just becoming acclimated to the new area when Don started having stomach and chest pains. Daphne drove him to a hospital where he was admitted and kept for several days. Doctors ran test after test but could not find the problem. They restricted him from eating and drinking for several days while they tried to determine what was going on. Waiting on doctors and tests took longer than expected.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Father, would you please intervene on Don and Daphne's behalf and bring healing to Don?"

**Note:**

Sometimes God catches us off guard with how specific He is with His answers. We knew that Don had been restricted from eating and drinking, and in addition Daphne had told us that he was stooped over and in terrific pain.

**God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*"The one who suffers...will soon be released...  
he will not go hungry."*

—Isaiah 51:14 NET

**Note:**

This translation had a footnote saying that the phrase “the one who suffers” could be translated “the one who is stooped over (under a burden).”

**The rest of the story:**

They found Don's problem and were able to correct it. Don was released after a few days and was no longer stooped over and in terrific pain, nor did he go hungry. He has not had that specific problem again. God's willingness to intervene on our behalf when we cry out to Him continues to amaze us.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God to speak to you, and He will. Sometimes when God speaks, He is very specific.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #56 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

Marilyn and I had been asked to disciple the college students working at the Lifeway Conference Centers at Glorieta, New Mexico, and Ridgecrest, North Carolina. It turned out that this was a commitment for two years—one summer at Glorieta and another summer at Ridgecrest.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want Marilyn and me to make ourselves available to disciple the students working at Glorieta and Ridgecrest?”

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*...What God is about to do...the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.*

—Genesis 41:28-32 KJV



**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, would You please confirm this for me? We don’t want to make a mistake.”

**God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...do this...as God has shown you all this...*

—Genesis 41:34-39 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

The Lord confirmed that we were to go to Glorieta and Ridgecrest; therefore, Marilyn and I volunteered to work at the conference centers, discipling the college students who were working there for the summer. Many of those students went back to their campuses and began making disciples and producing disciple-makers. Now, several years later, we are still being contacted by some of those students who continue to make disciples for our Lord. Scripture teaches us that obedience brings blessing, and this has been a tremendous blessing for us.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Obey God, and watch Him work.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #57 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

We were to go to the Glorieta Conference Center near Santa Fe, New Mexico. We had been asked to disciple the High Point College Students who were working there for the summer. I had just had knee surgery and had not fully recovered. I was wondering if I could manage the many stairs and slopes.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Father, please speak to my heart about going to Glorieta this summer to work with college students.”

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"...you shall...in the place, which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice...before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses..."*

—Deuteronomy 16:15-16 NKJV

*"Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of...the neighboring places...See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land...The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today...May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you!...'Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged!...'The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you..."*

—Deuteronomy 1:7-11, 21, 30 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

God was speaking to my heart that we were to leave and go to the Glorieta mountains in the neighboring state of New Mexico. He was setting this land before us, and He would multiply us in this place by spiritual multiplication according to Matthew 28:19-20. God spoke to my heart that He would fight for me in taking care of what He had done for me with my knee surgery.

We had a great time at Glorieta with the High Point students and saw God do some amazing things. Many of the students became disciples and went back to their campuses in the fall to make disciples.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust the Lord our God. He is omnipotent and omniscient, and He fulfills every *promise* He makes to us if we are obedient. Obedience brings God's blessings. The Lord our God goes before us and fights for us. Our God intervenes on behalf of His obedient children.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #58 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

A seminary had invited us to attend a one-week January term to teach *One on One with God* to both men and women students who were student directors on university campuses. They would be attending this class for discipleship training. We arrived on campus, and the night before starting our first class the next day, I awakened filled with many questions about being there. I was burdened by the responsibility that was ours. As I read my quiet time readings in the middle of the night in that dorm room, God comforted my heart with His precious Word.

### The question I was asking God:

“Father, You have orchestrated the circumstances of our being here. You have brought us to this place, and yet I am burdened with the responsibility that You have given me. Will You please speak to my heart and confirm to me that I am here because it is Your will?”

### God's answer/specific personal promise:

*“The Lord GOD has given...  
The tongue of the learned,  
That I should know how to speak  
A word in season to him who is weary.  
He awakens [me] morning by morning, [it was now 3:00 a.m.]  
He awakens [my] ear to hear as the learned.  
The Lord GOD has opened [my] ear;  
And I was not rebellious,  
Nor did I turn away...”*

*“For the Lord GOD will help [me];  
Therefore I will not be disgraced;  
Therefore I have set [my] face like a flint,  
And I know that I will not be ashamed.  
He is near who justifies [me] ...  
Surely the Lord GOD will help [me] ...*

*“Who among you fears the LORD?  
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?  
Who walks in darkness*

*And has no light?  
...trust in the name of the LORD  
And rely upon...God...*

*"I, even I, am He who comforts you.  
Who are you that you should be afraid?...  
But I am the LORD your God,  
Who divided the sea whose waves roared—  
The LORD of hosts is His name.  
And I have put My words in your mouth;  
I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,  
That I may plant...  
Lay the foundations of the earth,  
And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"*

— Isaiah 50:4-5, 7-10; 51:12, 15, 16 NKJV

### **Note:**

In the margin of my Bible, next to the verses He had communicated so clearly to my heart, I wrote, "WOW." As I fellowshiped with the Lord in the middle of the night, He gave me confidence in a situation that was difficult for me. He promised that He would help me, that He had equipped my tongue with what to speak, and that I was to speak a word in season to those who were weary. He comforted my heart when He told me that I was not to fear or be afraid and that He was the one who was comforting me.

### **The rest of the story:**

The time I had with those precious girls was beautiful. We watched God work in all our lives as we went through *One on One with God* in this discipleship class. One particular time that was so exciting was when one of the girls was struggling with meditation (pondering, picturing, and praying) a particular passage in the Bible. As she read the assigned Scripture, she just could not get it. She struggled, but all of a sudden with exuberance and joy, she shouted out, "I GET IT! I GET IT! I GET IT!" The Scripture had moved from her head and exploded in her heart so much that she could hardly contain herself. How exciting!

God is faithful to all His *promises*, and I watched during that class as He did all He said He would do. I am thankful for the courage and strength

that He gave me. Many of the girls were weary and struggling; they needed the comfort of coming to know Jesus more deeply and intimately. Through the disciplines we covered in *One on One with God*, they found peace and comfort. Many of the girls returned to their campuses with a greater passion to be true disciples and disciple-makers.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Speak encouraging words to the weary. Awake to God each morning to be alone with Him. God is the one who opens my ears to understand. Do not be rebellious or turn away from God. He is my helper. When I know what God wants me to do, I am to be determined, set my face like a flint, and do it. God is the one who justifies me. Be confident in God, and stand with Him. Do not fear. Do not be afraid of insults. God is my comforter. Do not let fear crowd out of our minds the goodness of God, our maker.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #59 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

The leadership at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina asked us to come and use *One on One with God* to disciple the college students who were working there for the summer.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Father, do You want us to go to Ridgecrest this summer and disciple the college students who are working there by taking them through *One on One with God*?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*So He said, "I will certainly be with you...I have sent you...you shall serve God on this mountain"...Moreover God said..."Thus you shall say to the children...'The LORD God of your fathers...has sent me to you...I will bring you up out of the affliction...'..."Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."*

—Exodus 3:12,15,17; 4:12 NKJV

### The rest of the story:

God clearly spoke that we were to go, so we went to Ridgecrest that summer to serve on the mountain. But at the first meeting with the Ridgecrest leadership regarding *One on One with God*, things were not working out with regard to scheduling the classes with the summer student workers whom we had been invited to disciple. The time being allotted to us for discipling the students was not sufficient for us to adequately train them. For a while during the meeting, it appeared that it might be better for us to come at another time when there would be adequate time to cover each session in *One on One with God*.

But we knew that God had sent us there, and we watched as He worked everything out. He brought us through that affliction. The students were given the option, if they desired, to go through *One on One with God* by working out their schedules to be disciplined during their free time. We were able to disciple around seventy students, and each one sacrificed thirty hours of their free time that summer to be disciplined. God powerfully used the time to capture students' hearts with His passionate love for them and His heart's desire for them to really know Him (Philippians 3:10 AMP) and to become disciples and disciple-makers (Matthew 28:19-20). We made ourselves available to meet with the students based on their particular schedules, so we were discipling from early morning to late night.

What a great summer! Many students became disciple-makers and went back to their schools that next semester to make disciples. One girl did not think she would have time to go through *One on One with God*, so she decided not to do it. At the end of the summer, she came to me, filled with regret that she had not gone through *One on One with God* and asked me if I could give her an overview because she wanted to go back to school and be a disciple-maker. She had grasped the principle of multiplication from friends who were being disciplined. I met with her for several hours, and it was great to see how she became a passionate disciple-maker in her school. Our God is an awesome God! He was certainly with us!

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is awesome. He is always with us. Be confident when God sends us on a mission. We can trust God to handle the afflictions on our path. When we are on God's mission and don't humanly know what to say, God will be with our mouths and teach us what to say.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #60 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

You can read in Specific Personal Promise #9 the *promise* God gave me about working with the married young adult women of our church. Now, after more than thirty years, the Lord has clearly led Jerry and me away from serving in the married young adult department of our church. We found that we were trying to do too many things at the same time. Our *One on One with God* discipleship ministry is now in many languages and countries throughout the world. In addition, God was laying on our hearts to quickly finish this book for our family and friends and at the same time keep up with many other responsibilities. It was becoming increasingly more difficult to give the time needed to lead the married young adult department. Therefore, God led us to step down.

However, now there was a problem. The responsibility was gone, but there was a void. I still had that longing in my heart to be with the young women. I had loved them for so long that they had become a precious part of my life.

The Lord had clearly spoken to me through Titus 2:3-5 more than thirty years earlier that I was to teach young women. I was to "...encourage [teach] the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible [discreet], pure, workers [keepers] at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored" (Titus 2:4-5 NASB, bracketed words from KJV).

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, You led us to work with the married young adults, and now You have led us away from the married young adult department. If You do not want me to continue ministering to the young married women, then would You please take this passion and desire away from me?”

### **Note:**

It was a while before the Lord answered my prayer, and when He did, I was surprised by what He said.

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...“You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.”*

Ruth 2:8-9 NKJV

### **Note:**

I did not understand what God was saying to me. It seemed like an enigma to me. I asked God to confirm in my heart His will regarding my question.

As a youth, God had placed in my path a godly woman who mentored me in many ways. She had a love and passion for young people, and when she was in her eighties and could no longer serve with youth, she began going to the youth department on Sundays, just to love on the young people. God brought this picture to my mind. I realized that each Sunday I could “stay close to the young women” so that I might let my “eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them.”

### **The rest of the story:**

Now each Sunday, before the married young adults begin their life groups, I go to their department just to love on them and encourage them. What a blessing this is for me! And now this story is only beginning. God is bringing young women across my path from many other areas, here in the States and abroad. How I praise Him!



### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God knows the plans He has for us, and they are plans for good and not evil to give us a future and a hope. What a blessing to be in on what He is about in our lives!

As the Lord our God has promised, He greatly blesses those who carefully obey Him. Like sheep, we are to listen carefully so that we can clearly recognize our Shepherd's voice and then obey Him, by being generous and sharing God's blessings with others.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #61 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

We owned a shop building and the lots on which it was located on N.W. 80th Street. We had outgrown it several years earlier, and we no longer had a use for it.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, do You want us to sell this shop?"

### **God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*...Get out...*

—Genesis 12:1 KJV

*So Abram [we] departed...*

—Genesis 12:4 KJV

### **The rest of the story:**

God was faithful to provide a buyer, and we sold the property. It turned out that the young man who bought the property had grown up in our neighborhood, and the property we were selling was just perfect for him and his business. We were able to work out a pay schedule for him and help him in some other ways, so it turned out to be a blessing for him and for us.

## **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Very often God wants to bless us and others at the same time through our obedience.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #62 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

A family was having financial problems, and we wanted to help if that was what God wanted us to do. But we did not want to get ahead of God.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do you want us to give these people some money to help them?”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Now...these things were done...*

—Ezra 9:1 KJV

### **I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Would you like to confirm that, Lord?”

### **God’s confirmation *promises*:**

*And now for a little space grace hath been shown...that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.*

—Ezra 9:8 KJV

*...let it be done...*

—Ezra 10:3 KJV

*...do it.*

—Ezra 10:4 KJV

### **The rest of the story:**

It was clear to us that God wanted us to financially help this couple, and we were able to do it without their knowing who had provided the help, which was a double blessing for us. You may wonder why we would pray about helping someone financially if we were able to help him or her. The reason is that we did not want to interfere with what God might have been doing in their lives. Also, in the past we have given money to others

who used the money in the wrong way. Rather than helping them, it created a problem for them.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Always talk to God about what He wants us to do, especially when we are trying to help someone. We need to make sure that what we are considering doing will truly help them and not hurt them.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE # 63 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

In our church one of the responsibilities of a deacon is to calm discord in our fellowship if and when it arises. Years ago we had a couple of men who were sowing discord in the church. As a deacon, I sensed in my spirit that God was dealing with me about talking to one of them.

**The question I was asking God:**

None, but I was thinking seriously about the discord being sown.

**Note:**

On the way to my quiet time one particular morning, I sensed in my spirit that God wanted to give me a *promise*. God brought a verse to my mind that I had read a couple of days earlier in my daily Bible readings.

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*...and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel...*

—Numbers 17:5 KJV

**Note:**

One of the men was telling things that were simply not true, but both were guilty of sowing discord. I was very conscious of Proverbs 6:16 and 19 NKJV, which teach that these were two of the six things the Lord hates: "A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." I was concerned for both of them but really didn't want to go talk to them.

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, do you want me to talk to \_\_\_\_\_ as a friend?”

**God’s confirmation *promises*:**

*...say unto them...*

—Numbers 18:26 KJV

*...thou shalt say unto them...*

—Numbers 18:30 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

This was way outside my comfort zone, but when we obey God and stand on His *promise*, He will give us the courage, humility, love, or whatever we need to accomplish what He has told us to do. Since God had spoken to me, I knew that He wanted me to go talk to the man I knew better, just as one friend to another. When I did, the problem was resolved with both men, and the false rumors and discord stopped.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Even though God often wants to use us outside our comfort zone, He goes with us to accomplish His will.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #64 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

I was invited to serve on the board of an organization serving the state where we live. I was very busy in the discipleship and church ministries God had given us and didn’t really believe that God would lead me to serve on this board. But I was willing to ask Him.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to serve on the board of \_\_\_\_\_? I don’t want to serve at this time unless You want me to serve.”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Take heed now that you fail not to do this...*

—Ezra 4:22 KJV

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, I am really not sure I can contribute anything.”

**God's confirmation *promise*:**

*...you are able...*

—Daniel 4:18 KJV

**Note:**

Some of the men serving on this board had been involved in asking me to serve.

**I asked God for another confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, that may be what others think, but what do You say?”

**God's confirmation *promise*:**

*Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren, and to strangers... you will do well...*

—3 John 1:5-6 KJV

**The rest of the story:**

I accepted the position and served for several years. Serving on the board of this very large non-profit organization has been a special blessing to me in so many ways. I really respect the people on this board and have learned so much from them in how they work together in such a large organization to reach a common goal.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God not only tells us what to do but encourages us and blesses us for obeying.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #65 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

Our pastor had put together a Special Discipleship Group program in our church, and he asked if I would consider leading one of the groups of girls. I told him I would pray about it and get back with him.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, am I to lead this group of girls in this discipleship program?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore...stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

—1 Corinthians 15:57-58 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

I told our pastor I would lead the group, and the time was priceless with those precious gals. God was mightily at work in each girl's life in many ways, and the time was a time of encouragement for each one of us on our journeys with God.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

We are to give ourselves fully to the Lord, and our labor in the Lord is not in vain. Always be thankful to God the Father, for He is the one who gives us victory, and He does it through our Lord Jesus Christ. Stand firm, and let nothing move us from being obedient to God.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #66 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

The time was fast approaching for our departure to a country that was not open to the gospel where we were to make disciples in several different areas.

### **The question I was asking God:**

My mind was full of questions regarding our trip.

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“It was the LORD our God Himself who brought us...out...and performed great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.”*

—Joshua 24:17 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

The Lord spoke to my heart that He was the One who was sending us and that He would perform great things before our eyes and protect our traveling. I praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful direction and guidance in our lives while on this trip. We repeatedly witnessed great things happening as we made disciples, and the Lord protected us in all our traveling. He opened doors for ministry in various areas and brought people into our path at strategic times to interpret and to travel with us to the places we needed to go. God gave us favor with many of the people we were discipling in that country and it was truly a blessed experience.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God was sending us on this trip. He was going to let us see Him at work, and He would protect us on our entire journey among the nations over and through which we traveled.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #67 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

Jerry and I were in a country that was not open to the gospel, and for several months we were traveling from city to city to disciple a group in three or four cities per day. We were using our discipling tool, *One on One with God*. We had interpreters who traveled with us, but on one particular early morning, our interpreter did not show up to take the train with us to the other cities. In addition, we had been given the wrong tickets and had to exchange them before the train was leaving. The language there is very difficult, and I was stressed, wondering how we were going to work out the ticket situation. I was also concerned about when we got to the cities—where we were going to disciple and how our groups would be able to understand us without interpreters. We got the tickets worked out, and while we traveled by train, I took out my Bible and began to read and talk with God.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, You know the predicament we are in today and You know the groups that are waiting for us. Would you please calm my heart and work out the problems?”

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*Then I called upon the name of the LORD;  
“O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”  
Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
Yes, our God is merciful.  
The LORD preserves the simple;  
I was brought low, and He saved me.  
Return to your rest, O my soul,  
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.*

—Psalm 116:4-7 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

That day when we arrived in the cities, God graciously provided whatever we needed. On this particular day the Lord provided our interpreters so that we were able to communicate with the people. He showed Himself strong on our behalf over and over again and in every situation as He dealt bountifully with us by providing all of our needs as He always has. He promised,

*...“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

—Hebrews 13:5 NKJV

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Believe and rest in the Lord. Our Lord is gracious, righteous, and merciful. He is the One who sees us through our problems. He is our salvation and our blessed provider.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #68 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

We were invited to Armenia by a missionary who felt that this country needed *One on One with God* discipleship. We went to make disciples,



produce disciple-makers, and help them finish the translation of *One on One with God* into Armenian. While preparing to go, God spoke to my heart regarding Armenia.

### **The question I was asking God:**

I was not asking God a specific question; however, many things were going through my mind as we prepared to go to Armenia.

### **God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,  
Who rides the heavens to help you,  
And in His excellency on the clouds.  
The eternal God is your refuge,  
And underneath are the everlasting arms;  
He will thrust out the enemy from before you,  
And will say, 'Destroy!'...  
Happy are you...  
Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD,  
The shield of your help  
And the sword of your majesty..."*

—Deuteronomy 33:26-27, 29 NKJV

### **Note:**

These Scriptures were a comfort to me as we prepared to go to Armenia, but after we arrived, they became even more precious to me. While we were there, Jerry encountered what he thought was altitude sickness, which was really affecting his ability to function. Many times during the day he had to go to bed. When we returned home, we found out that blockages in his heart were causing the extreme fatigue. Over and over I witnessed God as our refuge while we were in Armenia, and He carried us with His everlasting arms through some difficult times that took lots of energy. In the midst of all that was going on while we were there, the joy of the Lord was truly our strength—mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. Glory to God!

When we got back to our home in America, Jerry's cardiologist performed a heart procedure and inserted two stents in his heart to increase the blood flow.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, would you please give the surgeon skillful hands and godly wisdom as he performs this procedure on Jerry? Please bring Jerry through this procedure successfully and give him added years to walk with You and serve You. Selfishly I am asking for added years that we might continue our journey together with You.”

*“...yet not My will, but Yours be done.”*

—Luke 22:42 NASB

### **God’s answer/specific personal promise:**

*...The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble.  
The LORD will protect him and keep him alive,  
And he shall be called blessed upon the earth;  
And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies.  
The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed;  
In his illness, You restore him to health.*

— Psalm 41:1-3 NASB

### **The rest of the story:**

Once again, I have witnessed the goodness and mercy of God in our lives and His faithfulness to us in every need of our lives. Many times God’s answers have been yes and many times no, but He has always been faithful to walk with us through the situation. I have witnessed God’s grace in Jerry’s life again. Since the procedure and a time of adjusting the medications, I have been amazed at the energy that God has given Jerry to do the work that He has for him to complete.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is always watching out for us. He is our faithful helper, refuge, and shield, and He upholds us. He deals with the enemy before us. There is no one like God.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #69 (JERRY)

### The situation:

Again it was our responsibility to ask people to serve in a responsible position of a certain organization, and we were praying about inviting a specific couple.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want us to invite \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to serve in this position?”

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*...two vessels...as precious as gold.*

—Ezra 8:27 ESV

### I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, I agree but do You want them to serve in this position?”

### God's confirmation *promise*:

*“...keep them...”*

—Ezra 8:29 ESV

### I asked God for another confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, would You please confirm this?”

### God's confirmation *promise*:

*“...let it be done...Arise, for it is your task...be strong and do it.”*

—Ezra 10:3-4 ESV

### The rest of the story:

We invited the couple to serve. They accepted and have been a tremendous asset to the organization. It is such a wonderful experience to have God speak and give us specific instructions about what He wants us to do and then give us the faith and confidence to do it. To God be the glory!

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is to be praised for His patience and faithfulness in guiding us and then giving us confidence to do what He has asked us to do.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #70 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

My mother needed hospice care, and several different hospice firms had been recommended to us.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, what about using \_\_\_\_\_ as the hospice provider for Mom? Although others have been recommended, this company continues to come back to mind.”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“...select the best qualified...”*

—2 Kings 10:3 NLT

### **I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, we don’t know which one is best. We need You to guide us.”

### **God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*“...do whatever you think is best”*

—2 Kings 10:5 NLT

### **I asked God for another confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, I want to be sure I am doing what You know is best.”

### **God’s confirmation *promise*:**

*...He made a pact with them...“This is what you must do...”*

—2 Kings 11:4-5 NLT

### **The rest of the story:**

We invited the company to help us care for my mother, and we were very impressed with the love and care they showed her and the tremen-

dous help they were to our family. This company was definitely the right choice for us.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is pleased when we are persistent in seeking His will because we are convinced that He has a good plan for each of our lives, and we are committed to live out His plan.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #71 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

I was asked to share at a conference overseas.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to accept the invitation to speak at the \_\_\_\_\_ conference?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...You are the man...*

—2 Samuel 12:7 KJV

**I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, because of the context, would You please confirm this?”

**God's confirmation *promise*:**

*...stand by [them] in whatever business [they] may have need of you...*

—Romans 16: 2 Wuest

**The rest of the story:**

I had a lot of freedom as I prepared and spoke at the conference because I knew that I was doing what God wanted me to do. I am so thankful that God is willing to respond to our cries for help and show us the path upon which He wants us to walk.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is awesome. He is willing to lead us in every area of life.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #72 (JERRY)

### The situation:

Marilyn and I were praying about going to a specific country overseas to make disciples.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, are Marilyn and I to go to \_\_\_\_\_ to make disciples this year?”

### God’s answer/*specific personal promises*:

*...the doors...were locked...*

—Judges 3:24 KJV

*...they took a key, and opened them...*

—Judges 3:25 KJV

*...Go...*

—Judges 4:6 KJV

### I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, would You please confirm this for me?”

### God’s confirmation *promises*:

*...Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go...?*

—Judges 4:6 KJV

*...I will surely go with you...*

—Judges 4:9 KJV

*...is not the LORD gone out before you?...*

—Judges 4:14 KJV

### The rest of the story:

We went to the specific country overseas where God was leading us and made disciples. How could we stay at home when God had told us to go? He was unlocking a closed door, He was going before us, and He would go with us.

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

God can unlock any door at any time when He chooses to do so.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #73 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

I found myself in the midst of multiple personal health issues: an ear problem, a bad mammogram, a simple splinter under the fingernail, the surgery that followed to remove the splinter, and the fingernail that did not heal properly. One year later I was facing a second surgery for what turned out to be cancer—a squamous cell carcinoma—under the same fingernail. Soon thereafter, I was facing a third surgery where they took off part of my finger from the last joint to the tip of my finger because the cancer was resting on the bone.

### The question I was asking God:

I was asking God so many questions during that time. However, many times my heart's cry was a simple, "Help!"

### Note:

On several occasions with the different issues going on with my health, God spoke to my heart in my quiet time while reading His Word. He comforted my heart with many *promises* during this time, but this *promise* was particularly precious to me.

### God's answer/specific personal promises:

*"When you pass through the waters, I am with you;  
when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you.  
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;  
the flames will not harm you.  
For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your deliverer...  
Since you are precious and special in my sight,  
and I love you...  
Don't be afraid, for I am with you..."*

—Isaiah 43:2-5 NET

### The rest of the story:

Now I have experienced the healing of those multiple health issues I spoke of earlier. I have experienced again that His mercies are new every morning and great is His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23). God truly

is good all the time! Each time He speaks recurring *promises* over me, they are fresh, new, and specifically for me and the very thing I am going through at that moment.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

I am not to fear because the Lord my God is always with me. He will not allow me to be overwhelmed. He is God, and He is sovereign. He is my deliverer. He reassures me that I am precious in His sight and that He loves me.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #74 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

Our hearts were grieving as some of our friends were going through a very difficult time in ministry and were being attacked by those in authority over them.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Father, would You please intervene for Your honor and Your glory and work out the problems that our friends are going through?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“...I will now arise, says the LORD.  
“I will protect them from those who malign them.”  
And the words of the LORD are flawless,  
like silver refined in a furnace of clay,  
purified seven times.*

—Psalm 12:5-6 niv84

**The rest of the story:**

God protected them, took them away from the environment where they were being maligned, and placed them where they have been mightily used of God to bring honor and glory to Him.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God. He is our protector, and He intervenes on our behalf. His words are purified and flawless.



## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #75 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

Our church was without a pastor, and we were searching for the man that God had already chosen to be our pastor. My heart was expectant, but I was also filled with questions of what our church would look like and be like with a new pastor.

### The question I was asking God:

“Father, my heart’s cry is that You will lead us to the man You have already chosen to be our pastor. Would You not let us make a mistake in the call? I ask that our new pastor will be anointed by the Holy Spirit, that he will be powerful in the pulpit, and that his preaching will lead to the conversion of souls.”

### God’s answer/specific personal promise:

*“See, I have made him a **witness** to the peoples,  
a **leader** and **commander** of the peoples.  
Surely you will summon nations you know not,  
and nations that do not know you will hasten to you,  
because of the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
for He has endowed you with splendor.”*

—Isaiah 55:4-5 NIV84

### Confirmation promises:

*“...I will show you what to do...anoint for me the one I indicate.”*

—1 Samuel 16:3 NIV84

*Blessed is the man You choose...  
We shall be satisfied...*

—Psalm 65:4 NKJV

*“Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
See, I am doing a new thing!”*

—Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV84

### **The rest of the story:**

I rested in God and His *promises*, and I watched as God brought to us the man that He had already chosen. He is a witness and a leader, and he is passionate about reaching the nations. God is doing a new thing.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God. He knows the man we need to be our pastor. Do not lean on our own understanding; God has already chosen him. God is omniscient—He knows everything, which includes the man He has chosen to be our next pastor. Therefore, pray for discernment.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #76 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

I had fallen and broken my right wrist on February 7, 2008. The radius bone in my right arm was crushed, twisted, and tilted at the wrist. The doctor said that it was about as bad a break as a person could have. On February 12 the doctor performed surgery and placed a fixator on the wrist rather than a cast so that there would be absolutely no chance for any movement during the healing process for the next two months. While the fixator was on my arm, I had almost no movement in my right shoulder.

Two months later the doctor removed the fixator, and the shoulder was very painful. I could not move my arm into the normal position to help the doctor remove the fixator because of the severe pain in my right shoulder. Through therapy I was beginning to get some motion back in my right wrist after the fixator was removed, but as more motion returned in my wrist, I was having severe pain in my right shoulder and was unable to move my right arm and right shoulder more than an inch or two.

My wrist doctor told us this happens very often because when we have such a severe injury in one part of our bodies, such as the one in my wrist, our minds draw all of the attention to that severe injury and mask the pain of other injured areas. Then once we begin to heal, we become aware

of other parts of the body that may have been severely injured. He sent me to an orthopedic surgeon, and I had an MRI on my right shoulder. The doctor told us that the rotator cuff appeared to be totally torn in two. Surgery was scheduled for June 3, with a slight possibility that it could be performed on May 27.

**Note:**

As I came to my quiet time in the early morning of May 18, I was meditating on my readings from the day before about Simeon and how the “Holy Spirit revealed to him...” At that moment the Lord spoke to my heart that He reveals and that He had spoken to my heart the day before in Habakkuk 2:3 NKJV: “...the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want to reveal to me the vision You have been speaking to me about?”

**Note:**

As I sat down to begin my readings, my eyes fell on my desk devotional, *You Are Loved* by Elisabeth Elliot, and on these words for that day: “It is not for the flock of the sheep to know the pasture the Shepherd has in mind. It is for them simply to follow Him.”<sup>4</sup>

*“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”*

—John 10:14 NKJV

My response was, “I am Your sheep, Lord, and my heart is following hard after You to know You.” As I was searching for the meaning of the word *reveal* in the Greek, I was overwhelmed when my eyes fell on God’s answer to my question in these following Scriptures:

**God’s answer/specific personal promises:**

*“Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them; and I will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth.”*

—Jeremiah 33:6 NASB

*"...it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay."*

—Habakkuk 2:3 NASB

**Note:**

I was confident that God was speaking to my heart that He was going to heal my rotator cuff, but I didn't know how. And based upon Habakkuk 2:3, I was not sure when that would happen. God had said, "The vision [healing] is yet for an appointed time...wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry."

Then I was drawn back to what God had been saying to me for the last several weeks: "Don't fear...stand still...watch...the Lord will fight for you while you keep silent."

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"Now stand here quietly before the LORD as I remind you of all the great things the LORD has done for you...Now stand here and see the great thing the LORD is about to do."*

—1 Samuel 12:7,16 NLT

**Note:**

My response was, "O precious Father, how can my heart ever praise You enough for the preciousness of You and for all of Your precious promises? In every promise I come to know You more deeply and intimately. I come to know more and more the power outflowing from Your resurrection which it exerts over me, and in my suffering I want to be transformed into your likeness. You are transforming me in my spirit to be totally and completely surrendered to You, following You, trusting You, and believing You. Now Lord, help me, keep me, and teach me as I stand quietly waiting on You."

Throughout this trial I have come to know the Lord as my keeper in a deeper way. His keeping power has gripped me day by day as I have rested in Him. After He comforted my heart with these precious promises, He kept me quiet in my spirit before Him, standing in amazement and calmly watching all that He was doing.

## The rest of the story:

On May 26, I began to have a little motion and a little less pain in my right shoulder when moving my right arm. May 27, the earlier date that was offered as a possibility for the surgery on my rotator cuff, came and passed. There were no cancellations by other patients and, therefore, no opportunity for me to have the surgery that day. If the opportunity for surgery had been available, I would have taken it because the pain had not lessened that much when moving my right arm. But by Sunday, June 1, I had almost full motion of my right arm without pain. Two friends, both physical therapists and one of whom had seen my MRI report, told me that it was a miracle. We called our family doctor, Dr. Frank Davis, that night and told him what had happened. He confirmed that in his opinion it was a miracle and rejoiced with us. He told us that we should call and cancel the surgery scheduled for June 3, which we did the next morning, June 2. Also, on the afternoon of June 2, I had an appointment with my hand therapist for therapy on my wrist. She had been preparing me for the rotator cuff surgery with some limited exercises, and she had been taking the measurements on use of my arm from the rotator cuff injury, so she knew how limited I was and the pain I was experiencing. When I arrived that afternoon for my appointment, I said, "Andrea, look I have the use of my arm back! It is a miracle! God has healed my rotator cuff!"

She replied, simply, "Beautiful!"

It has truly been a beautiful experience to see another miracle of God. Every time I go back to see Andrea, she is still amazed, and from time to time will say again, "Beautiful!" Almost a month later I had great motion with my right arm and no pain. To God be all the glory! We are praising God for His *promises*, His faithfulness, and His healing.

## The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

Our God is amazing. He knows the plans He has for us:

*"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."*

—Jeremiah 29:11 NASB

Sometimes God chooses to work through doctors to heal us, and sometimes He just chooses to touch and heal us. But either way He is the healer. God is the One who fills us with an abundance of peace and truth. Sometimes our Lord tells us to stand quietly before Him as He reminds us of the great things He has done for us. And sometimes the Lord invites us to watch the great things He is about to do. God is awesome. Praise Him for His faithfulness and His love, mercy, and grace!

We may not always understand His hand, but we can always trust His heart because He is our Creator and Holy God. Because of His perfect love, we can trust Him. God did not choose to heal my wrist in such a dramatic way. It is taking much longer to return to normal, but it has knit back together, and now it is taking months of therapy. But He chose to heal my rotator cuff quickly. For all He has done and will do, I say, “Thank You, Jesus!”

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #77 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

The Lord had just given me a *promise* the day before about going to a certain area to make disciples where Christians were being persecuted, and I became concerned about taking Marilyn into that situation.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, should I take Marilyn into this situation?”

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“...‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you...”*

—Deuteronomy 1:29-30 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

Marilyn went with me to make disciples, and we made disciples without fear because God had promised that He would go before us and fight for us. We were not fearful while there even though some situations occurred that could have prompted fear. God shielded us, and we knew He was

fighting for us. It was also very evident to us that people were praying for us because we saw God intervene on our behalf many times. We praise God for His *promises* and the people who were praying for us because stepping out on faith while others are praying for you is a great combination!

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Do not be afraid when God tells us to go into a dangerous situation because He will go before us and fight for us.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #78 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

We felt like we needed a vacation to rest and prepare for an upcoming trip overseas to make disciples, so we were considering taking a vacation in the mountains.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want to speak to me about a vacation this summer to rest and prepare for our trip overseas?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*...it will be taken...*

—Numbers 36:3 NKJV

**Note:**

The next morning in my quiet time, God gave me a confirmation without my even asking for one.

**God's confirmation *promise*:**

*“...take your journey, and go to the mountains...”*

—Deuteronomy 1:7 NKJV

**The rest of the story:**

We took a much-needed vacation, and we were refreshed before going overseas.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God, who spoke the world into existence, is so concerned about us that He even wants us to take a vacation and get some rest so that we will be ready for His next assignment.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #79 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

I had been offered a dog for hunting quail and pheasants and wanted to make sure that God wanted me to take the dog.

### **Note:**

I had already finished my Bible reading for that day when I thought about the dog that had been offered to me. The following question came to my mind.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to take the dog if it is still available?”

### **Note:**

The thought came to my mind that I would find God’s answer in the book of Numbers, which was part of my daily Bible reading plan for the next day.

### **God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

...*Take...*

—Numbers 1:2 KJV

### **I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:**

“Lord, would You please confirm this for me?”

### **God’s confirmation *promise*:**

...*You...shall...*

—Numbers 1:3 KJV



**The rest of the story:**

This dog turned out to be one of the best hunting dogs we have ever owned. It amazes me that God is even concerned about whether or not I am to take a dog that someone wants to give me. But why should I be surprised? God has promised to meet all our needs, and one of the best ways for me to be refreshed and ready to get back into the battle is to go hunting. So God was actually meeting an important need that I had.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

“Jerry, I love you and want to meet all your needs and even your wants if they line up with My plan for your life.”

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #80 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

I was responsible to invite a person to serve in an important position in an organization.

**Note:**

One man immediately came to my mind who was very qualified and experienced to serve in this capacity.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do You want me to invite \_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the board of this organization?”

**God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*Behold, I am against you...*

—Nahum 2:13 ESV

*Behold, I am against you...*

—Nahum 3:5 ESV

**I asked God for a confirmation promise:**

“Lord, I am really confused. \_\_\_\_\_ seems to be the most qualified person. Have I misunderstood? Do You want me to invite him to serve?”

### **God's confirmation promise:**

*"...Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man..."*

—2 Samuel 14:21 ESV

### **Note:**

Red flags went up for me because now I was fearful that God was giving me what I wanted rather than what He wanted. He was telling me to go ahead and invite the man to serve.

### **I asked God for another confirmation promise:**

"Lord, I am not seeking my will but only Your will. Please confirm whether or not You want me to invite \_\_\_\_\_ to serve."

### **God's confirmation promise:**

*"...the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust, and you will not prosper by them."*

—Jeremiah 2:37 ESV

### **The rest of the story:**

Now I definitely knew that God did not want me to invite the man to serve; therefore, we did not invite him to serve and moved on in our search.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Don't lean on my own understanding. God has a plan, and I am to consult Him so that I know exactly how to live out His plan for my life.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #81 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

In the latter part of 2007, I was chairman of another pastor search committee in our church. The committee was confident that God had led us to narrow down the search to just two men from more than sixty candidates. Now we needed even greater discernment to know which of these men God had chosen to be our next lead pastor. I was confident that God would lead each one on the committee to discern His will, and I especially

needed to know how God was leading me and, ultimately, the committee. So God began putting several questions in my mind.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do we have enough facts on these two candidates?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*...“The word of the Lord is with him [the prophet]” so...[they] went down to him [Dr. C].*

—2 Kings 3:12 NKJV

**Note:**

Dr. C was the man who had recommended Ben Brammer to the committee, and Ben was one of the two remaining candidates. Dr. C is the person God brought to my mind when I read, “The word of the Lord is with him.”

*...this is a simple matter in the sight of the Lord...”*

—2 Kings 3:18 NKJV

*...do not gather just a few [facts].”*

—2 Kings 4:3 NKJV

**Note:**

After talking to Dr. C and gaining more facts, I was starting to believe that Ben was the man God had chosen but that God was telling me to lead the committee to get more facts. So we continued to gather more facts.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, do you want us to plan a personal visit with these two men now before we move forward?”

**God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*...“You shall not send anyone.”*

—2 Kings 2:16 NKJV

*...“Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go?’”*

—2 Kings 2:18 NKJV

**Note:**

We continued gathering more and more information about these two men, and the more information we gathered, the more I was becoming convinced that Ben Brammer was the man God had chosen to be our next lead pastor. So I asked the Lord another question.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, are you ready for us to work with just one man now?”

**God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*“...get information...”*

—1 Chronicles 19:3 NET

**Note:**

So time went by, and we continued gathering more and more information about these two men. I was becoming more and more convinced that Ben Brammer was the man God had chosen, so I asked God another question.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, is Ben Brammer the man you have chosen to be our next lead pastor?”

**Note:**

I sensed in my spirit that God was still telling me to wait, but I wanted to make sure that we were ready to move when God was ready.

**God’s answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*Trust in the LORD...  
...feed on His faithfulness.*

—Psalm 37:3 NKJV

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;  
Do not fret...*

—Psalm 37:7 NKJV

*...wait on the LORD...*

—Psalm 37:9 NKJV

...wait on the LORD...

—Psalm 37:34 NKJV

**Note:**

As we waited on the Lord, we received more and more positive information about Ben Brammer. At the same time I was becoming more convinced that God was putting in my heart to ask Him again about this candidate. So on November 10, 2007, I was ready to ask God if Ben Brammer was the man.

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, are you ready to give me a *promise* about Ben Brammer? Is Ben Brammer the man you have chosen to be our next lead pastor? Please make it very clear to me.”

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*“...I have chosen him...”*

—1 Chronicles 28:6 NET

**The question I was asking God:**

“Lord, this is very important. Please tell me again—is Ben the man you have chosen to be our next lead pastor?”

**God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*“...obey the God of your father and serve him with a submissive attitude and a willing spirit, for the LORD examines all minds and understands every motive of one's thoughts...”*

—1 Chronicles 28:9 NET

*“Realize now that the LORD has chosen...”*

—1 Chronicles 28:10 NET

*...“Be strong and brave! Do it! Don't be afraid and don't panic! For the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not leave you or abandon you before all the work for the service of the LORD's temple is finished.”*

—1 Chronicles 28:20 NET

**I asked God for another confirmation promise:**

“Lord, would you please confirm it again?”

### God's confirmation *promises*:

...*"Is this not the man...?"*

—John 9:8 NET

#### Note:

I really felt God's rebuke when He said, "Is this not the man...?" It was as if God was saying to me, "Jerry, did you not hear Me? I just told you that Ben is the man I have chosen." Then God gave me another confirmation *promise*.

...*"This is the man!..."*

—John 9:9 NET

#### Note:

At this point I knew that God was saying that it was okay for us to send a subcommittee to meet Ben and then come back to the committee and give a report, so that is what we did. Four of the eight people on the committee were able to make the trip. The subcommittee came back with a very positive report in regard to calling Ben Brammer as our next lead pastor.

### The rest of the story:

During the process God kept telling me that we were to continue gathering more and more information about our candidates. We were to wait on Him, trust Him, rest in Him, and wait patiently for Him. We were not to fret. I am confident that God was saying to us, "If you want God's best, you must be willing to wait for God's timing."

After seeking God's leadership through prayer for several months and receiving the very favorable report from our subcommittee, each member of the pastor search committee independently came to the conclusion that Ben Brammer was the man whom God had chosen to be our next lead pastor. I did not share with the committee the *promise* that God had given me until each committee member had voted with God's assurance that God was leading him or her to vote for Ben Brammer as the man God had chosen to be our next lead pastor.

Ben, his wife, Laura, and their son, Zachary were presented to the church, voted on, and welcomed into our church as our lead pastor on January 20, 2008. They arrived on the job to lead us on February 17, 2008.

Just a few months after their arrival, it was evident that Ben was the man God had prepared and chosen to lead us, and we praised God for His goodness to us.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Be patient, follow God, and trust Him to guide you every step of the way because He is faithful, and His timing is perfect.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #82 (MARILYN)**

**The situation:**

I had crushed my wrist and had it in a fixator for more than two months. Before the accident I had been asked to speak in chapel at Oklahoma Baptist University and then to speak at a ladies' luncheon after the chapel time. I had confirmed that I would do that, and I was looking forward to that time at OBU. Now I was wondering if I should still speak since I was having pain with my wrist, and the fixator I had on my arm and wrist was not something that people were used to looking at. It was, at times, a distraction for some people. I only wanted to do what God wanted me to do. If God wanted me to go to OBU to speak, I knew that He would make a way for me. He would give me what I needed to fulfill His desire for me at that time.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Father, do You still want me to speak at OBU and at the ladies' luncheon since I am now in a fixator and it seems to me that it might be a distraction while I speak?"

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*... "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say... I will teach you what you shall do."*

—Exodus 4:11-12, 15 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

I did go and speak at OBU's chapel service and then at the ladies' luncheon. God smoothed the way, and I was able to go and share what God had given me to share without the fixator on my wrist being a distraction. Several friends who were there said they did not even notice the fixator as I shared. God is so good! God was such a blessing and encouragement to me as I rested in Him.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Rather than worry when we need to know what God wants us to do, just ask Him. Trust God. He is faithful, and He cares.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #83 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

I was shopping in a department store and happened to see a table with many beautiful, expensive sweaters. The sign on the table was marked, "\$8.99 each." I thought "WOW! What a bargain!" I began to look through the sweaters with my mind racing as I thought of the girls in our family whom I could buy a sweater for as a special birthday gift. I selected several of the sweaters, and when I went to check them out, the clerk rang up the total that was much more than \$8.99 for each sweater. I explained to the clerk that the sign on the sweater table said "\$8.99 each," and she said, "Oh, that is a big mistake. That sign does not belong there." She hesitatingly added, "But since that is what the sign says, I will sell them to you for that price." On my way home after purchasing the sweaters, I was convicted in my spirit that I should not have bought the sweaters at that price. Was I taking advantage, perhaps, of the young woman who waited on me? Many thoughts were going through my mind. She might have been the one who placed the wrong sign on the table, and the mistake might have even cost her her job.

### **The question I was asking God:**

I did not have to ask God a question concerning the sweaters since that morning He had already spoken to me about this.



**Note:**

As I drove away from the store, the words that God had spoken to my heart that morning were ringing in my ears. God had spoken to me before I went shopping that morning to prepare me to respond in the way He wanted me to respond.

**God's answer/specific personal promise:**

*"Whoever offers praise glorifies Me;  
And to him who orders his conduct aright  
I will show the salvation of God."*

—Psalm 50:23 NKJV

**Note:**

Then God brought other confirmation verses to my mind.

**God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*O God, You know my foolishness;  
And my sins are not hidden from You.*

—Psalm 69:5 NKJV

*Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me;  
Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me...*

—Psalm 69:6 NKJV

*Nevertheless I am continually with you;  
You hold me by my right hand.  
You will guide me with Your counsel,  
And afterward receive me to glory.*

—Psalm 73:23-24 NKJV

**Note:**

I thanked God for His intensely personal love for me and for His speaking to me so freely about integrity and bringing His words to my mind with the sweater situation. He knows my heart, and He knows I would not have enjoyed those sweaters over time because of a mistake someone else had made in pricing them. The wrong price would have been at someone else's expense.

### **The rest of the story:**

God showed me His salvation by saving me from selfishness and allowing me to bring glory to Him by returning the sweaters and sharing with the young woman why I was returning them. The correct price for the sweaters was more than I wanted to pay, so when I left the store I had no sweaters. But I had peace with God, and the peace of God is far more valuable to me than anything this world has to offer.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Integrity matters. Peace of mind is more important than temporal gain. Sometimes God speaks to us to prepare us for something coming up in the near or distant future. I am responsible to God for right conduct. My sins are not hidden from God. I am not to let my conduct be an excuse that keeps others from coming to God. God guides me with His counsel and will someday receive me to His glory.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #84 (MARILYN)**

### **The situation:**

We were receiving invitations from overseas to translate and use *One on One with God*, the discipleship workbook and leader's guide we had written; therefore, we were traveling to other countries.

### **The question I was asking God:**

I was simply asking God if He wanted to give me a *promise* about traveling to these other countries.

### **God's answer/*specific personal promise*:**

*"But because my servant... follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring [them] into the land [they] went to, and [their] descendants will inherit it."*

—Numbers 14:24 NIV84

### **Note:**

Since giving me this *promise*, God has given me several confirmation *promises* even though I did not ask Him for confirmation.

### God's confirmation *promises*:

*If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us...*

—Numbers 14:8 AMP

*And I will bring you in unto the land...and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.*

—Exodus 6:8 KJV

*"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."*

—Genesis 28:15 NKJV

### The rest of the story:

We believe that God was telling us that if we were willing to go where He told us to go, He would leave *One on One with God* descendants in those language groups and countries where He took us. Therefore, we have moved forward having *One on One with God* translated into other languages, and we have gone to those countries to make disciples and produce disciple-makers as God leads, believing that He will leave *One on One with God* descendants in those places. It has been a wonderful experience for us to watch God work in these language groups and countries.

This year we should complete translations that will make *One on One with God* available to more than eighty-five percent of the literate world in their first, second, or third language.

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

Be God's servant. Trust God wholeheartedly. The Lord delights in us. Believe God and stand on His *promises*.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #85 (MARILYN)

### The situation:

God had given me a *promise* many years ago that I was to teach young women "to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands" (Titus 2:4-5 KJV). For many years, I led a young married women's Bible study,

but as we started traveling overseas with *One on One with God* so much of the time, I could no longer keep up with the biweekly study. A few years later, I was wondering if God still wanted me to teach young women since I still had that passion. But things had changed so much from the early days of meeting with them for our biweekly study.

### **The question I was asking God:**

“Father, do You want me to continue teaching young married women since that passion is still so strong within me and has never left?”

### **God’s answer/specific personal promise:**

*“For I am with you... I have many people in this city.”...[she] continued...teaching the word of God among them.*

—Acts 18:10-11 NKJV

*“...Do not go to glean in another field...but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them...”*

*“The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”*

—Ruth 2:8-9, 12 NKJV

### **The rest of the story:**

Strong in my heart is “[*She*] continued teaching the word of God among them.” The way the Lord has orchestrated my journey presently with young married women in teaching/training them in the Word of God has been a change from the way that He had for me in the past with a biweekly young married women’s Bible study. The Lord now has me on a path with not only young married women but also single women, walking on the path with them and “*teaching the word of God among them.*” He is bringing girls and women on my path through our church, through our married young adult ministry, through the singles’ ministry, through acquaintances, and through the marketplace, in a more casual way rather than through a biweekly study for married young adult women.

The Lord has placed a love and passion in my heart for women, and this brings so much joy in my heart to walk with them as Titus 2:4-5 teaches, discipling them and teaching them the Word of God when they are avail-

able. It has been exciting for me to serve God in this way—walking with these young women, discipling them in *One on One with God*, seeing some of them come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, and watching them get to know Jesus more deeply and intimately and then go on to become passionate disciples and disciple-makers in obedience to the Lord's command in Matthew 28:19-20. What a blessing! All glory to God!

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

God is with us, and when He places a passion in our hearts, He will always provide the opportunity to live out that passion. Don't force it; wait on God because His timing is always right. Stay under God's protection, take refuge in Him, and a full reward will be given you by the Lord your God.

**SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #86 (JERRY)**

**The situation:**

We were discipling in Oradea, Romania, and we began to sense in our spirits that God wanted us to go back to Bucharest, Romania, on October 12 as scheduled rather than staying a few more days in Oradea.

**The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, do you want us to go back to Bucharest as scheduled on October 12?"

**God's answer/*specific personal promises*:**

*...look not back...*

—Jeremiah 46:5 KJV

*...go...*

—Jeremiah 46:8 KJV

*...it shall be...*

—Jeremiah 46:10 KJV

Go...

—Jeremiah 46:11 KJV

*Fear thou not...saith the LORD: for I am with thee...*

—Jeremiah 46:28 KJV

### **The rest of the story:**

We thought it would be best for us to stay in Oradea for a few more days, but at God's leading through His *promises*, we returned to Bucharest on October 12. We didn't know what God had scheduled for us.

The next day we were invited to speak about *One on One with God* on a radio program in Bucharest. We shared our hearts and answered questions about *One on One with God* on the radio for one hour and twenty minutes. We were so excited that God had prompted us to return to Bucharest on His schedule so that we would not miss this opportunity He had scheduled for us.

### **The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

Trust God and His timing. Timing is important to God. Therefore, God's timing should be important to us.

## **SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #87 (JERRY)**

### **The situation:**

I had been invited by a medical doctor I had disciplined to join him in Africa to disciple some African pastors and some of their people.

### **The question I was asking God:**

"Lord, do You want me to plan to go to Africa to disciple for part of June and July this year?"

### **Note:**

I really expected God to say no because I had so much work to do at home. I thought that I needed to finish writing a book and finish some translations of *One on One with God* into other languages.

**God's answer/specific personal promises:**

*"Do you intend to stay here while your brothers go across and do all the fighting?"*

—Numbers 32:6 NLT

*...directed by the LORD to go...This happened in midsummer...*

—Numbers 33:38 NLT

*"Take possession of the land...because I have given it to you to occupy."*

—Numbers 33:53 NLT

**Note:**

I also noticed in Numbers 33:5-37 NLT that it said "They left" thirty-two times.

**God's confirmation promises:**

*"You must..."*

—Numbers 35:6 NLT

*"...cross...into the land..."*

—Numbers 35:10 NLT

*"...go with them to the tribe..."*

—Numbers 36:3 NLT

**The rest of the story:**

In June and July I was in Africa making disciples. I went because I understood God to say to me, "Are you going to stay home and let your brothers fight for you? You must go and be there in midsummer. You are to go with them to the tribe." This was another blessing from God because the people there are continuing to make disciples and produce disciple-makers. We are seeing them produce fruit that will last.

**The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:**

When we want God's will more than we want our own, He will tell us what to do.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #88 (JERRY)

### The situation:

We owned a piece of property and began to wonder if it was time for us to sell it.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, is this the time you want us to sell the property in Oklahoma City?”

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*“Sell...sell...”*

—Deuteronomy 22:28 NET

### I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, would you please confirm this for me?”

### God's confirmation *promises*:

*...“Don't be afraid...”*

—Deuteronomy 3:2 NET

*“Do not be afraid...”*

—Deuteronomy 3:22 NET

### Note:

The thought ran through my mind to ask God for another confirmation, but before I could say it, He gave me the following confirmation:

*...He said to me, “Enough of that! Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.”*

—Deuteronomy 3:26 NET

### The rest of the story:

God told us to sell the property and not to speak to Him anymore about this matter; therefore, we began to do the necessary things to get the property ready to sell and get it on the market.

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

When God has spoken clearly, it is time to obey.



## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #89 (JERRY)

### The situation:

One of the appliances in our home was not working properly, and we had gathered the facts while looking at a replacement for the appliance. We had the money to buy the appliance, so the cost was not a factor.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want us to replace the appliance with the one we looked at?”

### God's answer/*specific personal promise*:

*For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose...*

—Revelation 17:17 ESV

### I asked God for a confirmation *promise*:

“Lord, please confirm this for me.”

### God's confirmation *promise*:

*...“do not be afraid [to go ahead]...”*

—Matthew 1:20 NLT

### The rest of the story:

We replaced the appliance. You may be wondering why we would ask God for a *promise* to buy an appliance for our home since it was a necessity. Our answer is, *Why not?* God has promised to meet all our needs, and that includes how, when, where, why, and what. So why not be obedient, seek His will in everything, and enjoy great fellowship with the Lord in the process?

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

—Philippians 4:6 NLT

When we are simply obedient to do what God tells us to do, we enjoy wonderful fellowship with Him. The more we practice praying about everything, the greater fellowship we enjoy with the Lord.

## SPECIFIC PERSONAL PROMISE #90 (JERRY)

### The situation:

A few years earlier we could have saved several thousand dollars by refinancing our home. But we had asked God if He wanted us to refinance at that time, and He had told us no. Now a few years later, the rates were much better. So we asked the Lord again about refinancing.

### The question I was asking God:

“Lord, do You want us to refinance our home now?”

### God’s answer/*specific personal promise*:

...“Don’t be timid and don’t so much as hesitate...”

—Joshua 8:1 MSG

### The rest of the story:

This time God told us that this was the time to refinance, so we did. What an awesome God! We have learned that if we are willing to wait on God and operate on His timetable, things always work out better for us.

### The truth(s) God was reinforcing in my life:

Although patiently waiting on God’s perfect timing is sometimes very hard, it pays off in many ways.



## Final comments concerning our *promises*

God has given us hundreds of *promises*, but if we go on sharing our *promises*, we may never finish this book.

We have tried to be discreet in the *promises* we have shared so as not to draw attention to people or things that we believe only those involved have the right to share.

We have enjoyed great fellowship with the Lord as we have gone back to review these *promises*, some of which go back more than fifty-five years and

some that are as current as last week. We have attempted to offer a wide variety of the different kinds of *promises* God has given us.

Adrian Rogers, long-time pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, preached a message entitled “How to Arrive at Our Destination Without a Map.”<sup>5</sup> One of his main points was, “Let Jesus gladden you with His promises” (Joshua 3:3, 7). He emphasized that:

- A. The promises of God are for all saints.***
- B. The promises of God are for all seasons.***
- C. The promises of God are for all situations.***

In his “Portable Capsules of Grace,” David Jeremiah speaks of God’s *promises* like this:

*There has not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised...*

—1 Kings 8:56 KJV

*A biblical promise is a tightly-wrapped, power-packed, portable capsule of Scripture, written by God and designed to meet a specific need in your life at a specific time and in a way that corresponds perfectly to His all-sufficient grace.* The promises of God are His guarantees amid life’s uncertainties. They’re the basis of all our life of faith, and there are specific promises in the Bible to meet every condition and contingency in our lives.

Without God’s infallible promises, we have no assurance about anything, no hope, no security, no safety, no encouragement, no comfort. His promises provide all those things in an endless supply of grace-points for us each moment of every day.

*As George Muller once put it, “Many times when I could have gone insane from worry, I was at peace because my soul believed the truth of God’s promises.”*

We can trust God’s promises. Not one word of them will fail, and we can both rest and rely on them for all our needs.

God's promises mark the parameters of His grace. Spoken with the authority of His Word, they define His goodness, for He does what He has promised, and no less.<sup>3</sup>



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- The theme of this book is walking with Him in the light of His Word—or crawling, if necessary.
- We believe that God is saying to all of us, “When you can’t run, walk. And when you can’t walk, crawl. But as long as you have breath, give your all to walking with me in the light of My Word.”

We pray that by sharing some of our *promises*, you have seen God’s faithfulness to His children who seek His guidance, direction, and instruction through *promises* from His Word.

**PART 3**

***Standing on God's  
Specific Personal Promises***



## CHAPTER 5

# *Guidelines That Help Us Seek, Receive, and Stand on God's Specific Personal Promises*

**H**ERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES that help us seek, receive, and stand on God's *specific personal promises*.

Of course we are not saying that if you want to receive a *promise* from God you must follow these instructions. And we are not saying that to be a spiritual Christian you must seek and receive *specific personal promises*.

We are simply saying that if you desire to begin or become more active in living by *promises*, these thoughts may be helpful. We have found these things to be both important and helpful in seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises*.

### **1. Desperately seek God's will.**

We know that every time we make a significant decision, the choice we make can affect our walk with God, resulting in blessings or consequences. Therefore, we desperately seek God's will so that we may continue to live out God's plan by walking on His path and fulfilling the purpose for which He has given us life. Like blind Bartimaeus, we find ourselves desperate, persistent, and specific (Mark 10:46-52 KJV). We have found that following Bartimaeus's example is a good way to pray when we are asking God for a *promise*. As Pastor Simon in Africa said in his sermon, "Prayers That Move God,"<sup>1</sup> that type of prayer is:

- a. Desperate—Bartimaeus desperately cried out to Jesus for healing, and we desperately cry out for God's will to be revealed to us.

- b. Persistent—Bartimaeus persistently cried out to Jesus for healing, and we persistently cry out to God, asking Him to guide us.
- c. Specific—Bartimaeus specifically asked that Jesus give him sight, and we specifically ask God to make the way clear so that we may follow Him.

One other thing we have noticed in this passage about blind Bartimaeus is that his prayer was filled with faith. Therefore, because his prayer was desperate, persistent, specific, and filled with faith, God answered his prayer. After this was called to our attention, we also noticed the desperate, persistent, specific, and faith-filled prayer of Hannah when praying for a son (Samuel) in 1 Samuel 1:10-18 NET and of Jairus praying for his daughter who was at the point of death (Mark 5:22-23 NET). What impressed us most was that Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion was desperate, persistent, specific, and faith-filled, but then He added the most important part of prayer: Jesus was seeking the Father's will and not His own (Mark 14:33-42 NET).

## **2. Acknowledge your need for God to give you guidance, direction, or instruction.**

Only God can meet all our needs (Philippians 4:19).

*LORD, we know that people do not control their own destiny.  
It is not in their power to determine what will happen to them.  
Correct us, LORD, but only in due measure...*

—Jeremiah 10:23-24a NET

The New King James Version translates these verses like this:

*O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself;  
it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.  
O LORD, correct me...*

—Jeremiah 10:23-24a NKJV

## **3. Do not rely on your own intelligence to find direction.**

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;*



*In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

*Commit your way to the LORD,  
Trust also in Him,  
And He shall bring it to pass.*

—Psalm 37:5 NKJV

**4. Ask God to give you guidance, direction, or instruction, and then ask Him to protect you from making a mistake by not allowing you to miss or misunderstand the *promise*.**

*"...Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*

—John 16:24 NKJV

*"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*

—Luke 11:9 NKJV

*"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."*

—John 14:13-14 NKJV

*Pray all the time. Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit's wishes...*

—Ephesians 6:18 LIV

**5. Expect God to answer when you pray for His guidance, direction, or instruction *and* His will.**

*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.*

—James 1:6-7 NKJV

*...make your request without limit, and I will accede to them all.*

—Psalm 81:10 R. K. HARRISON

We can pray with confidence because when we pray seeking only His will and not our own, He has promised to hear and answer.

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we asked of Him.*

—1 John 5:14-15 NKJV

At this point God may give us a *promise*. Or He may choose to give us godly wisdom or lead us in some other way. But when we agree with Him and only want His will for our lives, He will give us the direction we need to live out His will.

## 6. Express your thankfulness to God as you seek His will.

*...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...*

—Philippians 4:6 NKJV

At the time we are seeking God's will and asking Him for a *promise*, we should thank Him for His answer. This not only expresses our gratitude but also our faith that He will hear and answer as He has promised. God loves to see our faith in action with an attitude of gratitude.

The idea of thanking someone for something when you ask him or her for it may seem presumptuous. But it is not presumptuous to thank God at the time we ask for His will to be done because He told us to ask and has already promised each of us that when we seek His will and His will alone, we will receive that for which we have asked (1 John 5:14-15 NKJV).

## 7. Be consistent in reading God's Word; He will meet you there.

*Your Word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.*

—Psalm 119:105 NKJV

Our experience has been that God usually gives us a *promise* in our normal daily Bible readings or when we are reading through books of the Bible. The pattern of those who regularly receive *promises* from God is that they are daily in the Word of God, seeking to know Him and His will for their lives. Therefore, it is easy for God to speak to them and give them the direction they are seeking.

Although this may have happened, it is not a normal practice for God to give *promises* to those who seldom read His Word. Those who occasionally choose to randomly open God's Word, point a finger at a verse, and find themselves pleased with what it says because it agrees with what

they want to do are *taking* the verse as a *promise*, presuming upon God that He has given them direction. With this approach there is usually no genuine seeking of God's will with a commitment to obey regardless of what God says; this violates the guideline of receiving *promises* instead of taking them. We address this guideline later in this section and in Chapter 7, "Answers to Questions About God's *Specific Personal Promises*."

## 8. Be specific.

We think through and write down the question we are asking God. In fact, we ask God to put the question in our minds that He wants us to ask. This is just a practical suggestion, but it may help prevent confusion. If you have several things on your mind, as most of us do, you may forget the exact question you were asking God if you have not written it down. Therefore, write it down because you don't want to miss God's answer when He speaks. You will probably find yourself asking this question over and over as you seek God's will and wait patiently for Him to reveal His will, in His timing, through His *promise*.

## 9. Seek God's will, not His agreement.

Sometimes children will beg for something so much that their parents will give it to them even though it is not the best thing for them. The children of Israel did just that with God. If we insist on having our way, God may give us what we have asked for and let us experience the suffering that comes with it, just as He did with the children of Israel.

*They soon forgot His works;  
They did not wait for His counsel,  
But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,  
And tested God in the desert.*

—Psalm 106:13-14 NKJV

*He let them have what they desired, then made them loathe it!*

—Psalm 106:15 MOF

The key to receiving *promises* is that we want God's will in our lives more than we want our own will. In fact, God's will becomes our will,

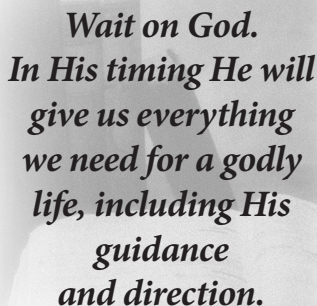
following the example of Jesus in the garden the night before His crucifixion, when He prayed,

*...“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

—Matthew 26:39 NKJV

Jesus voiced His request, but He was consumed with a passion to live out the Father's will for His life. Therefore, when His will was not exactly the same as the Father's will, He left no doubt that what He desired was the Father's will. In fact, the Father's will became His will. We are always to follow Jesus' example of yielding to our God and pray, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

## **10. Do not take *promises*; receive them.**



***Wait on God.  
In His timing He will  
give us everything  
we need for a godly  
life, including His  
guidance  
and direction.***

If we *take* a *specific personal promise*, it is a *promise* of our choosing, reflecting our will and based on our timing. If we wait on God, we *receive*, in His timing, the *promise* He has chosen to reveal His will to us.

If we take a *promise* and do not wait to receive a *promise*, we must be willing to pay the consequences for presumption upon God.

Wait on God. In His timing He will give us everything we need for a godly life, including His guidance and direction.

*By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.*

—2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT

In summary, here are some guidelines that we have found to be both important and helpful in seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises*:

1. Desperately seek God's will.
2. Acknowledge your need for God to give you guidance, direction, or instruction.
3. Do not rely on your own intelligence to find direction.
4. Ask God to give you guidance, direction, or instruction, and then ask Him to protect you from making a mistake by not allowing you to miss or misunderstand the *promise*.
5. Expect God to answer when you pray for His guidance, direction, or instruction *and* His will.
6. Express your thankfulness to God as you seek His will.
7. Be consistent in reading God's Word; He will meet you there.
8. Be specific.
9. Seek God's will, not His agreement.
10. Do not take *promises*; receive them.



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- We can pray with confidence because when we pray seeking only His will and not our own, He has promised to hear and answer.
- Wait on God. In His timing He will give us everything we need for a godly life, including His guidance and direction.



## CHAPTER 6

# *Convictions That Help Us Seek, Receive, and Stand on God's Specific Personal Promises*

**I**N THIS SECTION we will look at some of the things that inspire us to seek, receive, and stand on God's *specific personal promises*. We will look at the important role of yielding to God and the important roles of our goals, our beliefs, our commitments, and, especially, our convictions. We will also offer definitions of these words and phrases.

### Definitions

- To *yield* and *surrender* to the control of the Holy Spirit means to offer ourselves, abandon ourselves, or hand over our lives to God for His use and glory and to let Him be the boss in our lives each day.
- A *goal* is a target, a thing for which an effort is made, an objective, a mark, or something for which we strive.
- *Belief* is a state of mind and heart where we accept, trust in, rely on, and depend on some person or thing—whether or not we have scientific proof.
- A *commitment* on our part is a dedication or an accepted obligation to be something or to take certain action.
- *Convictions* imply that our *surrender* to the control of the Holy Spirit and our goals, beliefs, and commitments to God have become unshakable and are without doubt. At this point we don't hold them; they hold us. They are initiated and sustained by God in our lives because God has burned them into our minds and hearts. Convictions based on truth (God's Word) keep us under God's umbrella of protection and provide us with

godly parameters in which we live out our lives. They are not so easily changed, and it seems that most Christians who are held by godly convictions usually reflect assurance, confidence, and surety.

Therefore, we think of *surrender* and *yielding* to God as being totally abandoned to God for His use and glory. We think of a *goal* as our target. We think of *beliefs* as those things we accept as true and grasp tightly. We think of *commitment* as a dedication or obligation to be something or to take certain action, and we think of *convictions* as goals, beliefs, and commitments that have become so strong that they hold us instead of our holding them.

## Observation

People who routinely receive and stand on *promises* share some common characteristics. These people are involved in the pursuit and process of spiritual growth, and their goal is to progressively become all God wants them to be. They want to know Him, to glorify Him, and to become like Him.

Like Paul, none of these people we refer to would claim that they have reached their spiritual goals, but they are committed to train hard and run a good race in order to reach their goal of spiritual maturity. Paul said it like this:

*Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.*

—Philippians 3:13-14 MSG

*You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally.*

*I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.*

—1 Corinthians 9:24-27 MSG

As Christians, each of us is a work in progress. We should be in the process of progressively becoming people of strong faith who consistently and persistently stand on God's *promises*.



## Convictions Based on Truth

Our surrender to God and our goals, beliefs, commitments, and convictions reflect our values. This is why it is essential that they be based on truth. Our source of truth is the Word of God, which we find in two forms: the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God, the Bible.

### *Jesus, the living Word of God*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

—John 1:1 NKJV

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

—John 14:6 NIV84

*...our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...*

—Titus 2:13 ESV

### *The Bible, the written Word of God*

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

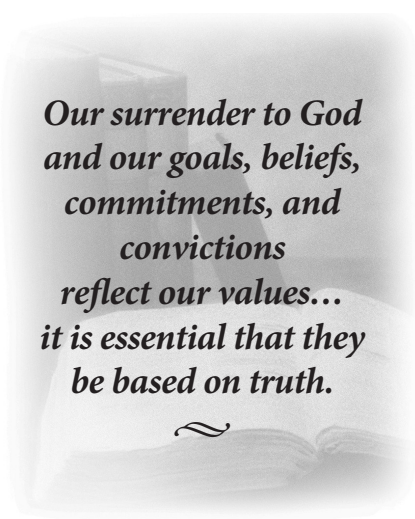
—Hebrews 4:12 NKJV

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

—2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV

*Sanctify them in the **truth**; **your word is truth**.*

—John 17:17 ESV



***Our surrender to God  
and our goals, beliefs,  
commitments, and  
convictions  
reflect our values...  
it is essential that they  
be based on truth.***

## **Convictions That Lay the Foundation for Us to Seek, Receive, and Stand on God's Promises**

*Conviction #1: Prayer (talking to God) is a great privilege and is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.*

*Conviction #2: Consistently reading and obeying God's Word is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.*

*Conviction #3: God has the best plan for our lives.*

*Conviction #4: We are here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan by walking on the path He has chosen for us.*

*Conviction #5: Always practice the attitude of obedience—a commitment to obey God before He speaks.*

*Conviction #6: God is to be the primary participant in our decision-making process.*

*Conviction #7: God can and will do a better job of running our lives than we can.*

*Conviction #8: We are to yield (surrender) the control of our lives to God throughout each day.*

Now let's examine God's Word to see what He says about these convictions that characterize those who consistently seek, receive, and stand on God's *promises* to see how God might use them to challenge and encourage us to seek, receive, and stand on His general and *specific personal promises*.

***Conviction #1: Prayer (talking to God) is a great privilege and is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.***

Make it a practice to talk with God throughout each day and to be obedient to God's instruction.

*Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion...*

—Ephesians 6:18 NLT

Cultivate a love for the fellowship with God that comes through prayer because

*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

—1 Corinthians 1:9 ESV

Expect God to answer because Jesus said,

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*

—Matthew 7:7 NKJV

Through prayer we ask for the strength, courage, and endurance to finish well. We run the race that is set before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, who is our example.

*Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now He's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God.*

—Hebrews 12:1-2 MSG

From God's Word we learn everything we can about prayer, including ***the instructions God gives for those who want to be sure that He will hear and answer all their prayers exactly as they have asked.***

What are these important instructions that God gives us in His Word for effective praying?

✿ ***God's first instruction in prayer: Forgive and seek forgiveness.***

- **Forgive others.**

*"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."*

—Mark 11:25 NIV84

We should not hold grudges or refuse to forgive others whom we perceive have wronged us because that breaks our fellowship with God. God is simply saying, "Don't expect Me to forgive you if you are not willing to forgive others."

- **Seek the forgiveness of others.**

*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*

—Matthew 5:23-24 NIV84

- **How many times are we to forgive others or seek the forgiveness of others?**

*At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?"*

*Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven."*

—Matthew 18:21-22 MSG

The answer seems clear in Scripture. Since we must confess our personal sin to be forgiven, we must forgive others when they sin against us, and we must seek the forgiveness of others when we sin against them. How often? We forgive others as many times as they sin against us, and we seek the forgiveness of others as many times as we sin against them.

✿ **God's second instruction in prayer: Confess our sins.**

- *When? **The moment we become conscious of the sin.***
- *Why? **To restore fellowship with God.***

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

—1 John 1:9 NKJV

***To understand the importance of confession of our sins, we need to understand the difference between relationship with God and fellowship with God.***



To understand the importance of confession of our sins, we need to understand the difference between relationship with God and fellowship with God.

Once we believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as our personal Lord and Savior, we have an eternal relationship with God.

*For you are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

—Galatians 3:26 NLT

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

—John 3:16 NKJV

*...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*

—John 1:12 NKJV

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*

—John 5:24 NKJV

This relationship is maintained throughout our lives by God's power.

*"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture...I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."*

—John 10:9, 28 NKJV

After trusting in Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, our eternal relationship with God depends on His integrity and on His faithfulness to keep His promises, not on our sin or lack of sin.

If sin doesn't affect our *relationship* with God, then what does it affect? Sin breaks our *fellowship* with God. Sin causes separation from God, but for the Christian, that separation is in fellowship, not relationship. When we sin, we are still God's children, just as the prodigal son was still the son of his father. But notice that there was no fellowship between them until the prodigal repented and came home. The picture of the prodigal son back home with his father is a picture of the restored fellowship we have with our heavenly Father once we have properly dealt with our sin.

Picture God with His arms outstretched. The right arm represents relationship with God, and the left arm represents fellowship with God. In His right hand He holds us securely

(John 10:28 KJV), and nothing can snatch us from His hand; therefore, we are confident, peaceful, and secure. This is a picture of how God assumes responsibility for our relationship with Him once we have trusted Him as our personal Lord and Savior.

Our fellowship with God depends on us. This is the picture of a father walking with his small child. The child is holding on to the father's finger, and when the child lets go, he falls and is separated from his father.

So how do we prevent this separation from God and maintain fellowship with Him?

- ***First, we walk in the light.***

*If we say that we have fellowship with Him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

—1 John 1:6-7 NKJV

- ***Second, when we sin, we must confess that sin immediately.***

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

—1 John 1:8-9 NKJV

David was a man guilty of murder and adultery after he became king, and yet God had spoken through the prophet Samuel to describe David in earlier years as a man “after His own heart.”

*“...The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart...”*

—1 Samuel 13:14 NKJV

When we are guilty of sin, we can learn in Psalm 51 how David dealt with his sin and reestablished his fellowship with the Lord. This is what David did in Psalm 51:

- He honestly admitted his sin without making excuses (verses 1-4).

- He was truly grieved and sorry for his sin (verse 17).
- He asked for God's forgiveness (verses 1, 7-9).
- He repented, which was shown by his change of mind about his sin and change of heart toward his sin (verses 1-17).

✿ ***God's third instruction in prayer: Pray in the name of Jesus.***

*"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."*

—John 14:13 NKJV

Praying in the name of Jesus does not simply mean ending our prayers using the words *in Jesus' name*, although there is nothing wrong with doing that if it is from the heart. We pray in the name of Jesus when we acknowledge that though we do not deserve to have direct access to the Father, we enjoy the privilege of direct access because Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Therefore, when we pray, we enter the Father's presence with both boldness and humility because we do not come in our own names but in the name of His Son, remembering what Jesus did for us on the cross.

For example, imagine that a person comes to me on the street and asks for money. Then another person comes to me and asks for the same amount of money. The second person calls one of my sons by name and says, "Your son is my friend, and he told me that if I would share my need with you, you would help me." Which of the two do you think I would be more concerned about helping? Of course it would be the one who came to me in the name of my son.

We come boldly to the Father in the name of Jesus because He has told us,

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

—Hebrews 4:16 NKJV

But we also come before God in the name of Jesus with humility because

*...“God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble.”*

—James 4:6 NKJV

✿ ***God's fourth instruction in prayer: Ask in faith, and believe you will receive.***

*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

—James 1:6 NKJV

Our doubts and unbelief are a real hindrance to God's accomplishing what He wants to accomplish in our lives.

*Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

—Matthew 13:58 NKJV

God tells us to ask in faith, believing.

*And whatever you ask for in prayer, having faith and [really] believing, you will receive.*

—Matthew 21:22 AMP

Our faith and confidence to believe we will receive that for which we have asked is based on God's faithfulness to do what He has promised. We simply align ourselves with God's plan, path, and purpose for our lives and willingly obey the conditions God places on His promises.

As we practice putting God first in our decisions, we see more clearly how God is at work in our lives, fighting the battles for us (Exodus 14:14 KJV). We become more aware that He stays with us, strengthens us, helps us, and upholds us in every circumstance (Isaiah 41:10 KJV). Our confidence in Him grows so that it becomes easier for us to believe we will receive when we ask.



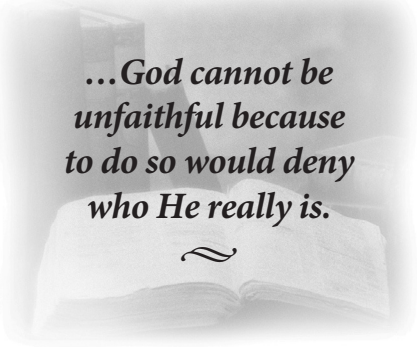
We begin the journey with Jesus by trusting Him because by faith we receive and stand on His promises from His Word that tell us He is trustworthy.

*If we are faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.*

—2 Timothy 2:13 AMP

Very simply, God is faithful by character. Faithful is possibly as much or more a description of who He is than what He does. Therefore, God cannot be unfaithful because to do so would deny who He really is.

As we walk with God, He proves His faithfulness to us over and over until our faith and confidence in Him soars to new heights and causes us to pray with greater faith and confidence, knowing that He will hear and answer our prayers.



***...God cannot be unfaithful because to do so would deny who He really is.***

✿ ***God's fifth instruction in prayer: Pray, "Father, not my will but Your will be done."***

*He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

—Matthew 26:39 NKJV

This must be the most important thing we can do to be sure that we will receive what we ask. Some may say that praying "Not as I will, but as You will" is a cop-out or shows a lack of faith. But that is far from the truth. Believers who sincerely pray, "Not my will but Your will be done," are voluntarily surrendering their will to the will of the Father. They understand that:

**1. *God has a great plan for our lives.***

*For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

—Jeremiah 29:11 LIV

**2. *It is never wise to leave God out of the equation when making decisions.*** We are to trust God to lead and direct us in the decisions we face. Making decisions while leaning on our own understanding is selfish and prideful and always brings undesirable consequences.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.*

—Proverbs 3:5 ESV

*Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.*

—Proverbs 3:5 AMP

**3. *God is qualified to lead and direct us in the decisions we face. He is the One in whom we have confidence.***

*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

—1 Corinthians 1:25 NKJV

- 4. *Jesus is our example.*** He prayed, “Not My will but Your will be done,” and in doing so He modeled for us how to pray and revealed to us His great confidence in God the Father. Nothing shows our faith more than when we have so much confidence in God that we want His will even more than we want our own. It acknowledges that we recognize we are here on earth to live out the purpose for which He has called us, which is to live out His plan for our lives by walking on the path He has chosen for us. When we sincerely pray for God’s will to be done in a situation, we are reflecting our confidence in God.

*Nothing shows our  
faith more than  
when we have so  
much confidence in  
God that we want  
His will even more  
than we want our  
own.*



*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

—1 John 5:14-15 NKJV

When we pray for God's will to be done, we are simply moving over to join God in what He already wants. Therefore, why wouldn't He give us whatever we have asked of Him?

✿ ***God's sixth instruction in prayer: Practice an attitude of obedience.***

*And we receive from Him whatever we ask for, because we [watchfully] obey His orders [observe His suggestions and injunctions, follow His plan for us] and [habitually] practice what is pleasing to Him.*

—1 John 3:22 AMP

Obedience brings blessings, and habitual obedience delights the heart of God. Habitual obedience comes from practicing the attitude of obedience. This is the attitude that says, "Lord, I will obey. You just speak." People who apply this attitude have already determined to obey God before He even speaks. Therefore, they are spared a lot of grief because when God speaks, they don't have to decide whether to obey or not. They simply follow Peter's example and say, "at Your word I will" (Luke 5:5 NKJV). We will talk more about this important attitude later.

***Conviction #2: Consistently reading and obeying God's Word is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.***

What can we say about this precious book, God's Word, that will cause us to honor it as it deserves to be honored, love it as it deserves to be loved, revere and respect it as it deserves to be revered and respected, and obey it as it deserves to be obeyed?

***Significance of God's Word***

If it were not for the written Word of God,

- We would know little or nothing about the living Word of God, Jesus Christ (John 1:1).
- We would not know that Jesus is our great God and Savior (Titus 2:13).
- We would know little or nothing about God's general or *specific personal promises* (2 Peter 1:4).
- We would not know of God's love for us (John 3:16) and that He has a great plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB).
- We would not have the benefit of knowing the truth (Psalm 119:142, 151, 160) or of experiencing His reproof or correction as we read His Word (2 Timothy 3:16).
- We would not have the joy of hearing Him speak to us through His Word to instruct us in righteous living (2 Timothy 3:16).
- We would not understand that it is through this wonderful gift from God we call the Bible that God matures, prepares, and equips us to accomplish the mission He has sent us here to accomplish (2 Timothy 3:17).
- We would not know of God's great power (Revelation 19:6) and of how He merely spoke to bring the world into existence (Genesis 1).
- We would not know of God's presence with us and that we, therefore, have no reason to fear, for He stays with us to strengthen us, help us, and uphold us (Isaiah 41:10).
- We would not know that in the Father and in Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3) and that God knows all things past, present, and future (1 John 3:20).
- We would not know that God knows everything about us (Psalm 139:1-6) and yet loves us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

- We would not know about God's abundant mercy, which doesn't give us what we deserve (1 Peter 1:3), or about His grace sufficient to help in time of need, which gives us what we don't deserve (Hebrews 4:16).
- We would not know that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30).
- We would not know that God is the Blessed Controller of all things (1 Timothy 6:15 JBP).
- We would not know that God is totally trustworthy and faithful because faithfulness is part of His moral character and nature. He is faithful because that is who He is. It is not just a word that describes His actions (2 Timothy 2:13).
- We would not know that we can be forgiven of our sins (1 John 1:9).
- We would not know that God wants us to let Him be boss in our lives every moment of every day (Romans 6:13).
- We would not know that God wants us to trust Him for salvation and much more. He wants us to trust Him every day for everything, including salvation in all three tenses:
  - Past—we have been saved from the penalty of sin (Ephesians 2:8).
  - Present—we are being saved from the power of sin (1 Corinthians 1:18).
  - Future—we shall be saved from the presence of sin (Hebrews 9:28).
- We would not know that God provides:
  - Deliverance when we are tempted to sin (1 Corinthians 10:13),
  - Strength when we are weak (2 Corinthians 12:9),
  - Comfort when we are burdened with the cares of life (1 Peter 5:7),

- Needs when our reservoirs are empty and there seems to be no hope (Philippians 4:19),
  - Direction when we are at a crossroads faced with a decision and want to make sure that our decision will bring glory to God (Proverbs 3:5-6), and
  - Forgiveness when we sin (1 John 1:9).
- We would not know that we are precious in God's sight and that He honors and loves us (Isaiah 43:4).
  - We would not know that we are His chosen people (Ephesians 1:4).
  - We would not know that He considers us His special treasure (Deuteronomy 7:6 ESV).
  - We would not know that He is constantly watching us to find opportunities to bless us when we are loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9 AMP).
  - We would not know that one day we will be required to stand before God to give an account of how we used all that God placed under our stewardship while we lived on this earth: our time, talents, possessions, positions, thoughts, attitudes, and actions (Romans 14:12).
  - We would not be warned that as true believers we suffer many afflictions, but God delivers us out of all of them (Psalm 34:19).
  - We would not know that when we come to Wits' End Corner, God always meets us there (Psalm 107:25-32 KJV).
  - We would not understand that God's purpose in allowing us to experience trials, difficulties, and hard times in our lives is to bring us to maturity, ready for anything, full and complete (Romans 5:1-4; James 1:2-4).
  - We would not know that God is holy and tells us to be holy (1 Peter 1:15 ).

- We would not know that we are not righteous in and of ourselves but that when we believe in Jesus, our belief is counted by God as righteousness (Romans 10:10 AMP).
- We would not realize that:
  - God is truth (John 14:6),
  - God is love (1 John 4:16), and
  - God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9).
- We would not know that our determined purpose in life is supposed to be:
  - To progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Jesus,
  - To perceive and recognize and understand the wonders of Jesus' person,
  - To experience the power outflowing from Jesus' resurrection, and
  - To so share Jesus' sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into His likeness (Philippians 3:10 AMP).

We could go on and on explaining how ignorant we would be concerning that which is eternal if it were not for God's precious gift to us, His written Word, the Bible.

- One last thing we must mention is that the Bible is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105 KJV).
- The Bible is the primary way God chooses to show us the path to walk on (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, when we as individual believers stand at a crossroads needing direction, He often speaks to us through a *promise* to tell us which way to go so that we can proceed with confidence, knowing that we are following His plan for our lives.

***Jerry's personal experience of accepting the Bible as the inspired Word of God***

For those of you who may be struggling with accepting the Bible as the inspired Word of God, this is the story of how I (Jerry) came to the conviction that the Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God.

In my sophomore year in college, I lived in a dorm with several atheists and agnostics. Until that time I had never been seriously challenged about my acceptance of the Bible as the inspired Word of God, but now I was being challenged at every turn. Just as Satan attacked Eve in the garden, I was being challenged with questions. For a young man being taught to think, these questions threw up a temporary obstacle in my path that had to be overcome. I remember that one of the questions they asked was, "How can you believe that every word in the Bible is inspired when the Old Testament has been translated seven times and the New Testament six times?" At the time, that was a troubling question.

That sophomore year was probably the most difficult year in my Christian life because God's Word was the basis of my values, and I was being challenged at the point of whether or not I could believe God's Word. Now as I look back, although it was the most difficult year, it may have been the most beneficial time in my Christian life because of what God taught me that year.

I kept trying to read my Bible and pray, but it seemed that God wasn't speaking to me through His Word and my prayers were getting no higher than the ceiling. This downward spiral of questioning God's Word went on for about a year, but I kept reading His Word and trying to pray. Then God began to bring to my mind some verses I had memorized:

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

—Matthew 7:7 KJV



*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

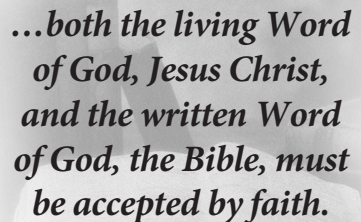
—John 16:24 KJV

*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

—Matthew 21:22 KJV

I began to think more and more about these verses and how God was inviting me to simply ask and I would receive. I thought that since the idea of asking and receiving was mentioned more than once in the Bible, this promise was certainly not lost in translation; therefore, I desperately cried out to God and said, “Lord, I don’t care if the Bible is inspired to anyone else. Every day as I pick it up to read it for guidance and direction in my life, I pray that every word of it will be inspired to me.” From that very day I have never had a problem with believing that every word of the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The fog lifted in both my acceptance of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and in my prayer life.

I am confident that I did not fully understand what happened in my life at that time, but now I think I understand. You see, I was not here when Jesus walked on this earth. I did not see Him or walk with Him or speak to Him during that time. I have accepted the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, by faith. As I’ve thought about it, I’ve wondered, “Why should I have expected to receive the written Word of God any other way but by faith as well?” Ultimately, both the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God, the Bible, must be accepted by faith. Remember, “The just shall live by faith.”



***...both the living Word  
of God, Jesus Christ,  
and the written Word  
of God, the Bible, must  
be accepted by faith.***

You might call my experience a defining moment, a crisis of faith, a turning point, or a milestone in my life, but I simply call it God's faithfulness to His promises.

***Conviction #3: God has the best plan for our lives.***

This conviction is based on our faith in Jesus and confidence in the Bible, not on our feelings or our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5 KJV). God has given us a tremendous promise through the prophet Jeremiah:

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me."*

—Jeremiah 29:11-13 NLT

We know that each of us has the choice to cooperate with God and live out His plan for our lives *or* to rebel against God and His will for our lives and selfishly live out our lives in disobedience. We choose to live out God's plan for our lives because we are totally convinced and firmly believe that:

- God made us!

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb.*

—Psalm 139:13 LIV

- God knows everything about us!

*O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.*

—Psalm 139:1 NLT

- God's plan for us is a good plan that gives us a bright future and hope!

*For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

—Jeremiah 29:11 NLT

God designed us, knows everything about us, and has a plan to guide us into reaching our highest potential. Think about it. Doesn't it make sense for us to passionately pursue living out God's plan for our lives? It does if we want to be successful—and who doesn't?

Another common conviction that God uses to grip the hearts of those who make it a habit to seek, receive, and stand on His *promises* is the conviction that God speaks to His children and leads them through His Word.

*By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path.*

—Psalm 119:105 MSG

*"Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,  
"Who take counsel, but not of Me,  
And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,  
That they may add sin to sin."*

—Isaiah 30:1 NKJV

Another common conviction that God uses to grip the hearts of those who make it a habit to seek, receive, and stand on *promises* is the conviction that God passionately loves us and wants to be involved in our lives every day because:

- God is good!

*Truly God is good to Israel,  
To such as are pure in heart.*

—Psalm 73:1 NKJV

- God loves us!

*"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son..."*

—John 3:16 NKJV

*"Since you are precious in My sight,  
Since you are honored and I love you...  
Do not fear, for I am with you..."*

—Isaiah 43:4-5 NASB

*..."Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love..."*

—Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV

- God cares about us!

*"The eyes of the Lord range through the whole earth, to bring aid and comfort to those whose hearts are loyal to Him..."*

—2 Chronicles 16:9 NEB

***Conviction #4: We are here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan by walking on the path He has chosen for us.***

We have already spoken much about God's plan for our lives, and if God has a plan for our lives, then He certainly has a chosen path that will make it possible for us to live out His plan. For the wise, then, God's path becomes their path.

David acknowledges that God has a path for his life and expresses his confidence that God will show him that path.

*You will show me the path of life...*

—Psalm 16:11 NKJV

In another psalm David writes,

*Point me down your highway, God; direct me along a well-lighted street...*

—Psalm 27:11 MSG

*Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the right path...*

—Psalm 27:11 NLT

Then the psalmist speaks of the importance of God's Word and the joy of walking on God's path.

*Guide me down the road of your commandments;  
I love traveling this freeway!*

—Psalm 119:35 MSG

In Proverbs we are told that there are wrong paths we must not take.

*My son, do not go along with them,  
do not set foot on their paths.*

—Proverbs 1:15 NIV84

*Do not set foot on the path of the wicked  
or walk in the way of evil men.*

—Proverbs 4:14 NIV84

In Proverbs we see more wise counsel.

*Mark out a straight path for your feet;  
stay on the safe path.*

—Proverbs 4:26 NLT

Then we see the greatest caution of all as we consider God's path for living out His plan for our lives. Emphatically we are told that we must trust in the Lord and the Lord alone, and we are definitely not to depend on our own abilities in making decisions.

*Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart;  
don't try to figure out everything on your own.  
Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;  
he's the one who will keep you on track.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG

*We put our hope in the LORD.  
He is our help and our shield.*

—Psalm 33:20 NLT

### ***God's purpose becomes our purpose.***

So what is our purpose in life? Our purpose is to know Jesus Christ intimately and to make a positive difference in the world for God by living out His plan for our lives by walking on the path He has chosen for us. In fact, He created and designed us for that purpose.

Is it ever too late to begin living out God's plan by walking on the path He has chosen for our lives? The answer is no. It is never too late because life for the Christian is from this point forward. Sometimes we are burdened with excess baggage, the consequences of wrong decisions in the past, but God will always provide a way for those who seriously seek Him and are willing to follow Him in living out His plan and walking on His path for the rest of their lives.

***...God will always  
provide a way for  
those who seriously  
seek Him and  
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Him in living out  
His plan and walking  
on His path for  
the rest of their lives.***

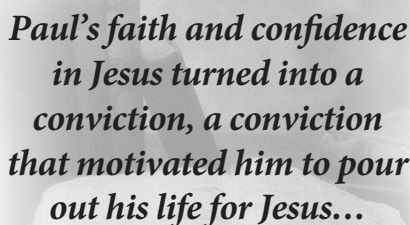


Paul describes his determined purpose in life like this:

*[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]...*

—Philippians 3:10 AMP

Go back and pay close attention. Read between the lines as you read



***Paul's faith and confidence in Jesus turned into a conviction, a conviction that motivated him to pour out his life for Jesus...***

Paul's declaration of His determined purpose in life, and see if you do not hear Paul speaking about God's plan and God's path for his life and our own lives. And then see if you recognize that Paul simply adopted God's purpose for his life as his own.

Paul's faith and confidence in Jesus turned into a conviction, a conviction that motivated him to pour out his life

for Jesus, the One who had done so much for him. Should we do less?

### ***God's plan becomes our plan.***

I believe that God gripped Paul's heart with a conviction that he was here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan for his life by walking the paths God had chosen. It should be no different for us.

*Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand.*

—Proverbs 19:21 AMP

Blessed are the people who voluntarily give up their plans in order to live out God's plan for their lives and fulfill the purpose for which He gave them life. This conviction that we are here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan for our lives by walking the paths He has chosen

seems to be common among those who routinely seek, receive, and stand on God’s *promises*.

***Conviction #5: Always practice the attitude of obedience—a commitment to obey God before He speaks.***

### ***The attitude of obedience***

We call this commitment to obey before God speaks *the attitude of obedience*. We see it demonstrated by Peter in Luke 5. Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret with a multitude of people pressing in to hear Him teach. He saw two boats and got into one of them, which belonged to Simon (Peter), and asked Simon to push away from the shore. Then Jesus sat down and began to teach the multitude from the boat. When He had stopped teaching, He told Simon to go out into the deeper water and let down his nets for a catch.

*But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish...*

—Luke 5:5-6a NKJV

### ***Excuses***

It is interesting to consider Peter’s possible responses to Jesus’ instruction to put down his nets because they represent the excuses or reasons we often give for not obeying the Lord. We may give excuses such as:


- “I’ve already tried that, and it didn’t work.”
- “My experience tells me it is not the right time or the right place.”
- “I have other obligations and responsibilities right now.”

The attitude of obedience is simply the attitude that disregards all excuses and causes us to make this commitment to the Lord: “At Your word I will.”

### ***The attitude of obedience frees us.***

The attitude of obedience may be the most liberating of all attitudes that a Christian may possess because:

- When we come to the point of commitment where we are willing to pledge our obedience before God speaks, then we free ourselves from the individual struggles that accompany every individual decision.
- When God speaks, we do not have to ask ourselves, “Will I obey or not? Should I or shouldn’t I? What will it cost?” These questions are not relevant, nor are they given consideration when we practice the attitude of obedience because we have already crossed that bridge and burned it. It was resolved at a certain time and a certain place. That burden was left at the feet of Jesus, never to be picked up again.



***Our beliefs  
determine  
our attitudes.***

### ***Our beliefs determine our attitudes.***

So what is essential if we are to consistently practice this attitude of obedience, an attitude that causes us to make the commitment to the Lord, “At Your word I will”? We must believe that:

- God’s call upon our lives is to live out His plan for our lives, which is better than any plan we could devise (Jeremiah 29:11 LIV).
- God is worthy to receive our total commitment, plus all glory and honor and power (Revelation 4:11 KJV).
- We are not our own; we were bought with a price. Now we belong to God, and our purpose is to glorify Him (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV).
- We can be confident that God will fulfill His promises because He is faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). Therefore, we are assured of living blessed lives if we remain loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9 NEB).



***Conviction #6: God is to be the primary participant in our decision-making process.***

***Definition***

What is faith?

*Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].*

—Hebrews 11:1 AMP

Faith! It is spoken of in Scripture in the same breath with hope and love, and Scripture says that only love is greater.

*For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality and face to face! Now I know in part (imperfectly), but then I shall know and understand fully and clearly, even in the same manner as I have been fully and clearly known and understood [by God].*

*And so faith, hope, love abide [faith—conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope—joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; love—true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

—1 Corinthians 13:12-13 AMP

You might wonder, as we have, how love could be greater than faith when faith is the gift from God that enables us to be saved. As we have meditated on this, we have concluded that if it were not for God's love and His willingness to allow His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins, there would be no hope and, therefore, no need for faith. But because of God's love, faith is essential. And because Jesus is our hope, hope is ever-present.

*...the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.*

—1 Timothy 1:1 NKJV

***Faith: the gift***

Our God is a gracious giver, and one of His greatest gifts to us is faith.

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

—Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

### ***Faith: the enabler***

Not only is faith a gift from God, but faith is an enabler.

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

—Hebrews 11:24-27 NIV84

Notice in the above passage what faith enabled Moses to do. Moses chose:

- Mistreatment over pleasure,
- Disgrace over treasure,
- Obedience over disobedience,
- Faith over fear, and
- Perseverance over giving up.

Moses could have had it so easy. Why did he choose this difficult path? He chose it because he had met with God, and “he was looking ahead to his reward” (Hebrews 11:26b NIV84). Moses chose to exercise the gift of faith God had given him, and when he did, he found that there is another blessing that comes when we exercise our faith. That blessing is hope.

### ***Faith grows stronger through use.***

God has given each of us enough faith to accomplish anything He leads us to do. But that gift is of little value unless it is used.

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

—Philippians 4:13 NKJV

What would happen if we simply chose to believe that through Christ we could do anything He wants us to do? We used to think that the emphasis in this verse was “I can,” but we soon realized that the emphasis in this verse is “through Christ.”

***Use your faith and put God first.***

God gives you the gift of faith, but you may be wondering how to get more faith or stronger faith. You're in good company because Jesus' disciples had the same question. One day the apostles said to the Lord, “We need more faith; tell us how to get it.”

*The Lord answered, “If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and thrown into the sea,’ and it would obey you!”*

*“When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, ‘Come in and eat with me’? No, he says, ‘Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.’ And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not.”*

—Luke 17:5-9 NLT

For years as we read through the above passage, we thought that Jesus had ignored the disciples' question. Then one day we realized that He did answer their question. He was simply telling them that if they wanted stronger and growing faith, they must do what the servant in this passage did when he came in from the field: he put his master first.

***If we want  
stronger faith, we must  
make it a practice  
to always put God first  
in every decision...***



*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”*

—Matthew 6:33 NKJV

If we want stronger faith, we must make it a practice to always put God first in every decision, just as a servant puts his master first by serving him first and putting his master's needs before his own.

If we begin putting God first in every decision, we will be exercising the faith God has given us, and that faith will grow strong enough for us to seek, receive, and stand on God's *promises*.

### ***Sufficient faith***

Faith to live our lives based on *promises* can be ours. We simply need to cooperate with God. As we exercise our gift of faith, He gives us more faith, faith sufficient to stand on His *promises*.

### ***Conviction #7: God can and will do a better job of running our lives than we can.***

Why can and will God do a better job than we can? To answer that question, let's look at the nature and attributes of God.

#### ***God's nature and attributes***

- Our God is Trinitarian: three in one, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

—2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV84

- Our God is incomparable.  
*"How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you!"*

—2 Samuel 7:22 NLT

- Our God is inscrutable.  
*"Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening?  
GOD doesn't come and go. GOD lasts.  
He's Creator of all you can see or imagine.  
He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath.  
And he knows everything, inside and out."*

—Isaiah 40:28 MSG

- Our God is unchangeable.  
*"God is not a man, so he does not lie.  
He is not human, so he does not change his mind.  
Has he ever spoken and failed to act?  
Has he ever promised and not carried it through?"*

—Numbers 23:19 NLT

- Our God is unequalled.

*Who is able to advise the Spirit of the Lord?  
Who knows enough to give him advice or teach him?  
Has the Lord ever needed anyone's advice?  
Does he need instruction about what is good?  
Did someone teach him what is right  
or show him the path of justice?*

*No, for all the nations of the world  
are but a drop in the bucket.  
They are nothing more  
than dust on the scales.  
He picks up the whole earth  
as though it were a grain of sand.  
All the wood in Lebanon's forests  
and all Lebanon's animals would not be enough  
to make a burnt offering worthy of our God.  
The nations of the world are worth nothing to him.  
In his eyes they count for less than nothing—  
mere emptiness and froth.*

*To whom can you compare God?  
What image can you find to resemble him?  
Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold,  
overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains?  
Or if people are too poor for that,  
they might at least choose wood that won't decay  
and a skilled craftsman  
to carve an image that won't fall down!*

*Haven't you heard? Don't you understand?  
Are you deaf to the words of God—  
the words he gave before the world began?  
Are you so ignorant?  
God sits above the circle of the earth.  
The people below seem like grasshoppers to him!  
He spreads out the heavens like a curtain  
and makes his tent from them.  
He judges the great people of the world  
and brings them all to nothing.  
They hardly get started, barely taking root,  
when he blows on them and they wither.  
The wind carries them off like chaff.*

*"To whom will you compare me?  
Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.*

—Isaiah 40:13-25 NLT

- Our God is awesome.

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unfathomable (inscrutable, unsearchable) are His judgments (His decisions)! And how untraceable (mysterious, undiscoverable) are His ways (His methods, His paths)!*

*For who has known the mind of the Lord and who has understood His thoughts, or who has [ever] been His counselor?*

—Romans 11:33-34 AMP

- Our God is eternal.

*"The eternal God is your refuge..."*

—Deuteronomy 33:27 NKJV

*For this is God,  
Our God forever and ever;  
He will be our guide  
Even to death.*

—Psalm 48:14 NKJV

*...God who lives forever and ever.*

—Revelation 15:7 NKJV

- Our God is omnipotent (all-powerful).

*"Is anything too hard for the LORD...?"*

—Genesis 18:14 NKJV

*"Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You."*

—Jeremiah 32:17 NKJV

*"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"*

—Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV

- Our God is omnipresent (present in all places at all times).

*I can never escape from your Spirit!  
I can never get away from your presence!  
If I go up to heaven, you are there;  
if I go down to the grave, you are there.  
If I ride the wings of the morning,  
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,  
even there your hand will guide me,*

*and your strength will support me.  
I could ask the darkness to hide me  
and the light around me to become night—  
but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.  
To you the night shines as bright as day.  
Darkness and light are the same to you.*

—Psalm 139:7-12 NLT

- Our God is omniscient (all-knowing).

*For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

—1 John 3:20 NKJV

- Our God knows what will happen in the future.

*"Long ago I told you what was going to happen.  
Then suddenly I took action,  
and all my predictions came true."*

—Isaiah 48:3 NLT

*"That is why I told you what would happen;  
I told you beforehand what I was going to do.  
Then you could never say, 'My idols did it.  
My wooden image and metal god commanded it to happen!'"*

—Isaiah 48:5 NLT

- Our God is wise.

*[For my concern is] that their hearts may be braced (comforted, cheered, and encouraged) as they are knit together in love, that they may come to have all the abounding wealth and blessings of assured conviction of understanding, and that they may become progressively more intimately acquainted with and may know more definitely and accurately and thoroughly that mystic secret of God, [which is] Christ (the Anointed One).*

*In Him all the treasures of [divine] wisdom (comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God) and [all the riches of spiritual] knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and lie hidden.*

—Colossians 2:2-3 AMP

We could go on and on talking about the nature and attributes of God, but surely we've covered enough to let us see and understand that God can do a better job of running our lives than we can because He has all power, He is always with us, He knows everything

(including what is going to happen in the future), and He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

- God is also the powerful controller of all things.

*...God who is the blessed controller of all things, the king over all kings and the master of all masters...*

—1 Timothy 6:15 JBP

- God is faithful to fulfill every promise He makes.

*"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments."*

—Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV

*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

—1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV

*But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.*

—2 Thessalonians 3:3 NKJV

*If we are faithless,  
He remains faithful;  
He cannot deny Himself.*

—2 Timothy 2:13 NKJV

God is qualified and willing to control our lives, but it is our choice.

Therefore, we must conclude that a person would be foolish not to allow God to be at the center of his or her decision-making process.

Do we have the power to control all circumstances and situations? Not at all! Does God have that power? Certainly! All power is His. He is omnipotent!

If we knew what was going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, or anytime in the future, would that influence us as we make decisions? Certainly! Do we have that power? Not at all! Does God

***...a person  
would be foolish  
not to allow God  
to be at the  
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decision-making  
process.***





have that power? Yes, He is omniscient! He knows everything past, present, and future.

God is qualified and willing to give us the guidance and direction we need in all the decisions we face, but we must choose to trust Him and invite Him to guide and direct us. He will not force His will upon us.

***Seek God's wisdom, guidance, and direction.***

Does God want us to seek His wisdom, guidance, and direction? Absolutely!

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

*"Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,  
"Who take counsel, but not of Me,  
And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,  
That they may add sin to sin."*

—Isaiah 30:1 NKJV

Why not begin living by God's general and *specific personal* promises today? God can and will do a better job of running our lives than we can, but not unless we give Him a chance by yielding to His control.

***Conviction #8: We are to yield (surrender) the control of our lives to God throughout each day.***

The biggest issue in every Christian's life is who is going to be boss in his or her life today. Will we yield (surrender) the control of our lives to the Holy Spirit today? Or will we insist on being boss in our lives?

*Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:  
but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and  
your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

—Romans 6:13 KJV

Will we deny ourselves the privilege of being boss in our own lives today? Or will we demand the right to make our own decisions?

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."*

—Luke 9:23 NKJV

Will we voluntarily allow our old sinful, selfish nature to be crucified so that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, can rule and reign in our lives today?

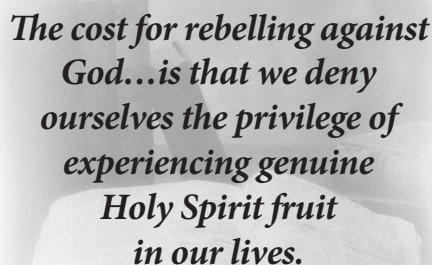
*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

—Galatians 2:20 NKJV

### ***The cost of rebellion***

The cost for rebelling against God and selfishly continuing to

be boss in our lives is that we deny ourselves the privilege of experiencing genuine Holy Spirit fruit in our lives. The Holy Spirit can only produce this fruit in us when He is in control of our lives.



***The cost for rebelling against God...is that we deny ourselves the privilege of experiencing genuine Holy Spirit fruit in our lives.***

Those who live under the control of the Holy Spirit have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful natures to His cross and crucified them there. They now live by the Holy Spirit's power and leading.

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.*

—Galatians 5:22-25 NLT

The world is desperately searching for love, joy, and peace, but it is looking in the wrong places. These three parts of the genuine fruit of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, and peace—are only produced in us when we are living under the control of the Holy Spirit.

**Question: Why should we yield (surrender) to the control of the Holy Spirit?**

**Answer: It simply costs too much not to yield (surrender) to His control. Who wants to live without love, joy, and peace?**

### *The solution to our problem*

By an act of our will, we must yield (surrender) the control of our lives to the Holy Spirit. We must choose to let Him be boss in our lives today. We must let Him guide and direct us through the problems, trials, and decisions of life. We are to simply follow as He leads.

### *The result if we yield and surrender to God's control*

When we yield (surrender) to God's control, we receive the benefit of God's wisdom and knowledge of the past, present, and future as He gives us guidance and direction in the decisions we face. We also free Him to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us.

### *The process*

- Yield (surrender) wholeheartedly to God's control.

*Do not continue offering or yielding your bodily members [and faculties] to sin as instruments (tools) of wickedness. But offer and yield yourselves to God as though you have been raised from the dead to [perpetual] life, and your bodily members [and faculties] to God, presenting them as implements of righteousness.*

—Romans 6:13 AMP

- Make your home in Christ.

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."*

—John 15:4 NKJV

- Operate under God's power and not your own.

*[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.*

—Philippians 2:13 AMP

- Let God guide and direct you.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

## Let's review...

***...the convictions that lay the foundation for us to seek, receive, and stand on God's promises.***

*Conviction #1: Prayer (talking to God) is a great privilege and is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.*

*Conviction #2: Consistently reading and obeying God's Word is essential for living in harmony and fellowship with God.*

*Conviction #3: God has the best plan for our lives.*

*Conviction #4: We are here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan by walking on the path He has chosen for us.*

*Conviction #5: Always practice the attitude of obedience—a commitment to obey God before He speaks.*

*Conviction #6: God is to be the primary participant in our decision-making process.*

*Conviction #7: God can and will do a better job of running our lives than we can.*

*Conviction #8: We are to yield (surrender) the control of our lives to God throughout each day.*



## *Chapter takeaways:*

- Our surrender to God and our goals, beliefs, commitments, and convictions reflect our values. This is why it is essential that they be based on truth.
- As Christians, each of us is a work in progress.
- We run the race that is set before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, who is our example.
- To understand the importance of confession of our sins, it is important to understand the difference between relationship with God and fellowship with God.
- Sin breaks our fellowship with God.
- God cannot be unfaithful because to do so would deny who He really is.
- Making decisions while leaning on our own understanding is selfish and prideful and always brings undesirable consequences.
- Nothing shows our faith more than when we have so much confidence in God that we want His will even more than we want our own.
- When we pray for God's will to be done, we are simply moving over to join God in what He already wants. Therefore, why wouldn't He give us whatever we have asked of Him?
- Ultimately both the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God, the Bible, must be accepted by faith. Remember, "The just shall live by faith."
- God will always provide a way for those who seriously seek Him and are willing to follow Him in living out His plan and walking on His path for the rest of their lives.
- Paul's faith and confidence in Jesus turned into a conviction, a conviction that motivated him to pour out his life for Jesus.

- God gripped Paul's heart with a conviction that he was here on earth for the purpose of living out God's plan for his life by walking the paths He had chosen.
- Blessed are the people who voluntarily give up their plans in order to live out God's plan for their lives and fulfill the purpose for which He gave them life.
- The attitude of obedience is simply the attitude that disregards all excuses and causes us to make this commitment to the Lord: "At Your word, I will."
- Our beliefs determine our attitudes.
- Jesus is our hope.
- As we exercise our gift of faith, He gives us more faith, faith sufficient to stand on His promises.
- A person would be foolish not to allow God to be at the center of his or her decision-making process.
- God can and will do a better job of running our lives than we can but not unless we give Him a chance by yielding to His control.
- The biggest issue in every Christian's life is who is going to be boss in his or her life today.

**PART 4**

# ***Questions and Answers***





## CHAPTER 7

# *Answers to Common Questions About God's Specific Personal Promises*

**W**HEN WE SHARE WITH OTHERS on the subject of *specific personal promises*, the people we are sharing with usually have several questions. We have noticed that the time devoted to answering their questions is an important part of the sharing time. Therefore, in this chapter we will address many of the questions we have been asked through the years. Just as we have been asked the questions in random fashion, we will answer them in no particular order.

For your convenience, Chapter 7 is divided into two sections. Section 1 provides a listing of the questions by number for quick reference, and Section 2 provides not only the questions by number but the answers to the questions as well.

### **Section 1: A listing of the questions, numbered for quick reference**

1. What if I am very busy and don't think I have enough time to pursue *promises*? (p. 236)
2. What about context? Is receiving a *promise* taking a verse out of context? (p. 236)
3. Can a person think that he or she has a *promise* from God when He has not given one? (p. 238)
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5. How long does it take to receive a *promise*? (p. 240)
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18. Have you always been open to talking about *promises*? (p. 250)
19. Should I share the *promises* God has given me? Sometimes when I do, people don't understand, and all I get are blank stares. (p. 250)
20. Why do you still seem to exercise caution when sharing about *promises*? (p. 252)
21. Is God concerned about everything we are concerned about? (p. 253)

22. Does God always immediately fulfill His *promises*? (p. 253)
23. What if I am confident I can make the right decision and don't need God's help? (p. 254)
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26. Is it wise for a husband and wife to both seek a *promise* about the same thing at the same time? (p. 257)
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29. Can we take a *promise* given to someone else and claim it for our own? (p. 258)
30. What is the best way to share *promises*? (p. 259)
31. Have you ever gotten ahead of the Lord and made a decision, or were in the process of doing so, and then realized that you had not asked God for a *promise*? (p. 259)
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33. How do we know that general promises or *specific personal promises* apply to us today? (p. 260)
34. What do you do when God has not given you a *promise* and you must make a decision? (p. 261)
35. Has God ever given you a *promise* by bringing a verse to your mind that you had memorized instead of speaking as you were reading the Bible? (p. 262)

36. Do you ever give up when you are seeking a *promise* and God hasn't given you one? (p. 262)
37. How do you respond to people who say that God has given us good minds and doesn't expect us to pray about everything or seek His guidance in every decision? (p. 263)
38. What if I am trying to stand on a *promise*, but I find myself doubting that God has really given me a *specific personal promise*? (p. 264)
39. Does God ever give you a *promise* that consists of only a portion of a verse or maybe portions of two or more verses? (p. 264)
40. What do you mean when you say that when God gives you a *promise*, it is as if He is shining a spotlight on the verse, passage, or portion of a verse or verses that He is giving you as His *promise*? (p. 265)
41. Have you ever read past a *promise* without recognizing it? (p. 266)
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55. What if we are too fearful to try to live by *promises*? (p. 276)
56. Is it possible for someone who, like the prodigal son, is living in sin, not just occasionally sinning, to receive a *promise* from God? (p. 277)
57. Is a *promise* something we can expect to receive on a regular basis? (p. 277)
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61. What if I trust God, but I don't trust myself or my ability to receive a *promise* from God? (p. 280)
62. What about the timing of sharing *promises* with others? (p. 281)
63. How important is a person's motive in asking God for a *promise*? (p. 281)
64. Why does God sometimes wait to give us a *promise* or fulfill the *promise*? (p. 282)
65. Who are some famous men of the past who received and stood on God's *promises*? (p. 283)

## Section 2: Questions with answers

### 1. *What if I am very busy and don't think I have enough time to pursue promises?*

**Answer:** Some might think that because of all that we have shared in this book, we have probably had an easy life with a job that required very few work hours each week. That is not the case. The workload in our business, which we were involved in for thirty years, required an average of about sixty hours per week when Jerry was working in his office and sometimes eighty hours or more per week when we were out of town on a specific job.

But we were and are committed to reading through the entire Bible each year. And as we read, we have sought and received *promises* while reading a portion of God's Word each day.

The daily intake of God's Word is and has been a priority with us for most of our lives. It is so important to us that many times through the years, in order for us to have time alone with God each day, it has been necessary for us to get up around 3:00 a.m. to have our quiet times, even when Jerry did not get home from work until late at night.

Even in a very busy life, we found time to desperately pursue *promises* because with them came the joy, peace, and contentment that comes when you know you are in the center of God's will, following His direction, and living out His plan for your life. Try it and see.

Our experience has been that all of us find time to do the things that are priorities in our lives because of their importance to us. It is a priority in our lives to read through God's Word each year, and while we do, we seek God's will through His *promises*.

### 2. *What about context? Is receiving a promise taking a verse out of context?*

**Answer:** The only time we know when context is not so important in reading or studying the Bible is when we are reading the Bible devotion-

ally because we need God to speak to us to give us His personal guidance, direction, or instruction in our specific situation. The skeptic might say, "God does not speak to us out of context." To statements such as this, Preacher Hallock responded by saying that God was not a prisoner in a dark cell of context.

If God cannot speak to us devotionally through the Bible, there are several important questions that must be answered:

- When did God lose His power? The answer to that question is never.

*"Ah, Lord God! Behold...Your great power...There is nothing too hard for You."*

—Jeremiah 32:17 NKJV

*... "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."*

—Luke 18:27 NKJV

*Then Job answered the LORD and said:*

*"I know that You can do everything,  
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."*

—Job 42:1-2 NKJV

- Does God's Word illuminate our path?

*Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.*

—Psalm 119:105 NKJV

- Was God's Word written for us to give us hope?

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

—Romans 15:4 NKJV

- Has God promised to direct our paths?

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

- Or who can say that God will not give us a *promise* if we are committed to obey Him and are desperately seeking His will?

*"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."*

—Matthew 21:22 NKJV

Our loving, living God speaks to us from His written Word to meet us at our point of need when we are at a crossroads seeking His guidance, direction, or instruction. What man or woman would dare set the parameters of context and tell God what He can or cannot do and when He can or cannot speak? God can speak to us directly from His Word when He chooses and give us *promises*. He can choose a *promise* from one verse or put together a *promise* from several verses and then illuminate that verse or those verses to our minds and hearts to speak to us clearly when we stand at a crossroads crying out to Him for guidance, direction, or instruction.

Please do not misunderstand us: Reading and studying the Bible in context is very important. In fact, we are always concerned about the context when reading or studying the Bible—except when we are reading the Bible devotionally seeking God's specific guidance, direction, or instruction in a particular situation. In fact, God often speaks to us very specifically from the context of the Bible when we need His guidance, direction, or instruction, *but He is not limited to the context*.

If God can speak specifically to a person through a burning bush, as He did to Moses (Exodus 2:3-6), or through a donkey, as He did to Balaam (Numbers 22:28-31), He can certainly speak to us personally from the Bible by giving us a *promise*.

**3. *Can a person think that he or she has a promise from God when He has not given one?***

**Answer:** The answer is yes. This happens sometimes when we want something so badly that our desire to seek and follow God's will is clouded or overshadowed by our own desires, even though our real desire is for



God's will to be accomplished. We are especially vulnerable when we are dealing with something of an emotional nature, as when we are seeking a *promise* about a dying loved one or whether or not to marry someone.

If we make a mistake and get ahead of God in one decision, we must not let it keep us from asking God for another *promise* and trusting Him to give it to us.

*The righteous man falls seven times and rises again...*

—Proverbs 24:16 AMP

The man, woman, boy, or girl who keeps getting up and trying again cannot be defeated. Don't let Satan rob you of the peace, joy, contentment, and confidence that comes from receiving and standing on God's *promises*. Try again and again and again!

The key to making the right decision every time is to constantly stay under God's control by yielding the control of our lives to Him, moment by moment, always seeking His will and displaying Jesus' attitude of "nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39 NKJV). When we are not under His control, our sinful, selfish nature gets involved, and we make wrong decisions.

The evidence that what we received was a genuine *promise* from God is that it will happen in God's timing, just as He said it would happen. God cannot lie.

When God gives a *promise* when our emotions are involved, there is nothing wrong with humbly asking Him to confirm the *promise*. It may protect us from confusion when the *promise* is fulfilled.

**4. *What if I think God has given me a promise, but it doesn't turn out like I thought God promised it would?***

**Answer:** God is perfect, and we are not. As the song says, "God is too wise to be mistaken." If it didn't happen like I thought God promised, it may be that:

- I was asking God more than one question at a time, which we would not recommend, and I applied His answer to the wrong question.
- I received the right answer, but God might be waiting for the right time to fulfill His *promise*.
- My emotions were involved more than I thought they were, and I *took* the *promise* I wanted rather than waiting on God to *give* me the *promise* He had chosen for me.
- I misunderstood what God meant in what He said.
- I should have asked God to give me a confirmation *promise* so that I could be more confident of what He promised.
- I should have admitted my proneness to error and asked God to help me not to make a mistake or misunderstand His *promise*.

**5. *How long does it take to receive a promise?***

**Answer:** There is no set time that it takes to receive a *promise* from God. It may take several minutes, several days, or several months. The important thing is how patient and determined we are to wait on God to reveal His will to us through a *promise*. Do we want His will so much that we are willing to wait for His timing? Or do we think we can do a better job of making decisions and running our own lives? We've found that it is always better to wait on God and operate on His timetable.

**6. *You have emphasized patiently waiting on God to give us a promise. What do you mean when you emphasize patiently waiting on God?***

**Answer:** *Waiting* and *patiently waiting* are often two different things.

We can wait on someone or something and be very impatient, as when waiting on someone who is late for a meeting, waiting for a meal, or waiting to see if we have been selected for a certain job or assignment. Moment by moment, we can become more impatient and more frustrated as we wait. Very often, while we wait, we become more unlike Christ in our attitudes and actions because things are not happening on our timetable.

When we are yielded to God, living under His control, and patiently waiting for Him to give us a *promise* or fulfill a *promise*, we have both the “peace of God” and the “God of peace.”

*And the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus...What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the **God of peace** will be with you.*

Philippians 4:7, 9 ESV

We can patiently wait on God because of our relationship and fellowship with Him and because of our great confidence in Him.

*The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.  
I will advise you and watch over you.  
Do not be like a senseless horse or mule  
that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”*

—Psalm 32:8-9 NLT

We know from experience that we can patiently wait on God and be a Christ-follower, or we can run ahead of God and pay the consequences like a senseless horse or mule.

#### 7. *Does God resent it when we ask Him what He wants us to do?*

**Answer:** No.

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*

—James 1:5 NLT

#### 8. *Once God gives a promise, is it okay to ask Him to confirm it?*

**Answer:** In Judges 6:11-16, God spoke to Gideon and gave him a specific task. In Judges 6:36-40, Gideon responded by asking God for a confirmation, not once but twice. Matthew Henry says,

*The purport of this is, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief. When he repeated his request for a second sign, the reverse of the former, he did it with a very humble apology, deprecating God's displeasure,*

because it looked so like a peevish humor some distrust of God. God's favour must be sought with great reverence, a due sense of our distance, and a religious fear.<sup>1</sup>

The message for us is yes, it is okay for us to ask God for confirmation when He has given us a *promise*, but this request is to be made in humility and in awe of God and with much respect for His patience. The reason for the request for confirmation is that we don't want to make a mistake. We are committed to living out God's plan for our lives. Thus, our intent is not to show discontent with His answer or to try to get God to change His mind. It is simply to confirm that we have not misunderstood or made a mistake.

God usually gives us confirmation when we ask, but sometimes He does not. Sometimes it is like God says, "I have given you a *promise*. Now exercise the faith I have given you, and stand on it."

#### 9. *Does fasting help or expedite in receiving promises?*

**Answer:** Sometimes we have fasted when asking God for a *promise*, but at other times we have not. In both instances God has given us *promises*. But we do acknowledge that there have been times when we were fasting that God gave us several *promises* in a brief period of time, which is rather unusual.

In Matthew 17:14-21, Jesus healed a boy, and His disciples came to Him and asked why they were not able to heal the child. Jesus responded by telling them of the tremendous power available to those who combine faith, prayer, and fasting.

*Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"*

*So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*

—Matthew 17:19-21 NKJV

If you desire to pursue fasting, we recommend a booklet by Bill Bright called “7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer.”<sup>2</sup>

**10. Once you've received a promise, how do you stand on it? What is required?**

**Answer:** Obedience, faith, and confidence in God, the giver of the *promise*, are required!

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

—2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV

Abraham received a *promise* from God which gave him direction for his life.

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*

—Hebrews 11:8-9 NKJV

Concerning God's specific *promise* to Abraham, Scripture says,

*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

—Romans 4:20-21 NKJV

The key to firmly standing on the *promises* of God is confidence in God, the One who gives the *promises*. We are fully convinced that our God who gives us the *promises* is faithful.

*And this is the confidence with which we approach Him...*

—1 John 5:14 TCNT

And when God gives us a *promise*, we believe that He is able to perform it. David the psalmist said,

*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed...*

—Psalm 27:13 NKJV

### 11. *What if the promise is a conditional promise?*

**Answer:** Many of the general promises in God's Word are conditional. In other words, God often says, "If you do this, then I will do this."

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

—John 3:16 NKJV

What is the promise in John 3:16? It is that if we believe in Him, Jesus, we will not perish but will have everlasting life. What is the condition God placed on our receiving this promise? We must believe in Him.

In this same way, when God gives us a *promise*, He will tell us if there are conditions attached. If there are conditions we must meet, He will clearly state the conditions when He gives the *promise*.

Some *promises* He gives us are conditional, and some are not. Here is an example of a conditional *promise* God gave me (Jerry) many years ago when we were praying about starting a new business. God promised that He would bless me, but the conditions that He placed on the *promise* were that I was to fear Him (stand in awe of Him and respect Him) and that I was to walk in His ways. When God gave me that *promise*, which contained some very specific blessings, I knew that they were mine as long as I met the conditions God had placed on this *promise*. God has faithfully fulfilled that *promise*, and if I continue to meet the conditions of the *promise*, I can expect God to continue giving me the blessings He promised because He is faithful.

### 12. *Is timing an important issue with God in our receiving and acting on a promise?*

**Answer:** There is no question that timing is an important issue with God. Sometimes the door of opportunity closes quickly, and God wants us to be ready to move quickly when He gives us a *promise*. You can see this in some of the *promises* we share in Chapter 4.

**13. Why is immediate obedience so important to God?**

**Answer:** Delayed obedience is disobedience.

Numbers 13 and 14 tell the story of how God was ready to give the Promised Land to the children of Israel. God spoke to Moses and told him to send spies into the Promised Land. Among the spies, only Caleb and Joshua gave a good report.

*...“Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are able to overcome it.”*

—Numbers 13:30 NKJV

The other spies gave a bad report that the land contained giants, whom they feared. The children of Israel took their bad advice and said,

*...“Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”*

—Numbers 14:4 NKJV

Moses interceded before the Lord on behalf of the people for their disobedience.

*“Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”*

—Numbers 14:19 NKJV

Then the Lord responded,

*...“I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD—because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.”*

—Numbers 14:20-23 NKJV

Then the Lord said,

*“...tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.”*

—Numbers 14:25 NKJV

The Lord told those men who were unwilling to follow His direction to go in and possess the Promised Land,

*"You will all drop dead in this wilderness! Because you complained against me, every one of you who is twenty years old or older and was included in the registration will die. You will not enter and occupy the land I swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun."*

—Numbers 14:29-30 NLT

Their punishment was that they would wander in the wilderness for forty years until all those over the age of twenty had died.

*"But you—your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you."*

—Numbers 14:32-34 NIV84

When Moses passed these words on to all the children of Israel and they understood the consequences of their sin, they grieved and changed their minds.

*Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country. "We have sinned," they said. "We will go up to the place the LORD promised."*

—Numbers 14:40 NIV84

Now they were willing to obey, but God had already given them another command, and that was to "...turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea" (Numbers 14:25 NKJV).

*But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the Lord's command? This will not succeed! Do not go up, because the Lord is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the Lord, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword." Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the Lord's covenant moved from the camp. Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.*

—Numbers 14:41-45 NIV84



Their failure to obey God immediately the first time compounded their problem. When they tried to go back later with delayed obedience to God's first command, they became disobedient to God's second command.

We really simplify our lives when we commit to obey God even before He speaks and then, when He speaks, obey immediately. Immediate obedience always pleases God.

**14. *What if I believe that I have received a promise, but it violates or contradicts a principle taught in God's Word?***

**Answer:** You can be sure that what you think might be a *promise* from God is not a *promise* from God if it violates or contradicts a principle taught in His Word.

How could God give us a *promise* instructing us to do something that would cause us to disobey His teachings? God will not give us a *promise* that violates or contradicts a principle taught in His Word.

**15. *What if we do not seek God's guidance and make a very bad decision?***

**Answer:** We must suffer the consequences for not seeking God's guidance.

***God's specific instructions to the Israelites:***

*"Do not make a covenant with them [the inhabitants of the land] or with their gods. Do not let them live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."*

—Exodus 23:32-33 NIV84

The children of Israel were naive and were tricked into making a covenant with the Gibeonites because they did not understand or had forgotten the importance of always seeking God's counsel, even in things that might not seem significant. The situation seemed simple enough, so they leaned on their own understanding rather than committing the situation to the Lord and seeking His counsel.

***The result of not seeking God's counsel:***

*They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.*

—Judges 2:13-15 NKJV

Just think: It all started when Israel thought that a treaty with the Gibeonites did not sound like such a bad idea. So instead of seeking God's guidance, they just decided to make this decision based on their own five senses and leave God out of the decision-making process. Maybe the children of Israel pleaded ignorance, or maybe they said, "We were tricked." But they still had to suffer the consequences for their sin because they did not look to God for guidance.

*The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.  
I will advise you and watch over you.  
Do not be like a senseless horse or mule  
that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

—Psalm 32:8-9 NLT

**16. *What are some benefits of receiving promises?***

**Answer:** When you receive a *promise* from God, it is just like God is sitting in front of you, looking you in the eye, calling you by name, and saying, "I want to make you a *promise*." And then He shares that portion of His plan or will that relates to your situation. He gives clear direction or instruction from His Word.

One benefit of receiving these *promises* from His Word is that in the days ahead when God may allow you to be tried or tested to see if you will stand on His *promise*, you can always go back to that *promise* in His Word and be encouraged and reminded that you made the right decision because God is faithful.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

—Hebrews 10:23 NKJV

*"...and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed."*

—Joshua 23:14 ESV

Also among the many benefits of receiving God's *promises* are the joy, peace, and confidence that come from knowing that we are in the center of God's will and living out His plan (His will) for our lives because we are following His guidance and direction.

*"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."*

—Matthew 6:33 NLT

### **17. What is the difference between taking a promise and receiving a promise?**

**Answer:** If we have already made up our minds and simply want God to agree with us, then we are prime candidates for *taking a promise*.

*Taking a promise* usually happens when we search through the Bible, trying to find something in God's Word that we construe to say what we want it to say. Then we apply it to our situation.

*Receiving a promise* usually occurs when we only want God's will. We have no agenda. We are simply trying to discern the path that God has chosen for us. All we want to do in this decision is bring glory to God, walk in the center of His will, and live out His plan for our lives. As we seek God's will, He illuminates a verse, a portion of a verse, or several verses to give us direction. We recognize that He is giving us this *promise* in response to our request and our need, so we receive it as a gift from God.

**18. *Have you always been open to talking about promises?***

**Answer:** No, we have not. For the first few years that we practiced seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises*, we thought that the *promises* were too personal and that other people would probably not understand them; therefore, we did not share them. Another reason we did not share them is that they were too precious to us to lay them out for others to question or trample on.

**19. *Should I share the promises God has given me? Sometimes when I do, people don't understand, and all I get are blank stares.***

**Answer:** Don't be surprised, and don't be discouraged. In fact, don't expect others to understand the *promise* God has given you. A *promise* is like a love gift from God given specifically to you. It is very much like a love letter sent to you by one who loves you. It is not likely that others will get the same blessing from that love letter because it was addressed to you and it was very personal. I am not saying that others cannot understand your *promise*—sometimes they do understand. I am simply saying that others probably will not understand. Therefore, don't be surprised if they do not share your same excitement.

Remember that you were at a particular crossroads—maybe even at Wits' End Corner—and cried out to God for help, and He met you there with a *promise*. The *promise* God gave you was a love gift from Him, specifically addressed to you.

There are many whose eyes have not been opened to the wonderful general promise of John 3:16, but that does not discourage us or keep us from receiving and standing on that great promise with confidence. We must also consider the possibility that God may be allowing us to be tested because He wants to give us the opportunity to grow spiritually and become stronger and more mature in our faith.

God may be teaching us the importance of standing alone when we know He has spoken to us and are doing what He told us to do. I once

heard of a company that asked every person who interviewed for a job there this question: "Have you ever had to stand alone for what was right?" The character quality of being willing to stand alone for what is right is a great godly character quality. In fact, if we have learned to stand alone for Christ, we are in good company. Paul said,

*At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength... And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.*

—2 Timothy 4:16-17 NIV84

If we are willing to stand alone for what is right, if all we want to know is what God wants us to do, and if we are committed to obeying God regardless of the opposition, there is nothing wrong with asking God if He would like to give us another *promise* to confirm that we are doing exactly what He wants us to do. This may relieve any questions or doubts in our minds or hearts about whether we may have made a mistake.

***We must be like Abraham.***

*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

—Romans 4:20-21 NKJV

Regardless of what others say or think, we must not waver at the promise of God through unbelief. Years ago, God began to convict us. He began to say to us, "What if Preacher Hallock had not shared with you how to live by *promises*?" We came to the conclusion that God wanted us to begin sharing about *promises*. Therefore, now we share about *promises* God has given us but are not surprised if those we are sharing with do not understand. In fact, we are very surprised if they do understand because we realize that we were at a crossroads needing direction from God when we asked Him for that *promise*.

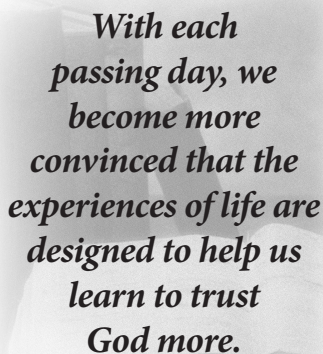
We decided that it was unfair for us to expect those we were sharing with to understand because the Holy Spirit probably had not spoken

to them in this passage as He did to us at our particular point of need. Therefore, when you share *promises*, be willing to stand alone because God is always with you. Don't be surprised if you receive blank stares and others do not understand. It's okay.

**20. Why do you still seem to exercise caution when sharing about promises?**

**Answer:** We prefer to share with people about *promises* when we know that they have already established a daily intimate and personal walk with our Lord. We encourage people to go through the discipleship sessions of *One on One with God* ([www.OneonOnewithGod.org](http://www.OneonOnewithGod.org)) because *One on One* helps lay a foundation for making decisions based on God's *promises*. We do not want people to misunderstand and see *promises* as a quick fix.

Living by *promises* is a lifestyle, a way of life.



***With each  
passing day, we  
become more  
convinced that the  
experiences of life are  
designed to help us  
learn to trust  
God more.***

The *promises* themselves are wonderful, but the fellowship we enjoy with Jesus in the process of receiving the *promises* is also wonderful. When He gives us *promises* and we experience His faithfulness and see Him do what He said He would do, our trust, faith, and confidence in God grow.

With each passing day, we become more convinced that the experiences of life are designed to help us learn to trust God more.

*Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.  
Delight yourself also in the LORD,  
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

—Psalm 37:3-4 NKJV

Receiving *promises* and the process involved in receiving them is not a quick fix; it is a way of life, a lifestyle of walking daily in intimate fellowship with God.

## 21. *Is God concerned about everything we are concerned about?*

**Answer:** Yes. You have probably heard people say that God does not want us to bother Him with the little things of life. But if we look closely at Scripture, we find that is not true.

Listen to what God says to us in Scripture:

*Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him; for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.*

—1 Peter 5:7 AMP

This sounds very much like a God who is concerned about everything we are concerned about and wants to be involved in even the small things in our lives.

*And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

—Philippians 4:19 AMP

Yes, God is concerned about our every need. He wants us to talk to Him about everything. This is because He died on the cross not only to have a relationship with us but also that we might enjoy a daily, intimate fellowship with Him. Through that fellowship we talk to Him and He talks to us, and sometimes when He speaks He is giving us a *promise* for our good and His glory.

## 22. *Does God always immediately fulfill His promises?*

**Answer:** No. Years ago God gave us a *promise* about buying some land. We were both interested in and willing to do that but did not experience God's leadership to buy any particular piece of land. We assumed that God would, in His timing, guide us to buy a specific piece of land and give us another more specific *promise*. As time went by, the *promise* to buy the land got crowded out and moved to the back of our minds' "to-do" list. Over time we began to outgrow the shop we had in our business and needed a larger one, so we began looking for another shop to buy. We did not find a building that was right for us, and eventually God gave us

a *promise* to buy a particular piece of land and build a shop that would meet our needs.

Somewhere in the process we began to wonder about that earlier *promise* to buy some land that God had given us, and we wondered why God had never led us to a particular piece of land to buy. Then we realized that this land where we were going to build our new shop was the land God was talking about—and He confirmed it with another *promise*.

This was a situation in which twelve years passed between the time God gave us the *promise* and the time we saw it fulfilled. The first *promise* was a very general *promise* in that God simply told us to buy land. The second *promise* was more specific in that it was about buying a particular piece of land.

**23. *What if I am confident I can make the right decision and don't need God's help?***

***Answer:***

*Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action),*

*So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

—2 Timothy 3:16-17 AMP

Therefore, when God's Word tells us to

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding...*

—Proverbs 3:5 NKJV

He is clearly giving us instruction in how we are to live holy lives that will conform to His will in thought, purpose, attitude, and action. If we choose to deliberately disobey God's instructions, we must respond to His question,



*"So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?"*

—Luke 6:46 NLT

When we are tempted to be prideful and selfish and to leave God out of our decision making, we must remember God's instruction.

*...Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

—Ephesians 4:17-18, 22-24 NLT

*And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

—Ephesians 4:30 NLT

In making decisions, we are to humble ourselves and trust God and God alone for His guidance.

*He guides the humble in what is right  
and teaches them his way.*

—Psalm 25:9 NIV84

#### **24. Can we rely on peace alone as a means of discerning God's will?**

**Answer:** No. Very often people say that they are going to do a certain thing and that they know it is okay because God has given them peace about it—even though what they are about to do is in conflict with how Jesus lived, His moral character, or the principles taught in God's Word. They have simply deceived themselves. This is not peace from God because genuine peace that comes from God is never in conflict with how Jesus lived, His moral character, or the principles taught in God's Word.

The peace that God gives is not the kind of false peace the world gives.

*"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."*

—John 14:27 NLT

The peace that comes from God is the peace that comes when we are not leaning on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5) but are, instead, trusting Jesus and Jesus alone (John 14:6). It comes when we are willing to give up our own agenda and have brought our will totally in line with God's will, just as Jesus did in the garden the night before His crucifixion when He prayed to the Father,

*"...If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

—Matthew 26:39 NIV84

God's peace comes when we have so much confidence in God that we want His will more than we want our own. That attitude only comes when we begin to view life from God's perspective, which comes by saturating our lives with God's Word. The peace that comes from God is His gift (John 14:27) to those who abide (make their home) in Jesus (John 15:4). This kind of peace comes to those who have totally yielded (Romans 6:13) the control of their lives to Jesus. They have learned to live one day at a time (Matthew 6:11), and in the process Jesus has become their peace (Ephesians 2:14). Therefore, when we have Jesus in full control of our lives, ruling and reigning, we have peace because He is our peace.

Very simply, genuine peace from God comes when our decision is in harmony with or reflects how Jesus lived, His moral character, or the principles taught in God's Word. Counterfeit peace is peace that Satan gives when we are not in harmony with or reflecting how Jesus lived, His moral character, or the principles taught in God's Word.

**25. *When you are seeking a promise, how do you decide on the question to ask the Lord?***

**Answer:** Through the years we have learned that the question we ask the Lord and how we phrase that question is very important. Therefore, we simply ask the Lord to put into our minds and hearts the question that He wants us to ask Him. Sometimes several days go by before the question we are to ask God becomes clear to us.

It is very important that our question be cradled in a spirit of humility. It should reflect the attitude of our hearts in that we are not trying to back God into a corner, and we are not trying to get Him to agree with us. We simply want what He knows is best. We want His will and not His agreement with our will because we are convinced that He knows what is best and that He will give us what is best so that we can live out His plan for our lives.

The phrasing of the question is also very important. For instance, if another person is involved in the situation about which we are asking God for a *promise*, we must take into consideration the fact that he or she may or may not choose to obey God, that we may have misunderstood the *promise*, or that we may have taken rather than received the *promise*.

**Example:** When I was asking God for a *promise* about marrying Marilyn, I couldn't speak for her, so I simply asked God if He wanted me to ask Marilyn to marry me. That left room for her to independently seek God's leadership and for God to confirm how He was leading her without being pressured by me. In fact, I did not tell her that God had given me a *promise* about marriage until after she gave me her answer, which was immediately, because God had already given her a *promise* about our marriage.

When seeking a *promise*, we should ask God to help us know the exact question to ask. In fact, we should ask Him to put the right question in our minds.

**26. *Is it wise for a husband and wife to both seek a promise about the same thing at the same time?***

**Answer:** Before we were married, we independently sought God's *promises* about the same thing at the same time. One example is that we were both seeking a *promise* regarding God's will concerning marriage. But now that we are one in marriage, in matters that could cause disharmony, one of us usually agrees to pray, we pray together, and one seeks the

*promise*. When we are talking about situations where we need to make a decision, it has never been a problem of who will seek the *promise* and who will pray since we are both comfortable with the other seeking the *promise*.

**27. *Is it wise for a pastor and church member to both seek a promise about the same thing at the same time?***

**Answer:** We have been involved in many complex situations in the church for more than fifty-five years. We have served on many committees and have been very close to our pastors. We believe that the pastor is the one called to a church to shepherd the local flock. He is called to tend, feed, and give leadership to the body.

When our church is at a crossroads needing a *promise*, we want to try to eliminate confusion; therefore, instead of seeking a *promise*, Marilyn and I choose to pray that God will give our pastor a *promise*.

**28. *Does God ever give you a promise when you have not asked Him for one and are not seeking one?***

**Answer:** Yes, we have had several experiences where God gave us a *promise* when we were not seeking one. Some of these *promises* were shared in detail in Chapter 4, "Sharing Some of Our *Specific Personal Promises*."

**29. *Can we take a promise given to someone else and claim it for our own?***

**Answer:** The answer is no. We may claim general promises in the Bible, such as John 3:16, because God offers these general promises freely to all of us, but *specific personal promises* are just what the title implies. They are God's gift to a specific person. Therefore, they are not to be grabbed and claimed by one to whom it was not given, just as a child might grab a toy belonging to another child and claim that it is his when it is not.

When we have a specific gift for a specific person, we intend for that person to be the one to receive the gift. It is the same with God. God gives

*promises* to us when we prepare ourselves to receive them, and He gives them to us as individuals in His timing.

It is not uncommon, however, for God to give the same *promise* that He gave me to someone else. The key is that we do not take the *promise* from someone else and claim it as our own. Instead we might ask and then patiently wait to see if God wants to give us that same *promise*.

**30. *What is the best way to share promises?***

**Answer:** When we share *promises*, it is usually as part of a personal testimony. We share about the confidence and peace God gives us when He gives us a *promise* and how that same confidence and peace in making decisions is available to all Christians who are walking with God. We talk about the things we have learned on this path of making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises* because we want others to experience this same joy that we have experienced for years. But most of all we try to point out that we have an awesome God who loves us and is interested in every detail of our lives, a God who gives us *promises*, and when we receive, obey, and stand on His *promises*, we can be confident that we are walking in the center of God's will, God's plan for our lives.

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

—Jeremiah 29:11 ESV

**31. *Have you ever gotten ahead of the Lord and made a decision, or were in the process of doing so, and then realized that you had not asked God for a promise?***

**Answer:** We are sure this has happened many times, but three situations quickly came to my (Jerry's) mind. In all three situations God got our attention, and we asked Him for a *promise*—once while we were still in the process of making the decision and twice after we had already made the decision. Each time when we realized our mistake, we told God that our fellowship with Him was more important to us than anything; therefore,

we were willing to reverse our decision, make restitution, or suffer loss rather than experience broken fellowship with Him.

These three situations involved buying a bird dog, buying a car, and hiring a superintendent in our business. All three of these *promises* are shared in detail in Chapter 4, “Sharing Some of Our *Specific Personal Promises*.”

**32. *Is there ever a time when we do not need to ask God for a promise?***

**Answer:** We don't need to ask God for a *promise* about things that are clearly modeled for us in the life of Jesus because we are to become like Him. We do not need to ask God for a *promise* about whether or not to obey the clear teachings of Jesus or the godly principles taught in God's Word. We do not need to ask God for a *promise* about doing things that are clearly inconsistent with the moral character of Jesus, which would include living selfish, unholy, unrighteous, untruthful, unloving, or unfaithful lives.

**Example:** We don't need to ask God for a *promise* concerning whether or not we should be in the pursuit of holiness because,

*...as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

—1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV

**33. *How do we know that general promises or specific personal promises apply to us today?***

**Answer:**

*Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it's written for us. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize us, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next.*

—Romans 15:4 MSG

In his commentary on Romans 15:4, Matthew Henry makes the following statement:

We must therefore labour not only to understand the literal meaning of the Scripture, but to learn out of it that which will do us good. Practical observations are more necessary than critical expositions.<sup>3</sup>

A devotional approach to the Word of God is accepted as one of the best ways to get to know God, to hear His voice, and to discern His will for our lives. As we have practiced reading God's Word devotionally through the years, we have found that we are progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him. We more easily recognize when He is speaking to us and that He often speaks to us through His Word to give us *promises* that help us live out His plan for our lives.

**34. What do you do when God has not given you a promise and you must make a decision?**

**Answer:** When the deadline arrives and God has not given us a *promise* telling us what to do, He has provided a good alternate plan for making decisions by telling us to ask for godly wisdom.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

—James 1:5-8 NIV84

*He hides away sound and godly Wisdom and stores it for the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with Him); He is a shield to those who walk uprightly and in integrity...*

—Proverbs 2:7 AMP

When we have enough time, we seek a *promise*. But when the deadline arrives and we have not received a *promise*, we ask God for and expect to receive godly wisdom so that we might make the decision in a way that will bring glory to Him. In either case we make the decision and never look back wondering if we made the right decision because God has told us to believe Him and not doubt.

**35. *Has God ever given you a promise by bringing a verse to your mind that you had memorized instead of speaking as you were reading the Bible?***

**Answer:** Yes, on a few occasions God has done this. We shared a couple of these in Chapter 4, “Sharing Some of Our *Specific Personal Promises*.”

**36. *Do you ever give up when you are seeking a promise and God hasn't given you one?***

**Answer:** The answer is no. But sometimes we ask God to help us know how to rephrase our question. Once we have rephrased the question, we begin asking the Lord the new question. If we still do not get an answer, we lay it aside for a while and just talk to the Lord about it. But we never intentionally give up.

A few of the reasons that God may not give us a *promise* according to our timetables are:

- Sometimes God is interested in showing us how easily we give up when He so highly values endurance.
- At other times the timing is just not right for us to know or for Him to answer.
- There may be something in our lives He wants to accomplish before He gives us the *promise*.
- He may be trying to help us learn to view life from His perspective and live on His timetable.

Rest in this fact: God knows what is best, He has our best interests at heart, and He will act at the right time and in the right way. But in the process He is enjoying fellowship with us and wants us to enjoy fellowship with Him. Don't give up. Wait on Him.

*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...*

—Psalm 37:7 NKJV



**37. *How do you respond to people who say that God has given us good minds and doesn't expect us to pray about everything or seek His guidance in every decision?***

**Answer:** This statement could reflect an attitude of honest searching when the person is genuinely seeking the truth and wants to know if he or she is to pray about the little routine things in life. Or it could reflect an independent spirit rather than a spirit yielded to God's control.

God has a good plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV84). He is the only One who knows all the details of that plan because He knows everything (1 John 3:20 NIV84). He knows everything past, present, and future.

*"Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.  
Let him declare and lay out before me  
what has happened since I established my ancient people,  
and what is yet to come—  
yes, let him foretell what will come."*

—Isaiah 44:7 NIV84

In the Father and in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3 NIV84). Since He knows everything, has all knowledge, and knows what is going to happen in the future, wouldn't it be wise for us to pray and seek His guidance in everything?

Doesn't it make sense to eliminate all the problems in our lives that we possibly can? Why suffer the consequences for wrong decisions when God has offered to help us make right decisions?

God's Word is too clear on this subject for us to allow Satan to trip us up. Consider God's general promises to us on this subject.

- We are to trust God with all our hearts.

*You guide me with your counsel  
leading me to a glorious destiny.*

—Psalm 73:24 NLT

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.*

—Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

- We are to trust Him for all our needs.

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

—Philippians 4:19 NKJV

“All your need” includes our need for God’s guidance and direction in every decision. Does this mean that I am to pray about everything? Absolutely!

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

—Philippians 4:6 NLT

**38. *What if I am trying to stand on a promise, but I find myself doubting that God has really given me a specific personal promise?***

**Answer:** Do what the disciples did when they said to Jesus, “Show us how to increase our faith” (Luke 17:5-9 NLT). The essence of Jesus’ response was, “Always put God first, and your faith will grow.”

Therefore, when you are seeking a *promise*, make sure that you are putting God first in each individual situation, even before your own needs and interests.

Then ask God to please give you another *promise* to confirm the first *promise*. If He gives you a confirmation *promise*, then make sure you stand on it.

**39. *Does God ever give you a promise that consists of only a portion of a verse or maybe portions of two or more verses?***

**Answer:** Yes, God sometimes gives us *promises* that consist of a portion of one verse or portions of two or more verses, but we don’t have to try

to piece them together. God will do that for us by simply highlighting the portions of the verses He is giving to us.

I experienced this early in my journey of learning to live by *promises*, so in a visit with Preacher Hallock, I asked him if he had experienced the same thing. In my mind I can still hear his response, “Oh, yes. Oh, yes.” Preacher would say, “The *promise* will find you.”

*You guide me with your counsel,  
leading me to a glorious destiny.*

—Psalm 73:24 NLT

*The LORD will guide you continually...*

—Isaiah 58:11 NKJV

**40. What do you mean when you say that when God gives you a promise, it is as if He is shining a spotlight on the verse, passage, or portion of a verse or verses that He is giving you as His promise?**

**Answer:** As we read God's Word, He illuminates a verse, a passage, or a portion of a verse or verses. We mean that it stands out.

**Example:** On a dark night you are looking for the address of a certain home. You shine your flashlight or spotlight on the address, and when you do, you see it clearly. When God shines His spotlight on the *promise*, we see it clearly.

*Suddenly, GOD, your light floods my path,  
GOD drives out the darkness.*

—2 Samuel 22:29 MSG

Another way of thinking about how God illuminates a *promise* for us is that it is like reading a book that has been highlighted with a brightly colored marker in just a few places. These highlighted places really stand out, and the more accustomed we become to receiving God's *promises*, the easier it is to see them.

**41. *Have you ever read past a promise without recognizing it?***

**Answer:** Yes, we have, although most of the time we recognize the *promise* when we first read it. There have been times when we have read past the *promise*, but the interesting thing is that when we have, we could not get it out of our minds. God would not let us forget it, and as we talked to Him about it, we realized that this was our *promise*.

**42. *What motivates Christians to want to seek, receive, and stand on God's promises?***

**Answer:** The motivation to seek, receive, and stand on God's *promises* is not to be wealthy or to never experience problems or to always be seen as riding the crest of the waves or to be viewed by others as successful. The primary purpose that motivates Christians to want to live by *promises* is a passion from within that, more than anything in life, they want to live out their lives walking in the center of God's will, regardless of where that might take them. They don't want to waste their lives. They want their lives to count for God and to have purpose and meaning, and the way they have discovered to do that is to discern God's will—His plan for their lives—and walk in it.

This passion comes from a conviction that God knows how to run their lives better than they do, a conviction that above all, they want to accomplish what God sent them here on this earth to accomplish. They know that living by faith and standing on His *promises* is the only way that can be accomplished.

*You will show me the way of life,  
granting me the joy of your presence  
and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

—Psalm 16:11 NLT

**43. *As we seek God's will, can we always be sure that God will respond by giving us a promise?***

**Answer:** No, we cannot be sure that God will always give us a *promise*. Our experience has been that it is not always “according to His will” to give us a *promise*.

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

—1 John 5:14-15 NKJV

Sometimes God may choose to lead us in another way, like trusting Him for godly wisdom to make the right decision, rather than giving us a *promise*. We believe that God leads us in different ways because He wants us to be so familiar with His voice, like sheep with their shepherd, that we will hear and recognize and follow Him whenever and however He speaks.

*"The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."*

—John 10:3-5 NIV84

If the desire of our hearts is simply to know what God wants us to do, and we are committed to obeying Him, we can be confident that we will receive God's direction in a way that is "according to His will," a way that He has determined is best for us at this particular crossroads and at this particular time.

#### **44. How do I find promises that apply to me and my situation?**

**Answer:** Preacher Hallock taught us that we don't find *promises*; they find us. But we are to make sure that we have the right heart attitude and are in God's Word daily and for a sufficient amount of time for God to give us a *promise*.

*Promises* seem to be most often received by those who love God's Word and are reading it daily. They see Bible reading as the primary means by which God speaks to them to give them direction.

The best way to put yourself in a position to receive *promises* is to start on a plan for reading the Bible through once a year for the rest of your

life. (See the Bible Reading Plan at [www.OneonOnewithGod.org](http://www.OneonOnewithGod.org).) Why not start today?

As we prepare to read God's Word each morning, we should pray that God will help us understand as we read and help us recognize when He gives us a *promise*.

*Then He [thoroughly] opened up their minds to understand the Scriptures.*

—Luke 24:45 AMP

**45. *If I continue to question God because I want to be sure I understand the promise He has given me, will He be disappointed with me and think that I don't trust Him?***

**Answer:** As long as we are sincerely seeking God's will and are committed to obeying Him when He gives us a *promise*, we do not need to be concerned that God will be disappointed with us or think that we don't trust Him. Remember that God is not deceived by what we do or what we say because He looks directly into our hearts and sees our motives and our sincerity.

*"...the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

—1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV

God knows when we are sincerely seeking His will—and He knows when we are trying to get Him to agree with us or to just get Him to give us what we want. He also knows when we are being stubborn and just don't want to obey Him.

If we are questioning God for any reason other than that we want to make sure we understand what He wants us to do, with our minds set on obeying, then we should be concerned. God knows what is best, and once we are confident of what He wants us to do, it is time to stand on that *promise* and stop questioning Him.

**46. *The Bible is so big! Where do we start in attempting to receive promises?***

**Answer:** Don't wait until you are in a crisis. Begin making preparation for receiving *promises* from God today!

One way to do this is to start reading a few verses each day in Psalm 119. When you finish Psalm 119, find a plan for reading the Bible through once a year for the rest of your life, and start investing time in reading your Bible each day. You can find such a plan for reading through Psalm 119 and then through the Bible on our website ([www.OneonOnewith-God.org](http://www.OneonOnewith-God.org)). Click on "Learn" and then on "Daily Bible Reading Calendar." After reading through Psalm 119, click on "Second Month Daily Bible Reading Calendar," and you will find a plan for reading through the New Testament. In the third month you will start reading in the Old Testament, and in the fourth month you will be reading one place in the New Testament and two places in the Old Testament. You will have gradually begun a plan for reading through the Bible once a year.

*You're blessed when you stay on course,  
walking steadily on the road revealed by God.  
You're blessed when you follow his directions,  
doing your best to find him.*

—Psalm 119:1-2 MSG

*If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy,  
I would have died in my misery.*

—Psalm 119:92 NLT

Continue reading God's Word every day, and when God is ready to give you a *promise*, He knows where to find you.

**47. *Is there a precedent in God's Word about receiving promises that I can show skeptics?***

**Answer:** In Acts 13:46-47 NKJV, Paul speaks of an experience that he and Barnabas had at Antioch when the Jews rejected the truth they were preaching.

*Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us:*

*'I have you as a light to the Gentiles,  
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"*

—Acts 13:46-47 NKJV

What did Paul mean when he said, "For so the Lord has commanded us?" He was speaking of a *promise* God had given him from Isaiah 49:6.

*"Indeed He says,  
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"*

—Isaiah 49:6 NKJV

God had spoken to them clearly and directly through a *promise*, telling them that they were to be "a light to the Gentiles"—they were to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

**48. *What's wrong with making decisions by just relying on intellect, intuition, or feelings?***

**Answer:** The problem with making decisions by relying on intellect, intuition, or feelings is that it is contrary to what the Bible teaches. Depending on intellect is simply weighing the facts; intuition is doing whatever seems best; depending on feelings is just doing whatever feels best. When we make decisions relying on these three methods, we are ignoring or rejecting God's instruction and invitation.

*"But I'll take the hand of those who don't know the way,  
who can't see where they're going.  
I'll be a personal guide to them,  
directing them through unknown country.  
I'll be right there to show them what roads to take,  
make sure they don't fall into the ditch.  
These are the things I'll be doing for them—  
sticking with them, not leaving them for a minute."*

—Isaiah 42:16 MSG



If we choose to walk in disobedience, contrary to the teaching and instruction of God, we shouldn't expect God's blessing.

**49. Is there anything wrong with using astrology (a.k.a. horoscopes) in making decisions?**

*Answer:* Astrology and astrologers, those who search the heavens for supposed revelations, have no place in God's plan for showing us how to make decisions.

*Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets..."*

—Daniel 2:27-28 NKJV

Using a horoscope is simply fortune-telling by astrology. The Bible says astrology is forbidden:

*"Do not act like the other nations,  
who try to read their future in the stars.  
Do not be afraid of their predictions,  
even though other nations are terrified by them."*

—Jeremiah 10:2 NLT

The Bible says that astrology is wicked and detestable in God's sight.

*"If there is found among you...a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded....an abomination [detestable thing] has been committed..."*

—Deuteronomy 17:2-4 NKJV

The Bible says that those who seek the counsel of astrologers are misled, and astrologers will be punished.

*"...Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you...  
Disaster will come upon you...  
All the counsel you have received has only worn you out!  
Let your astrologers come forward,  
those stargazers who make predictions month by month,  
let them save you from what is coming upon you."*

*Surely they are like stubble;  
the fire will burn them up.  
They cannot even save themselves...  
these you have labored with since childhood.  
Each of them goes on in his error..."*

—Isaiah 47:10-11, 13-15 NIV84

Only God can lead us to make the right decision every time, so why should we waste our lives seeking help from ungodly sources?

**50. *Will receiving and standing on God's promises eliminate all problems in our lives?***

**Answer:** Living by *promises* may eliminate some problems in our lives simply because it places us where God wants us, at the time He wants us there, doing what He wants us to do. So we eliminate the problem of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. But problems, difficulties, hard times, and testing times are absolutely essential if we are to mature in the Christian life. This is revealed to us if we notice the sequence in James 1:2-4 NKJV.

The path to spiritual maturity takes us through various trials and times of testing, and yet problems, difficulties, hard times, and times of testing are not unique to Christians. Our advantage is that we expect them, and God walks through them both in and with us.

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
But the Lord delivers him out of them all.*

—Psalm 34:19 NKJV

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*

—1 Peter 4:12 NIV84

*"Don't panic. I'm with you.  
There's no need to fear for I'm your God.  
I'll give you strength. I'll help you.  
I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you."*

—Isaiah 41:10 MSG

Does this mean that we should ask God for more trials so that we can mature more quickly? No! That is not necessary. We live in a fallen world, so the problems, difficulties, and hard times will come automatically. But we do need to be strong and ready for them, realizing that God will not allow any of these experiences to touch our lives except those He wants to use for our good and His glory. God defeats Satan at his own game. He takes the worst that Satan has to offer and turns it for our good.

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

—Romans 8:28 NLT

Moses is an example of a person who, by faith, deliberately chose God's plan for his life rather than the fleeting pleasures of sin, looking ahead to the great reward God would give him.

*It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward.*

—Hebrews 11:24-26 NLT

We must not let fear rob us of God's best for our lives, which is His plan for our lives. Like Moses, we must look ahead to the great reward God has for those who deliberately choose to live out His plan for their lives, regardless of the trials, difficulties, and hard times they may encounter.

#### **51. *Why take the time to gather the facts if we are seeking promises?***

**Answer:** When we are seeking a *promise*, we first try to discern how we should phrase the question that we will ask the Lord. Gathering the facts helps us know how to phrase the question. We find that gathering the facts helps us become even more dependent on the Lord to give us His direction through a *promise*. God's Word also emphasizes the importance of always gathering the facts.

*He who answers a matter before he hears the facts—it is folly and shame to him.*

—Proverbs 18:13 AMP

*"Does our Law convict a man without giving him a hearing and finding out what he has done [without gathering the facts]?"*

—John 7:51 AMP

**52. *Some people seem so confident that God will give them His direction through promises. How is it possible to be so confident?***

**Answer:** The answer is that the promises of God, both general and specific, have been thoroughly tested through the years. In talking to pastors and godly people who have walked with God for many years, we have often found that there have been times when they were faced with a decision and cried out to God for help, only to find that God spoke to them through Scripture to give them direction.

*Your promises have been thoroughly tested;  
that is why I love them so much.*

—Psalm 119:140 NLT

Usually our confidence that God will speak to us through His *promises* is in direct proportion to our faith and the number of times we have exercised our faith by standing on God's *promises* in the past. It seems that the more faith it takes to receive and stand on a *promise*, the faster our confidence in God grows.

**53. *How do you make the daily routine decisions of life?***

**Answer:** We make most of the daily routine decisions of life by asking God for godly wisdom to make the right decision (James 1:5).

*And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

—Philippians 4:19 AMP

One of our greatest needs is for God to give us His guidance and direction. The way we handle the daily routine decisions of life is to start each day by committing the day to God and giving Him full control of our lives for that day. We ask Him to give us godly wisdom in every decision we will face that day. Then we talk to God throughout the day about

the specific issues we are facing. We handle things like this because the routine decisions usually come so fast during the day that we do not have time to seek and receive a *promise* before the decision has to be made. Yet we would always prefer to have a *promise*.

Either way, whether making the decision based on trusting God to give us godly wisdom or based on receiving a *promise*, our goal is to enjoy fellowship with the Lord in the process by talking to the Lord about these decisions throughout the day.

**54. *What if we feel like we don't have enough confidence in God to receive and stand on promises?***

**Answer:** Strong confidence comes from a reverent and worshipful fear of God.

*In the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is strong confidence...*

—Proverbs 14:26 AMP

Strong confidence seems to thrive among those who have a reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord. Those who are growing daily in knowing Him personally and developing an intimate fellowship with Him seem to have strong confidence in the Lord. And they always try to put God's interest above their own when making decisions.

We know that our faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9), and as that faith grows, so does our confidence in God. Ask God for help in the areas of having growing faith and stronger confidence and always putting Him first.

*And whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

—John 14:13 KJV

Then take the next step. Start asking God for a *promise*. As we grow in our walk with the Lord, we become aware that the Lord Himself has become our confidence.

*Do not be afraid of sudden terror,  
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;  
For the LORD will be your confidence,  
And will keep you from being caught.*

—Proverbs 3:25-26 NKJV

**55. What if we are too fearful to try to live by promises?**

**Answer:** Consider the source of this kind of tormenting fear and anxiety caused by approaching danger: Satan. This kind of fear is not to be confused with godly fear because godly fear is a fear that holds God in awe and respect. It is a reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord (Proverbs 14:26 ESV).

*The Lord has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does. He said,  
“Don’t call everything a conspiracy, like they do,  
and don’t live in dread of what frightens them.  
Make the LORD of Heaven’s Armies holy in your life.  
He is the one you should fear.  
He is the one who should make you tremble.  
He will keep you safe...”*

—Isaiah 8:11-14 NLT

Within you is the power to overcome fear because

*You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you [the Holy Spirit] is greater than he who is in the world [Satan].*

—1 John 4:4 NKJV

*“Fear not, for I am with you;  
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you,  
Yes, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”*

—Isaiah 41:10 NKJV

*“Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid,  
nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*

—Joshua 1:9 NKJV

It has been said that there are more than 365 times in the Bible where in some form it says, "Fear not"—one for each day of the year. It is obvious that God does not want us to experience or live in tormenting fear.

Decide that today you will believe God is faithful and will do what He says. Just stand on His *promises* today. Don't worry about the past or the future. Stand on God's *promises* today, and make this day a day of living by faith.

**56. *Is it possible for someone who, like the prodigal son, is living in sin, not just occasionally sinning, to receive a promise from God?***

**Answer:** It is probably not a common thing, but it is possible. If people living in sin are under conviction and are sincerely crying out to God for help, God will respond to them with a *promise* or in some other way to lead them. But if they are living in sin, don't think they need God's help, and have no desire for God to intervene, they are probably not in the Word of God and are not going to be receptive to either general or *specific personal promises*. We say it is possible, though, because we know of several people who experienced just that. They were ready to commit suicide but picked up a Bible and began to read. God illuminated their minds and convicted their hearts, and they were saved at that moment as they cried out to God to save them.

**57. *Is a promise something we can expect to receive on a regular basis?***

**Answer:** How often we receive *promises* is usually in direct proportion to how earnestly we seek to know and follow God's will (His plan) for our lives.

If we seldom find ourselves at that level of desperation to know God's will so that we can follow His will, we will probably receive very few *promises*. But if we frequently find ourselves crying out to God in desperation, not wanting to make mistakes in the decisions we make and not wanting to miss God's will (His plan) for our lives, we're probably going to

experience receiving God's *promises* on a regular basis—if we are in God's Word consistently so that He can give us a *promise*.

*"Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own."*

—Jeremiah 33:3 MSG

*And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.*

—2 Peter 1:4 NLT

**58. *Is there a scriptural precedent for asking God for confirmation after He has given us a promise?***

**Answer:** Here is an example of David asking God for a *promise*:

*Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."*

*Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"*

*And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."*

*But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"*

—1 Samuel 23:1-3 NKJV

Then David asked God for confirmation.

*Then David inquired of the LORD once again.*

*And the LORD answered Him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."*

—1 Samuel 23:4 NKJV

**59. *Is there a scriptural precedent and reason for being very specific when asking God for a promise?***

**Answer:** Notice how David asked God a question so general that he had to follow it up with a more specific question.



*It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"*

*And the LORD said to him, "Go up."*

*David said, "Where shall I go up?"*

*And He said, "To Hebron."*

—2 Samuel 2:1 NKJV

Sometimes the questions we ask God are so general that when He answers, we may not understand exactly what He wants us to do, as happened with David. Therefore, make sure you don't give up. Follow up the first question by asking God a more specific question. God won't be upset with you. He is enjoying the fact that you are seeking His counsel, and He loves the fellowship He has with you in the process.

**60. *Can God speak to us by giving us a promise no matter what translation we are reading?***

**Answer:** God is not restricted to speaking through only one translation, especially when we are reading devotionally. God is God, and the only limitations He has are those He places on Himself. God is willing to meet us at our point of need, and that often means He will meet us where we are, regardless of the translation we may be reading.

We have found it very beneficial to read through many translations and paraphrases of the Bible. Each of the translations and paraphrases we have read has been like a window that allows a little more light on certain verses or passages so that we see more clearly and understand more completely.

Of course it is always the reader's responsibility to study questionable phrases or passages to make sure they are consistent with the best translations of Scripture if the person's goal is to discover the truth for himself or herself or for teaching and preaching. But this book is about making decisions based on God's *specific personal promises* by reading or studying God's Word devotionally, asking God to give us His personal instruc-

tion, guidance, and direction for our lives in our particular situation at a specific time.

Since we have read through the Bible more than fifty-five times, God has given us *promises* from many translations and even from the paraphrases.

**61. What if I trust God, but I don't trust myself or my ability to receive a promise from God?**

**Answer:** The answer could be as simple as getting to know Jesus better, and, of course, the way we get to know Him better is by investing more time in the Bible.

As we get to know Jesus better, we will find that we have everything we need to live a godly life, including His “great and precious promises.”

***By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.***

—2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT

God used Paul in a wonderful and powerful way because Paul knew Jesus in a deep and intimate way. In fact, Paul said:

*[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly]...*

—Philippians 3:10 AMP

Knowing “...our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13 NKJV) deeply, intimately, and personally gives us all we need to overcome our fears and failures, even the fear of not being able to trust ourselves or our ability to receive *promises* from God.

**62. What about the timing of sharing promises with others?**

**Answer:** We generally do not share a *promise* with others until it has already been fulfilled because we do not want to be guilty of presuming upon God's timing or appear to be trying to force God to fulfill the *promise* on our schedule rather than His.

Patiently wait on God. His timing will be perfect, and you will probably have plenty of time and opportunities to share the *promise* after you have seen it fulfilled as God promised.

**63. How important is a person's motive in asking God for a promise?**

**Answer:** A person's motive is very important to God. We have an example in Scripture where God told Balaam to go meet Balak, and when Balaam obeyed, "God's anger was kindled because he went" (Numbers 22:20-22 NET). Some commentators argue that "God's anger was kindled" because He saw that Balaam's motive was greed and pleasure for riches, and that is why he was so willing to go. Balaam was not going simply because he wanted to be obedient to God; his motive was greed (2 Peter 2:15 NKJV). This seems to be confirmed in Jude 11 NLT, "...Like Balaam, they deceive people for money..."

*"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,  
and desperately wicked.  
Who really knows how bad it is?  
But I, the LORD, search all hearts  
and examine secret motives.  
I give all people their due rewards,  
according to what their actions deserve."*

—Jeremiah 17:9-10 NLT

In Numbers 22:20-35, on two occasions in verses 20 and 35, God emphasizes and then reemphasizes to Balaam what he is to say to Balak. Therefore, we might conclude that because of this repetition and because God has the ability to understand what we intend to say or do by searching our hearts and examining our motives, He saw that Balaam was not

planning to be absolutely obedient. He wasn't planning to say exactly what God told him to say or do exactly what God told him to do, and this is what kindled God's anger.

Regardless of why God's anger was kindled against Balaam, we know that we have nothing to fear if our motive in seeking a *promise* from God is because we simply want to live out His plan for our lives, walk on the path He has chosen for us, and thus fulfill the purpose for which He has given us the opportunity to live here on earth. God desires for us to value godly motives as much as He does.

**64. *Why does God sometimes wait to give us a promise or fulfill the promise?***

**Answer:** We could list many reasons why God may wait in giving or fulfilling a *promise*, but it seems that they are usually related to God's timing. Many times it simply gives God the opportunity to demonstrate His faithfulness to His loyal followers who patiently wait for Him.

*Look, the LORD takes notice of His loyal followers,  
those who wait for Him to demonstrate His faithfulness.*

—Psalm 33:18 NET

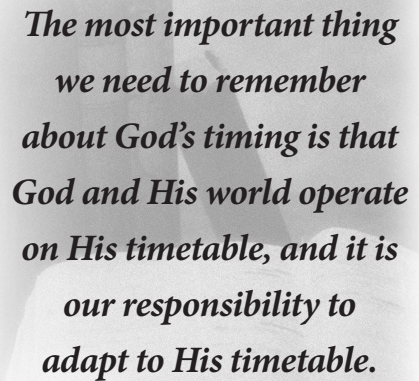
Other reasons why God might wait are:

- God sometimes waits with His answers because timing is an important part of God's plan for our lives, and sometimes the timing is not right.
- We have not yet learned the important lesson He was trying to teach us through some experience, or we have not yet spiritually matured as much as He desired through the experience (James 1:2-4 NLT).
- We have not totally rested in Him through the experience, realizing that whatever answer God gives will be for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28 NLT).
- We have not yet totally yielded to His will (Romans 6:13 KJV).

- Our attitude has not yet become like that of Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8 NIV84).
- We have not yet become a mirror through which Jesus can reflect Himself (2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT), especially the fruit of His Spirit, patience (Galatians 5:22 NET).
- Or maybe in the past when God answered, we were not overwhelmed with His faithfulness and did not give Him glory, honor, and praise for intervening on our behalf.

God is good. Give Him glory, honor, and praise in the beginning of the process, during the process, and at the end of the process.

The most important thing we need to remember about God's timing is that God and His world operate on His timetable, and it is our responsibility to adapt to His timetable.



***The most important thing we need to remember about God's timing is that God and His world operate on His timetable, and it is our responsibility to adapt to His timetable.***

**65. Who are some famous men of the past who received and stood on God's promises?**

**Answer:** In our lifetime we have known many people who have experienced the joy of seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises*. Usually, however, one must draw these experiences out of them because these *promises* are very personal, and they are too cautious to lay them out for others to trample underfoot.

Recently I was reading something written about Preacher Hallock and was reminded of two of his favorite stories about others who had lived by *promises*.

### **George Müller**

During his lifetime of more than ninety years, George Müller read the Bible through two hundred times. He once reported that one hundred readings were done while he was on his knees, and the other one hundred readings came after he was seventy years old. Müller built a great orphanage. He and his wife determined that they would ask no human being for anything but would instead always lay their needs before the Lord in prayer. The particular [*specific personal*] *promise* upon which they founded the orphanage came from the first words of the fifth verse of Psalm 68: "...A father of the fatherless..." The Müllers built great buildings, cared for as many as 2,100 orphans at a time, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars by prayer, and thus glorified God. Not once did they make their needs known in the way of an appeal to human beings.<sup>4</sup>

### **David Livingstone**

David Livingstone went to Africa as a missionary with his heart firmly fixed upon Matthew 28:18-20—the Great Commission. The latter part says: "...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Whatever the crisis was, David Livingstone always came back to this [*specific personal*] *promise*, and having read and thanked the Lord, he would say, "'Tis the word of a gentlemen of the most strict and sacred order, and that's an end of it."<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that not only did George Müller and David Livingstone receive and stand on God's *specific personal promises*, but both of the *promises* shared above were only portions of a verse that God had highlighted for them specifically.



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- With each passing day, we become more convinced that the experiences of life are designed to help us learn to trust God more.
- The most important thing we need to remember about God's timing is that God and His world operate on His timetable, and it is our responsibility to adapt to His timetable.





**PART 5**

***Closing Remarks***



## CHAPTER 8

### *Confession of the Authors*

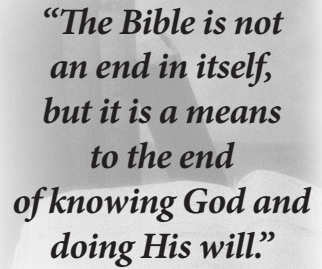
**WE MUST CONFESS** that if for the first time we were reading or hearing about making a decision and basing that decision on a *specific personal promise* from God through the Bible, we would probably be more skeptical than anyone reading this book. But remember:

- We heard many messages from Preacher Hallock, our pastor in college, about basing our decisions on God's *promises*. At that time he was a man in his sixties who had practiced living by *promises* for many years.
- Preacher modeled what he preached, and we saw the tremendous confidence and peace he had when making decisions that were based on hearing directly from God. To be perfectly honest, we wanted that same peace and confidence in making decisions.
- When we began to practice what Preacher taught, we found that there was nothing mystical about basing our decisions on a *promise*. We were simply taking God at His word and believing that if we would trust the Lord with all of our hearts, not lean on our own understanding, and in all our ways acknowledge Him, He would give us His direction, even if He did not always give us a *promise*. Sometimes time ran out, and we were forced to make a decision without a *promise*. So we learned in those instances to ask God for godly wisdom (James 1:5-6), and we believed we would receive it because we were committed to obeying and following His will.

- We became convinced that God has a good plan for our lives and that the best way to live out that plan was for us to surrender to God's will. We were to simply join Him and agree with Him that His plan was the best and not try to come up with an alternate plan. Therefore, we began trusting God to lead us in all our decisions by letting Him be boss in our lives each day. We simply began to rest in God and His *promises*, and we have found that His plan has been a better plan for our lives than we had for ourselves.
- A good God with a good plan for our lives would not be unwilling to reveal it to us in His timing, thus enabling us to live out that plan for our lives.
- The Bible teaches us that the just shall live by faith, and faith is simply taking God at His word and standing on His *promises* when we have no proof with our five senses that what He is promising us is true. We only have hope, and that hope is based on our faith, a gift from God that is more than sufficient to enable us to receive and stand on His *promises*.
- We do not have the right to take a *promise* by picking and choosing whatever we want from the Bible that might apply to our situation. We simply receive, as a gift from God, a *promise*, which gives us direction when we stand at a crossroads, trusting God and God alone to guide us.
- As we have said before, there is a precedent in God's Word concerning living by *promises*. In Acts 13:46-47, Paul speaks of a *promise* God gave him from Isaiah 49:6 about taking the Word of God to the Gentiles.
- We have received most of our *promises* while reading the Bible devotionally.

Comments from the "How to Study the Bible" section of *The Open Bible* have some important thoughts about devotional Bible study that we would like to repeat for you here in these final words.

- “The Bible is not an end in itself, but it is a means to the end of knowing God and doing His will.”<sup>1</sup>
- “...devotional Bible study is the most important kind of Bible study. Devotional Bible study means reading and studying the Word of God in order that we may hear God’s voice personally and that we may know how to do His will and to live a better Christian life.”<sup>2</sup>
- “A great scientist and a great medical doctor, Dr. Howard A. Kelly (Professor of Gynecology at Johns Hopkins University from 1889 through 1940), was also a great student of the Bible. He once said: ‘The very best way to study the Bible is simply to read it daily with close attention and with prayer to see the light that shines from its pages...’”<sup>3</sup>



***“The Bible is not  
an end in itself,  
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If you are skeptical, we understand. But please don’t let that skepticism keep you from the peace and confidence that God wants to give you in making decisions. As Dr. Kelly said, “...read it [God’s Word] daily with close attention and with prayer...”<sup>4</sup> Try what Dr. Kelly suggested, and see if God doesn’t illuminate your path with a *promise* in response to your crying out to Him and seeking His will in your decision-making process. When you become desperate to know God’s will, He will respond and give you the guidance you seek.

### **Testimony of the authors**

Our personal testimony is that nothing other than our salvation has given us such peace and confidence as fellowshiping with Jesus while pursuing and resting in and on His *promises*.

Apart from our personal salvation experience, living our lives based on seeking, receiving, and standing on God’s *promises* has been one of the most

exciting experiences of our lives. It has tremendously increased our love for God and our understanding of the depth of God's love for us.

Standing on God's *promises* has taken us to places we would not have gone, allowed us to meet people we would never have known, and enabled us to do work that has been both exciting and rewarding. God's *promises* have provided and illuminated the path that He has used to show us how to live out His plan for our lives. The joy of living by these *promises* has given us a wonderful confidence and peace in discerning and living out God's will, His plan for our lives. After more than fifty-five years of living our lives based on *promises*, we can assure you that God has been 100% faithful to us in His *promises*.

In regard to seeking, receiving, and standing on God's *promises*, just remember this phrase: We do and any true believer walking with God may.

The following verses are our constant reminder that blessed are the people who voluntarily give up their plans to live out God's purpose for their lives.

*Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,  
Who walks in His ways.*

—Psalm 128:1 NKJV

*Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand.*

—Proverbs 19:21 AMP

## **Simply believe. Just do it!**

*...“Anything is possible if a person believes.”*

—Mark 9:23 NLT

We have the example of a man in the Bible who wanted to believe that Jesus could heal his son. His faith was small, so he said to Jesus,

*...“Have mercy on us and help us. Do something if you can.”  
“What do you mean, ‘If I can?’” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.”  
The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”*

—Mark 9:22-24 NLT

In Mark 9:27 we see that Jesus did heal the man's son, so it is implied that Jesus did help the father by responding to his prayer to help him not to doubt. Therefore, we can receive God's help to believe if we sincerely pray and confess, "Lord, I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief." Just as this father did, we must act and use the faith God has given us.

The words *faith*, *belief*, and *trust* are sometimes substituted for each other in Scripture. They overlap in meaning. Here are some things Scripture says about these important words:

- Without faith it is impossible to please God

*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 NIV84

- If we doubt when we ask God for something, we should not expect to receive that for which we have asked.

*But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.*

—James 1:6-7 NIV84

- Faith is a gift from God.

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

—Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

So how do we grow stronger in faith, belief, and trust in God that is sufficient to stand on His *promises*?

- Like the father in Mark 9:22-24 NLT, we should pray—confess to God that our faith is weak and ask Him to help us not to doubt.
- Use and exercise the faith God has given us.

- Like the servant in Luke 17:5-9 NLT, we should always put the Master (God) first, even before our own needs and desires, when making decisions.

The disciples once asked Jesus why they were not able to perform certain miracles that Jesus was able to perform (Mark 9:18, 28 NIV84). Jesus replied that it was because of their unbelief (Mark 9:19 NIV84). In Mark 9:23 NIV84 Jesus said, “Anything is possible if a person believes.” You have sufficient faith to stand on God’s precious general and *specific personal promises*, but even if you don’t think so, now you know how to get that kind of faith.

The Bible is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths (Psalm 119:105 KJV); therefore, it shouldn’t surprise us that God intends to use His Word to illuminate His plans (Jeremiah 29:11 LIV) and His path for our lives with both His general and *specific personal promises*.

Remember, God’s Word is alive (Hebrews 4:12 NLT). It was given to us to instruct us in how we are to live (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT), and it was written for you and me to have as a road map for our lives.

*Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it’s written for us. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize us, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next.*

—Romans 15:4 MSG

May God bless you as you seek, receive, and stand on His *specific personal promises*, which will provide you with an illuminated path so that you may live out His plan for your life.

*For from Him and through Him and to him are all things.  
To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*

—Romans 11:36 NIV84

*For this God is our God forever and ever;  
he will be our guide even to the end.*

—Psalm 48:14 NIV84



## **The best candidates for consistently receiving and standing on God's promises**

The best candidates for consistently receiving and standing on God's *promises* are Christians who, regardless of the circumstances, are willing to take God at His word and believe that He has a good plan for their lives (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT). They believe that because God has a good plan for their lives, He has a path (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT) on which He will guide them (Psalm 48:14 NLT) that will allow them to live out His plan and fulfill the purpose for which He gave them life.

### **Examples of those who lived before us**

In this book we have mentioned great men of the past who made decisions based on God's *promises* such as the Apostle Paul, mentioned in Chapter 1; George Müller, mentioned in the last part of Chapters 4 and 7; and David Livingstone, mentioned in the last part of Chapter 7. Of course, as with many other people, the Apostle Paul has tremendously marked our lives by his example and what God spoke through him in the Bible. George Müller and David Livingstone have challenged us with their great faith, willingness to sacrifice, and their determination to live with purpose.

But when we live during the same time as, rub shoulders with, and get to know great men personally, it marks our lives in an unusual way. That was our experience with our dear friend, Preacher Hallock, whom we have mentioned several times in this book. He taught us to receive and stand on God's *promises*. In our presence he lived making decisions based on God's *promises*. As Pastor Mike Fleischman said, "He was a living example of a life transformed by an unshakable commitment to the truth of God's Word."<sup>5</sup>

And in his typically unassuming way of explaining things, this is Preacher's testimony about receiving and standing on God's *promises*:

I have continued through all the years this business of reading the Book, and more and more God has opened up the path of walking with Him

***“Whenever I have  
needed particular  
guidance in any  
direction, it has come  
from some verse  
in God’s Word.”***

*Preacher Hallock*



in the light of His Word. When I have needed warning, I have received it from the Book. When I needed exhortation, He has given it from the Book. When I needed comfort, it has come from God’s Book. Whenever I have needed particular guidance in any direction, it has come from some verse in God’s Word.<sup>6</sup>

Our recommendation is that you follow the examples of the Apostle Paul, George Müller, David Livingstone, and Preacher Hallock in making decisions based on God’s *specific personal promises*.



### ***Chapter takeaways:***

- We have found that His plan has been a better plan for our lives than we had for ourselves.
- “The Bible is not an end in itself but it is a means to the end of knowing God and doing His will.”<sup>7</sup>
- Nothing other than our salvation has given us such peace and confidence as fellowshiping with Jesus while pursuing and resting in and on His promises.
- Preacher Hallock was a living example of a life transformed by an unshakable commitment to the truth of God’s Word.
- “Whenever I have needed particular guidance in any direction, it has come from some verse in God’s Word.”<sup>8</sup>





# Notes

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