

Get a Good Grip on God's Promises

Are you having a hard day? A hard week? A hard life? Are you facing difficult circumstances that seem to have no solution?

If so, I have good news for you: God is thinking about you right now as you read this article. He knows what kind of day you are having. He knows your greatest burdens and your deepest dreams. He cares.

And He provided a solution for your problems before they ever existed through the promises in His Word. All 7,487 of these promises were given to guarantee your victory. All you have to do is lay hold of them, as the Bible encourages us to do:

“Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps His Word” (Heb. 10:23, The Message). We know we will not be disappointed, for “all the promises of God in [Christ] are Yes, and in [Christ] Amen” (2 Cor. 1:20, NKJV).

It's wonderful to know there are promises for every circumstance of life. Salvation promises. Hope and healing promises. Promises for finances, friends and family. Whatever your problem is, there is a promise for you. Whatever your dream is, there is a promise for you.

TICKET TO RIDE

A ticket to a movie costs about \$. A season ticket to the symphony costs around \$650. Super Bowl tickets can go as high as \$3,000! When you have a ticket to an event, it means you have a right to attend or participate in the event. Those with no tickets will be turned away at the door.

God's promises are like tickets, as this verse from The Message states: “We were also given absolutely terrific promises to pass on to you—your tickets to participation in

the life of God" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). These tickets didn't come cheap, but it costs you nothing to redeem them; Jesus already paid the price with His blood.

I heard of a woman who attended a Mercedes-Benz car show with her husband. While he was drooling over the features of a top-of-the-line Mercedes, she halfheartedly scribbled her name on a "Win This Car" contest card.

To her utter shock, six weeks later, the Mercedes dealership called to congratulate her on winning the car. "All you need to do to receive this Mercedes is bring us your winning ticket within 48 hours," they told her.

To her dismay, she didn't have a clue where she had put that insignificant piece of paper. Who would have thought she'd really win?

The hunt began. She dug through all her purses and pockets but found nothing. She went through all her drawers and even the community dumpster.

Her time was almost up, but she needed to pick up her son from school, so she stopped looking long enough to make a quick dash to the nearby junior high. In fact, too quick.

When she noticed the red lights of a police car flashing behind her, she groaned, pulled over and reached into the glove box for her registration and insurance card. To her surprise, she saw her winning ticket lying there, just waiting to be redeemed.

Jumping out of the car, she shouted at the police officer, "I found my ticket! I found my ticket!" She told him her dilemma and explained that she had only 20 minutes left to redeem it for a new Mercedes. The officer smiled and said, "Jump in!"

Sirens screaming, the policeman broke every rule to get her to the Mercedes dealership. They pulled onto the lot and saw the

sales manager preparing to take the contest car off the display rack.

The policeman handed his radio to her. Across the car lot, her voice thundered: "Get your hands off of my car! I found my ticket!" The number on her ticket matched the winning number perfectly, and she was awarded the car.

God's promises are like that winning ticket. They are hiding in the Word just waiting to be redeemed, and God will break every natural law to fulfill them. If you're willing to search them out in the Scriptures, they will become tickets for you to participate in God's abundant life.

As you purpose in your heart to stand on the promises of God, a "higher authority" steps in. Just like the policeman who handed the woman his radio to claim her car, Jesus, your High Priest, has handed you His authority to thunder through the heavenlies: "Satan, get your hands off my family and finances! I found my ticket!"

GET A GRIP ON THE PROMISES

My husband, Tommy, and I have stood on God's promises for more than 30 years and rescued hundreds of thousands of young people out of Satan's clutches. Based on personal experience, I can say unequivocally that if you refuse to give up, Satan will have to, just as the apostle James assured us: "Resist the devil and he will flee" (James 4:7, NKJV).

You might be thinking, If these promises are for me, why am I still troubled, and how do I get them from the pages of my Bible into my life? Most Christians know about the promises of God, but they haven't seriously claimed them. Here are four simple ways to get a grip (G-R-I-P) on the promises of God.

Trust God The moment you read a promise from the Word of God, God's character goes on trial. Does He really mean it? Can He be trusted to fulfill it?

The fulfillment of any promise is directly dependent on the character of the one making the promise. If you had to choose to do business with either a pastor or a criminal, you would probably choose the pastor because you could better trust his character.

The promises of God are not a list of wonderful wishes. They are guarantees from your Father, and He can be trusted.

Your checking account might be unsettled. Your weight might be unsettled. But God's Word is forever "settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89).

You can't always trust people, but you can always trust God. To believe His promise is to take Him at His Word. "'God is not a man, that He should He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?'" (Num. 23:19.)

I heard a funny story about a man who was hiking up a steep mountain when his foot slipped on some loose gravel. He began falling 200 feet through the air but was able to grab a branch that was jutting out of the side of the mountain. The force of the fall caused him to bounce a few times, but he was relieved to realize he was still alive and the tree held.

"Hellooooo, is anyone up there?" he yelled.

"Yes, I hear you!" came an instant reply.

"Can you help me?" asked the exhausted hiker.

"Yes, I can," responded the deep voice.

"OK, who are you and what should I do?" the hiker asked.

"I am God. All you need to do is trust Me and let go."

The hiker pondered a moment and yelled back a little louder, "Is anyone else up there?"

If God's plan isn't easy, many of us are tempted, like the

desperate hiker, to look for a Plan B. But God can be trusted, even when His ways don't make sense to us.

Rehearse Your Rhemas The word logos refers to God's written Word (the Bible). Rhema is illuminated logos—a personalized, jump-off-the-page-and-slap-you-on-the-face promise from the Bible. You know when God gives you a rhema word because faith and peace explode inside you.

Here's an example that will help explain the distinction between logos and rhema. Logos is like a patriotic letter from the president of the United States that is addressed to all U.S. citizens. Rhema is like a personal telephone call from him. The letter would be inspiring, but the phone call would be life-changing.

Of course, this is a very loose analogy. But it points out that logos is general, and rhema is personalized. Both are God's Word, but simply put, one is written and one is spoken in your spirit. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

What should you do when God entrusts you with a rhema word? Write it down and mark the date and location. Rejoice over it and rehearse that personal, just-for-you promise over and over in your mind.

Several young ballerinas were about to perform Hansel and Gretel. An "X" on the floor made of masking tape helped them remember where to stand. The curtain worker was told, "When Sarah stands on her 'X,' open the curtain."

Sarah forgot where to stand, so nothing happened. A loudmouthed friend shouted, "Sarah, go stand on your 'X' so the performance can begin!"

Ladies, your "X" is your rhema promise from God, and I am your loudmouthed friend, screaming, "Go stand on your 'X' [rhema word] so His performance can begin!" God is "'watching over

[His] word to perform it'" (Jer. 1:12, NASB) and as you once again rehearse your rhema promise, you'll enjoy a grand performance of His Word.

Inspect Your Heart Many of God's promises are conditional. If you don't fulfill your part, God cannot fulfill His.

The Bible speaks of unforgiveness, fear and secret sin harboring in your heart. A harbor is an area of water where boats park. If the fulfillment of God's promise seems slow in coming, perhaps there's something harboring or parking in your heart. Inspect your heart and don't allow anything ungodly to harbor there. No parking allowed!

Sherry was a vivacious girl who genuinely loved the Lord. She was strong in God's Word and never wavered when diagnosed with severe ulcerative colitis.

But seven months passed, and Sherry's symptoms had grown worse instead of better. When she questioned God about this dilemma, He said nothing. Instead, He began to deal with her about an unforgiving attitude toward her mother-in-law.

She told me: "The more I talked to God about my sickness, the more He talked to me about my unforgiveness. Finally, I released my bad attitude, and within 10 days, I was completely healed."

Sometimes God promises are postponed or completely aborted because of sin. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (, NKJV). I am not saying that sickness is always because of sin, but if your victory is not forthcoming, take some time to inspect your heart.

Be Patient Have you noticed that God's promises aren't always manifested instantaneously? So what are you supposed to do between the "Amen" and "There it is"? You'll find the answer in Hebrews 6:12: "Do not be sluggish [lazy], but imitate those

who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (emphasis added).

Just whom should we imitate? Abraham is a good start. He gripped God's promise about his inheritance and held onto it for 25 years before his promised son, Isaac, was born. Joseph walked through 13 years of nightmares before his dream from God about ruling over his family was fulfilled.

Ask anyone whose walk with God you admire, and she will tell you that patience has been an important factor. What a key for possessing the promises of God!

Patience and faith go together, yet they function differently. Faith aggressively stands on God's Word, while patience says, "I don't care how long it takes; I will continue to trust God." Faith believes and patience waits, but if you develop both, victory is guaranteed.

When I was young, I spent time each summer in Minnesota with my grandparents. A neighbor of theirs had a long rope that swung over the lake. In a fit of mischief, two neighborhood kids and I taught the neighbor's bulldog, Oscar, to grip the rope, and we swung him back and forth over the water.

One sunny afternoon, we were on the patio when I noticed Oscar dangling motionless on the rope. I realized that we had taught him how to grip the rope but not how to let go! (Eventually, he learned.)

Reminding me of this incident one day, the Spirit of God said, "I'm training you to grip My promises like that dog and never let go." I have often said that the only difference between a bulldog and a woman of God is lipstick!

If your life seems to be falling apart, get a grip! Grip the promises of God and don't let go until you experience God's best.

Read a companion devotional.

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