

Genesis 12:10-13:1

Abraham and Tests of Faith

Genesis 12 Now the Lord said to Abram,

“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;
² And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
³ And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

⁴ So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite *was* then in the land. ⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. ⁸ Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. ⁹ Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.” ¹⁴ It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ Pharaoh’s officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶ Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

¹⁷ But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." ²⁰ Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

Genesis 13 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.

Ligon Duncan on Genesis 12:10ff

Brief review and introduction...

"In Genesis 12, verses 1 through 9 we see the outline of the covenant blessings given in verses 1 through 3. Then in verses 4 and 5 we see Abram begin to live out God's commands. Remember that in the covenant... God in His grace comes and blesses Abram, though Abram does nothing to earn or deserve that. Nevertheless, God places requirements on Abram, and the central requirement that He places on Abram is to separate himself from his land, his relations and from the headship of his father's house. So there is a requirement that Abram must fulfill in carrying out this mutual relationship which is a covenant. So even in the covenant...which is established by God's grace, there are requirements for God's people and this is seen in verses 4 and 5 as Abram begins to follow through on the command of God to 'go forth from your country to the land that I will show you.'

Then looking at verses 6 and 7, we see Abram pausing at the site of Shechem to lift up praise to the Lord as he builds an altar there. It's very likely that that phrase "the site of Shechem" or "the place of Shechem" indicates that there was a pagan altar there. This was a pagan worship center. So here is Abram coming into the middle of the land of promise. None of it is his at this moment. It's under pagan control. The Canaanite is then in the land. This is the center of their worship, their idolatrous worship. And what does he do? He builds an altar to the one true God, the Lord, and he worships Him. He proclaims the Lord's dominion over the nations, even when he is a stranger in a strange land.

Then, looking at the very end of that section in verses 8 and 9, Abram's faith was tested in his wanderings, and he learned to live the life of a pilgrim.

Though Abram pitched his tent, he built an altar. That really showed us Abram's priority. He built a lasting altar to the Lord for worship, even though he, himself, was dwelling in a tent. He recognized the priorities of life.

That sets the stage for this next scene here in Genesis, chapter 12, verses 10 through 20.

I. The great themes of the Abrahamic Covenant are: the Seed, the Land, the Nations.

In verse 10 we see the heading to this whole section in the words, "Now there was famine in the land and so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there for the famine was severe in the land." In that passage we see God setting the stage for a trial for Abram. Abram had already had to endure many trials in obedience to God's call. He had, of course, to leave his native country. He had to go to an unknown destination. He had to deal with his wife's childlessness in the face of God's promise to make him a great nation. He had to deal with the loss of his father. He had to deal with coming into a land and not finding a permanent home, but living as a nomad. He had to deal with being surrounded by idolaters on every side. ***And now, there is a famine in the land.***

The Lord is testing Abram's faith and faithfulness and verse 10 is setting the stage for the rest of the event as it enfolds in verses 11 through 20. So this verse sets the stage for a story which reveals the sinfulness of a great man. Abraham. Though he was a great man, was a sinner. ***So we see the sinfulness of a great man set side by side with the grace of a great God.***

It will help us to remember the themes that are set forth in the promise of God to Abram in the blessing of verses 1 through 3. Because each of these three themes have a role to play in this passage in explaining what exactly is going on here.

God promises to Abram blessings in verses 1, 2 and 3.

We see at least three main features to that blessing. There is the promise of a seed, the promise of posterity. There is the promise of the land, and there is the promise of the nations. And those promises continue to be repeated throughout the story of Abram here in Genesis 12 through 23.

- **First of all, looking at Genesis 12, verse 2, let's see the promises about the seed.** “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing.” So He promises that he’ll be a great nation. That promise has to do with the seed, with the posterity that he will become a great nation. Then look at **Genesis 13, verse 16**. There God again says, “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth; then your descendants can also be numbered.”

So again this theme of the posterity that God is going to give to Abram is brought to our attention. Then again in **Genesis 15, verse 5**, we read: “He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ and He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”

Again a promise concerning the seed. **Genesis 16, verse 10**...there again: “Moreover the angel of the Lord said to her, ‘I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.’” And then again in **Genesis 17, verse 2**, we read: “I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.” ***So over and over in God's dealings with Abram, He stresses the blessing of posterity. He is going to give him descendants. He is going to give him not simply an heir, but He's going to make him a father of a great nation, indeed a father of nations.***

- **Then if you'll turn back to Genesis 12. Let's look at the second theme. This is the theme of the land.** In **Genesis 12, verse 7**, we read: “The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.” Then in **Genesis 13, verse 15**: “All the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.” Then, **Genesis 13:17**: “Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.” Then **Genesis 17, verse 8**: “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” ***So over and over, throughout God's dealings with Abram we see him repeating His promise of the blessing of the land. Not only posterity, but the land.***
- **In Genesis 12 we also find the third theme.** In **Genesis 12, verse 3**, we read: “I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” What's the third theme? ***God blesses Abram in his covenant promises and says that he will be a blessing to the nations.***

Consider this theme as it's carried out...**Turn forward to Genesis 22**. In the wake of God providing a substitute in the sacrifice of Isaac, we read this...

Genesis 22, verse 18: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice.” ***Over and over the blessing that Abram is to be to the nations is mentioned as the promises of the covenant are reiterated.***

It is in precisely the three areas of those promises that Abram is tested. Precisely in the area of the promises of the posterity, the land, and his blessing to the nations Abram is tested.

- ***Think for a moment about the promise of the posterity.*** Abram's wife, Sarai, goes to the age of 90 before she ever bears him a son. Do you realize that Rebecca, his daughter-in-law, went 20 years before she bore a son and Abram was still alive? Consider what that would have been like for 160-year old Abram having gone through all the pain of waiting with Sarai, now waiting for his son's wife to have a child. ***This man's faith was tested over and over again with regard to the posterity.***
- ***Think again of the promise of the land. Not only is Abram sent from his home country to a place where he doesn't know, you remember Hebrews tells us he didn't where he was going when he started out.*** The Lord just said you go, I'll take you there. Not only does he go to a country that he doesn't know, but he's a stranger there. And when his wife dies, he has to buy a parcel of ground to bury his wife. He doesn't own any land at his wife's death at the age of 127. ***Abram's faith is tested in the promises of the land. In fact Hebrews 11 reminds us that Abram died without the promises of God being fulfilled to him with regard to the land.***
- ***Think again of this testing with regard Abram being a blessing to the nations.*** First in this chapter, and then again in Genesis 20, Abram is going to be a problem for his neighbors.

In every single one of God's promises to Abram, God tests him.

Do you see a pattern emerging here? Man's extremities are God's opportunities. You know, it's in the trials of life that we either go one direction or another. We either revert to bitterness or our faith shines brighter in God. ***And in the midst of all Abram's trials, and in the midst of all Abram's failings...God did grow Abram by grace, and Abram did persevere to the end.*** That is an example for you and me, because in precisely the areas of God's promises to you, He will test you, just as He tested your father, Abram.

II. The Covenant promises are endangered by unbelief.

First look at verses 11 through 13. There we see a failure in Abram's character. Frankly, we see a display of cowardice on Abram's part here, and we see a failure in Abram's trust in God. Abram wouldn't have resorted to this chicanery if he had truly trusted in God in terms of the promises. **Here we see in verses 11 through 13 the covenant promises are endangered by unbelief.** Abram has been promised by God that the Lord would give him a seed, the Lord would give him a land, and the Lord would make him a blessing to the nations, and Abram endangers all of those things by his behavior here. They go down into Egypt.

As they go into Egypt, Abram knows that he has a beautiful wife. We have copies of laws in Egypt from this time, that the Pharaoh had the right to take the wife and children of any sojourner coming into his land. Now probably that would not have been done normally with a great dignitary like Abram. But Abraham's faith breaks down, and he knows that when he goes into Egypt, it is very likely that either one of the local lords is going to try and kill him for his wife, or that Pharaoh himself is going to hear about her, and he's going to get rid of Abram so he can take her for his wife. **So Abram's faith breaks down. This is a sheer breakdown in trust of the Lord. Abram was endangering the covenant blessings.**

Abram's lack of character shows through here...You are seeing what this man would have been like without grace. Nothing can Abram claim for himself. **"There is nothing of our own in our good," Calvin used to say. "There is nothing of our own in our good." Abram, apart from grace, was a coward.**

But we're also seeing something else...the sudden transition that is possible for the same person to make from faith to fear. Abram only a few days, a few weeks, a few months before buoyed by such faith in God that he can build an altar in the presence of his enemies and worship, is now asking his wife to lie and endanger herself and her virtue, her reputation and the future of all God's promises so that he might be protected. Even heroes of the faith are sinners and need to be saved by grace.

Is that not one of the great testimonies of the truthfulness of Scripture? If we had been making this up, would we have said that about the father of the faithful? No. But because God's words are true, He records both the good and the bad even about His faithful servants. Now Abram asks Sarai to say, "tell them you're my sister." Technically true, because we know that Sarai was his half-sister. Nevertheless it is endangering the promise of the covenant.

III. The covenant promises are preserved by the sovereign Lord's intervention.

We see in verses 14 through 17 that when Abram fails on the job, the Lord God of Israel does not. The Lord sees, just like He saw on the slopes of Moriah, He sees Sarai in her time of need. ***There again we learn that God's covenant promises are preserved by His sovereign intervention, not by us.*** God's covenant promises are preserved by His sovereign intervention. ***Even when Abram is faithless, the Lord remains faithful.***

Abram goes down into Egypt. Just as he anticipated, the Egyptians see that Sarai is beautiful. They begin to talk about her. Word of her beauty gets all the way to the house of Pharaoh. So Pharaoh hears about Sarai and says, 'Pick her out. Bring her to me. Pay for her to her master.' ***Just as Abram had planned, he received a great deal of wealth from Pharaoh, and he gave his wife over into the harem of Pharaoh. But even when Abram is faithless, the Lord is faithful, and he strikes Pharaoh in his house with great plagues.***

This reminds you of another thing God will do in Egypt. You see here in Genesis 12 a foreshadow of what God is going to do in His redemption of the people of Israel in the days to come.

IV. The heir of the covenant castigated by the nations.

And that brings us to verses 18 through 20. So far Moses has made absolutely no comment about the morality of what Abram has done. But note that the Lord places, through Moses' pen, a rebuke of his servant, Abraham, from the mouth of a pagan. Think of it...a godly man rebuked for his untruthfulness by an idolater and a pagan. ***Here we see the heir of the covenant being castigated by the leader of a foreign nation.***

Alongside that rebuke, you see yet one more testing of the promise about Abram being a blessing to the nations. Is he a blessing to Pharaoh? Hardly. He's the cause of curses and famine coming upon his house. ***But note in this passage three things that we see in the Exodus.***

- ***Notice that it is famine that brings Abram into the land of Egypt, just as it is famine that brings the brothers of Joseph into the land of Egypt.***
- ***Notice that God visits plagues on the house of Pharaoh just as in the Exodus God visits plagues on the house of Pharaoh.***

- ***And notice that Pharaoh gives God's covenant heir plunder and wealth and riches, just as the Egyptians gave to God's people upon their departure from Israel, we are told in Genesis 15 and also in the book of Exodus, many riches.***

Moses is drawing a parallel for us here so that in this event of the life of Abram is prefigured a greater redemption that God is going to accomplish one day in the future. It's accomplished not because of Abraham's faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness.

Therein is a lesson for us. We do not learn from this, of course, that we should be complacent about our obedience, because God will simply rescue us out of our failings. ***The message ought to make us tremble at the thought of what we do with God's precious promises. This reminds us that in the very last instance it is not our faithfulness that assures the continuance of the promises of God: it is God's faithfulness and the grace which He works in us.***

One cannot survey the life of Abram and say that it was Abram's righteousness that caused God to love him. No. When you survey the life of Abram, you say "Every goodness that I see in this man is the result of the grace implanted in him by God." For he was just an idolater from the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans, that God by grace chose and called to be the man of promise and to be the fountainhead of the promises of all those who trust in Christ."

Life Lessons...

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to ask, "Do you realize that most of your unhappiness is because you are listening to yourself and not talking to yourself?" (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures*)

What has God revealed in His Word about His character and His ways?

What has God told me about trials?

What has God warned me to avoid if I would live a life that honors Him?

Where does my strength lie?

Who or what am I fearing?

How can I honor God in these circumstances?

Test #1...The Famine

Now there was a famine in the land...Who causes or allows famines? The sovereign (in control) God....

- **Providence...(from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1647)**

Q. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Psalm 145:17. The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Psalm 104:24. O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Hebrews 1:3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high

Nehemiah 9:6. Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Ephesians 1:19-22. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church

Psalm 36:6. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

Proverbs 16:33. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Matthew 10:30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Trials...

Think about this for a moment...Why was Abram in this land? What was God's will?

Clearly Abram was where he was supposed to be...in the center of God's will. And yet what happens? A famine!

That God allows trials to test our faith is a bedrock principle found in both the Old and New Testaments. The trial(s) He brings into our lives are not to destroy us (His children) but to refine our faith.

The LORD writes many a bright lesson on the blackboard of affliction and uncertainty.

Beloved, do not be surprised (*present imperative with a negative*) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ (*the test is not an obstacle but an opportunity and a privilege to imitate our Savior!*), keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

James 1:2-4 affirms the high and holy purpose of tests in our life...

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Later James adds an additional value to trials declaring...

"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12)

In Romans 5:2-5 Paul adds that as believers we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope (Greek *elpis* = absolute assurance of future good)...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Paul describes another future benefit of present trials..

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor 4:17-18)

- **Triumphs...As Warren Wiersbe says "Tests often follow triumphs."**

Elijah after Mount Carmel...1 Kings 18,19

Recall that Abram had just obeyed God (Ge 12:4), had been protected by God during his journey to Canaan (Ge 12:6b), had a personal encounter with God (Ge 12:7), received an incredible promise from God (Ge 12:7), and built two altars and had a wonderful worship service (Ge 12:7b, 13). He had been on the "mountain top" so to speak. ***It is not uncommon to experience adversity after we have encountered the Lord in special ways.***

Self Reliance...Keith Krell comments...Abram was overwhelmed with the circumstances that God dealt him. Now he was not wrong for being concerned about the famine or feeding his family, but he was wrong for failing to trust God to provide for his needs (Isa 31:1). Abram acted prematurely. In alarm, he felt like he must do something and it seems he will have to go to Egypt where there is likely to be more food. ***Abram's going down to Egypt was not so much an intentional sin as it was a reflexive turn to his own devices. He did not deny God; he simply forgot Him. He forgot how great God is.***

We are so much like Abram! Trials come and we automatically go into survival mode. We scheme, we prognosticate, we run through the "what ifs," we shore up our position, and we pile up sandbags. And God? Oh yes...we ask Him to bless our ways.....When circumstances become difficult and you are in the furnace of testing...Faith moves in the direction of peace and hope, but unbelief moves in the direction of restlessness and fear (Isa 28:16).

The important question in trials...

In times of testing, the important question is not, "How can I get out of this?" but "What can I get out of this?" (Jas 1:1-12). God is at work to build your faith and He alone is in control of circumstances. You are safer in a famine, abiding obediently and trusting in His will, than in a place of plenty, out of His will.

It has well been said, "The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you."

Steven Cole comments...To survive, Abram journeyed down to Egypt. There was nothing wrong, per se, with going to Egypt. On at least two occasions God directed His people to Egypt for temporary protection (Gen. 46:3; Matt. 2:13). The text says that he went to "sojourn," not to settle, there. ***The problem was, there is no indication that Abram sought the Lord's guidance in this situation. It never seemed to occur to him that God was sovereign over the famine and that he needed to seek His direction.***

Proverbs 3:5,6...Trust in the Lord with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight

Test #2...The Egyptians

The fear of man brings a snare

Proverbs 29²⁵ The fear of man brings a snare,
But he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.

When faced with a choice, I will choose to honor God

Warren Wiersbe comments that "Faith is living without scheming." When you stop trusting God's Word, you start leaning on man's wisdom; and this leads to trouble (Pr 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 3:18-20). Abraham and Sarah brought this "half-truth" with them from Ur (Ge. 20:13), used it in Egypt and Gerar (Gen. 20:1-18), and then their son Isaac adopted it (Ge 26:1-35). When you find yourself scheming in order to escape problems with people, beware; worse trouble is coming!"

And Warren Wiersbe further observes that "When you are in the place of God's choosing, you don't ever need to be afraid; for faith and fear cannot dwell in the same heart (Isa. 12:2; Mk 4:40). ***The fear of God is the fear that conquers every fear (Ps. 112:1-10; Isa. 8:13); but "the fear of man brings a snare" (Pr. 29:25). God had repeatedly said "I will" to Abraham, but now Abraham was saying "They will" (Ge 12:12). He took his eyes off the Lord and started looking at people.***"

Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament

Keith Krell notes that there are additional problems with Abram's lying, and lessons we can learn:

1. After lying once it becomes easier to do the next time. Abram later tried to pull the same stunt with Abimelech in 20:12.
2. Lying influences others around us. In 26:7, we discover Abraham's son, Isaac, pulling this exact same stunt with his wife Rebekah and Abimelech.
3. Lying brings a reproach to the name of God. Sadly, a pagan king must rebuke Abram for his deception and lack of faith in God (12:18-19).

Fear of man reflects lack of faith in God's promises. In a word, Abram seems to have forgotten the promises God had made which if considered logically would have taught him that he could not be killed (because he did not yet have an heir).

Living by God's promises

Genesis 12 Now the Lord said to Abram,

“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which **I will** show you;
² And **I will** make you a great nation,
And **I will** bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
³ And **I will** bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you **I will** curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

J C Ryle on God's Promises...

“Promises ... are one grand means by which God is pleased to approach the soul of man... He who has mercifully caused all Holy Scripture be written for our learning has shown His perfect knowledge of human nature, by spreading over the Book a perfect wealth of promises, suitable to every kind of experience and every condition of life...

“There is hardly a step in the man's life, from childhood to old age, hardly any position in which man can be placed, for which the Bible has not held out encouragement to everyone who desires to do right in the sight of God.

“There are “shalls” and “wills” in God’s treasury for every condition.

- About God’s infinite mercy and compassion –
- About His readiness to forgive all who repent and believe –
- About His willingness to forgive, pardon, and absolve the chief of sinners –
- About His power to change hearts and alter our corrupt nature –
- About the encouragements to pray, and hear the gospel, and draw near to the throne of grace –
- About strength for duty, comfort in trouble, guidance in perplexity, help in sickness, consolation in death, support under bereavement, happiness beyond the grave, reward in glory –

About all these things there is an abundant supply of promises in the Word. “No one can form an idea of its abundance unless he carefully searches the Scriptures, keeping the subject steadily in view. If anyone doubts it, I can only say, “Come, and see.””

(J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*)

Points to Ponder...

God has given us promises of what he will do for us in every situation we will ever face. So no matter what problem or difficulty we encounter, God has given us promises in his word of what he will do for us if we turn to him and trust him. ***But we can only do this if we know the promises God has given us in his word.***
And the only way we can know these promises is by discovering them in his word.

So...

- Study God’s Word to learn his promises,
- Work on memorizing his promises so they will always be available to you, and
- In every situation, fight the fight of faith to trust his promises.

J I Packer...

“In the days when the Bible was universally acknowledged in the churches as “God’s Word written,” it was clearly understood that the promises of God recorded in Scripture were the proper, God-given basis for all our life of faith, and that the way to strengthen one’s faith was to focus it upon particular promises that spoke to one’s condition.

Latter-day Puritan Samuel Clark wrote as follows...

A fixed, constant attention to the promises, and a firm belief of them, would prevent [fear] and anxiety about the concerns of this life.

It would keep the mind quiet and composed in every change, and support and keep up our sinking spirits under the several troubles of life ...

Christians deprive themselves of their most solid comforts by their unbelief and forgetfulness of God's promises. For there is no extremity so great, but there are promises suitable to it, and abundantly sufficient for our relief in it.

A thorough acquaintance with the promises would be of the greatest advantage in prayer. With what comfort may the Christian address himself to God in Christ when he considers the repeated assurances that his prayers shall be heard!

With how much satisfaction may he offer up the several desires of his heart when he reflects upon the texts wherein those very mercies are promised! And with what fervor of spirit and strength of faith may he enforce his prayers, by pleading the several gracious promises which are expressly to his case!

“These things were understood once; but liberal theology, with its refusal to identify the written Scriptures with the word of God, has largely robbed us of the habit of meditating on the promise, and basing our prayers on the promise, and venturing in faith in our ordinary daily life just as far as the promises will take us.”

J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*

Impactful Quotes from J I Packer's *Knowing God*

“The promises of God [are] the proper, God-given basis for all our life of faith”— so we must learn, and trust, God's promises.

“The way to strengthen one's faith [is] to focus it upon particular promises that [speak] to one's condition” — so whenever we are weak in faith we should open up God's word and set our hearts upon appropriate promises.

“A constant attention to the promises, and a firm belief of them, would prevent fear and anxiety” — so fear and anxiety show that we are not trusting some promise in God's word.

“There is no extremity so great, but there are promises suitable to it”
— which means that there is a promise in God’s word for every problem we will ever face.

We must return to “the habit of meditating on the promise, and basing our prayers on the promise, and venturing in faith in our ordinary daily life just as far as the promises will take us.”