

The Promise Driven Life

Text: II Corinthians 1:15-2:1

Introduction: Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Drive Life* has been an unbelievable success. In no way would I minimize its value. Yet I would like to suggest another way of looking at a successful life. I am convinced that people who seek to live out God's plan for their lives do so because they are **banking on the promises of God**. Abraham caught hold of the promise of God as recorded in Hebrews 11:11, 17-18 and we marvel at his instant obedience to offer his son Isaac. Those responses to God banked on Promises from His God. One of the most insightful passages on the promises of God is found in the autobiographical letter of Paul to the church in Corinth. Thank you Dami for reading that passage.

The preacher was so upset because he was accused of being frivolous when he made a promise to visit them and didn't. As a good Rabbi he had read Ecclesiastes 5:4-7. He knew that the vows he took identified him as a person of truth and trust. He knew that his commitment to promises gave a glimpse of the image of God in him. He knew that people could say, "If you can't trust the preacher's words, how can you trust the gospel message he preaches."

WE LIVE IN A DAY WHEN PROMISES ARE MADE IN A WORLDLY WAY, II Corinthians 1:17

"Promises are like pie crust, lightly made and easily broken." I have read that the average life of a New Year's resolutions is 21 days. When I was in college in South Carolina folks said to me, "Ya'll come, hear?" but when you showed up they were surprised." In California it's more like, "Let's do lunch" but it is seldom meant. Oscar Wilde said, "Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account."

A BROKEN PROMISE REQUIRES A SERIOUS EXPLANATION, II Corinthians 1:15-16, 23-2:1

If you have studied the first letter of Corinthians you know that the church had some severe problems that needed to be addressed. One was a scandal that was a conversation among the non-members. Paul as the father to the family of believers knew that if he were to return at that time he would have to use apostolic authority to correct many situations. He asked himself, "Is it better for me to go and demand "this and that" or to give them a chance to grow spiritually? By this time in their Christian faith they should be able to deal with the conflict. Besides this they had not listened to his whole promise. I Corinthians 16:6-7 "if the Lord permits" v. 7 and James 4:13-15. "If it is the Lord's will we will do this or that."

But Paul was always watching some teachable moment. He turns this misunderstanding of why he neglected to come into a principle of life. It might sound like this: "WHEN HUMANS EVEN BELIEVERS DISAPPOINT YOU, BREAK THEIR PROMISES, THERE IS ONE WHO NEVER DOES, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER."

1. DIVINE PROMISES ARE GUARANTEED II Corinthians 1:18-19

All the promises made about Jesus Christ were kept.

Genesis 3:15 "the seed of the woman."

Isaiah 7:14, the manner of His conception.

Micah 5:2 the birthplace of Jesus.

These and many other intricate details were predicted hundreds of years before the event and were all fulfilled. Again, concerning His death. The events of the crucifixion were given even before that procedure was invented by the Romans. We pray "In the name of Jesus...The Amen. We say Yes" to all the future grace we have in Christ.

2. DIVINE PROMISES ARE INCLUSIVE.

A Canadian school teacher by the name of Everett Storm read through the Bible seventeen times. In that period he counted 1, 4187 promises. There is no small print, no exclusionary clauses, no expiration dates, and no preconditions. Some of us testify, "Well God did this for me ten years ago and in my gratitude I serve Him." John Piper describes that approach as living on by gone grace. He insists that the "driving force" Of vigorous Christian service is "faith in future grace." Tomorrow might bring you to face a challenge you have never had before. That hurdle might be so much higher than the tests of the past. So begin to observe faith in the future grace. Are you living in the full enjoyment of the future yes to the promises of Jesus? Catch hold of John Newton's idea in those words:

"Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come:

Tis grace that brought me safe thus far. (By gone grace)

And grace will lead me home. (faith in future grace.)

Let's notice Romans 2:28, 32 God will always say "Yes" to our highest prayers, our noblest ambition, our best dreams, the potential for which God has designed us to make the world a better place. And God will always say yes to us when we seek to depend on God and center our lives around God.

Conclusion: The greatest promise God makes to us is mentioned 300 times. It is Jesus promise to return. If there is a proper use of the words, "delaying His coming, it should be based on the Father's long suffering and compassion for those who have not yet responded.