



reflecting Jesus

BETA

God's power for change
comes through God's promises **10**

?

did you know...

In August 1914, British explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and 27 men sailed with the ship *ENDURANCE* for the Antarctic. Their goal was to cross of the Antarctic Continent from ocean to ocean via the South Pole. They began on 7 December 1914, but their ship got stuck in pack ice with the coast still 80 miles away.

The *ENDURANCE* drifted in the ice. Repeatedly the hull of the ship was forced to withstand increasing pressure from the ice. The men waited ten months for the ice to loosen. Then on 27th October 1915, they finally had to leave the ship after the tremendous ice pressure sank the ship. Shackleton and his men were shipwrecked in one of the most desolate places of the world. For months they drifted north with the pack ice. On 9th April 1916, the castaways finally reached the edge of the ice. They got into the three life boats they had towed

behind them all the way. That was the beginning of a most unique journey in the history of polar exploration; a voyage over the most tempestuous ocean on earth in a life boat only 7 metres long.



On 24th. April 1916, after incredible exertion, the men reached the uninhabited Elephant Island. Shackleton decided that most of his crew and the two more fragile boats should remain there and wait for him. Taking the *JAMES CAIRD*, which was the best of the three life boats, he wanted to try to reach South

Georgia, 700 sea miles away. He chose five crew to go with him, and promised the rest, "I will return."

They sailed away through raging waters in one of the most spectacular events in the history of polar exploration. Despite all the storms and adversities, the *JAMES CAIRD* reached South Georgia on 10th. May 1916, nearly one and a half years after the *ENDURANCE* had first started out from this island. But the men, now completely exhausted, had come ashore on the uninhabited side of the island. So Shackleton and two of his companions climbed over this unknown terrain, interspersed with high rugged mountains and glaciers. After only 36 hours of near continuous climbing, they reached the whaling station. Shackleton then fulfilled his promise. In the rescue mission that followed, all members of the expedition were saved.



the facts of his story

1. According to 2 Peter 1:3-4, what two things do God's promises do for us?

2. What is the key for the promises of God to be fulfilled with amazing power in our lives? You also see this key at work in the life of Abraham in Romans 4:16-21.

3. What happens to the people in the parable of the seed who do not believe Jesus' words? (Luke 8:11-15)

v12 _____

v13 _____

v14 _____

4. What three things does Jesus say we have to do if we are to be transformed by his words? (v15)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____



thinking it through

1. What is the most important thought you have read in the above texts, and why?

2. Is there anything that you find difficult when it comes to believing what God has said and promised? Why do you think this is, and what can you do about it?



habits for reflecting the mind of Jesus ~ praying God's promises

Have you ever prayed to be different inside, but ended up staying just the same? If so, what can we do about this lack of power? Here's a promise from God to you that can help:

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

Someone calculated that there are 1260 promises in the Bible. And did you know that God's promises are all ultimately focused on what Peter is describing—for us to reflect the character of Jesus and avoid being hurt by sin. For these promises to work however, James tells us bluntly that when we come to God, we must believe that God will do what he has promised, "But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave

power in that prayer! Why? Because nowhere in the Bible does God promise to give any of us a sports car! However, when we know what God does promise us, then we can pray with complete confidence that God will answer. There is power in such prayers.

*"Promises predict
the answers."*

Armin Gesswein

So when we pray according to the God's words, our faith grows, and this faith brings God's power into our lives for change. As you may know, Jesus is able to perform miracles in the gospel stories that brings change into people's lives because of their faith in his words.

So where can we find God's promises that bring the promise of His power to us? First, in the Bible there are promises that begin with words like, "I will...". Look at some of these in the box below.

Abundant life, John 10:10

A crown of life, Rev. 2:10

A heavenly home, John 14:1-3

A new name, Isa. 62:1-2

Answers to prayer, 1 John 5:14

Assurance, 2 Tim. 1:12

Cleansing, John 15:3

Clothing, Zech. 3:4

Comfort, Isa. 51:3

Companionship, John 15:15

Deliverance, 2 Tim. 4:18

Divine sonship, 1 John 3:1-2

Everlasting life, John 3:16

Fellowship of Jesus, Matt. 18:19

Fruitfulness, John 15:4-5

Gifts of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12

Glory after death, Man. 13:43

God's protection, 1 Pet. 5:6-7

Growth, Eph. 4:11-15

Guidance, Isa. 42:16

Hope, Heb. 6:18-19

Inheritance, 1 Pet. 1:3-4

Joy, Isa. 35:10

Knowledge, Jer. 24:7

Liberty, Rom. 8:2

Peace, John 14:27

Power for service, John 14:12

Renewal, Titus 3:5

Rest, Heb. 4:9, 11

Restoration, Isa. 57:18; 1 John 1:9

Resurrection, Rom. 8:11

Rich rewards, Matt. 10:42

Spiritual fullness, John 6:35

Spiritual healing, Hos. 6:1

Spiritual light, John 12:46

Spiritual treasures, Matt. 6:19-20

Strength, Phil. 4:13

Temporal blessings, Matt. 6:25-33

Understanding, Ps. 119:104

Victory, 1 John 5:4

Wisdom, James 1:5

Willmington, H. L. (1987). Willmington's book of Bible lists. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.

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 1:6-8)

But how can we ask God and be confident that we are asking for the right things? We could ask God for a Ferrari sports car, but there is no

Secondly, descriptions of God Himself are also promises. Romans 8:29 tells us that it was God's plan that we become like his Son, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...", Romans 8:29. So when we read descriptions of Jesus, these can become promises for our prayers to become like him. (This does not include

descriptions of God that belong to God alone, for example, that he is all powerful, all knowing, or everywhere at the same time etc.)

Characteristics of God alone—that can give us confidence that our prayers will be acted upon	Characteristics of God that we share with him—as people whom he longs to restore into his image	
Almighty, Isaiah 6:1-3; Isaiah 14:27	Love, Exodus 15:13; 1 John 4:11-17	Wise, Ephesians 1:17; 2 Timothy 3:14-15
Always present, Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:19-20	Kind, Isaiah 63:7; Ephesians 2:6-7	Pure and Holy, Exodus 3:2-5; 1 John 3:2-3
Sovereign, 2 Samuel 7:22; Daniel 4:34-35	Compassionate, Psalm 103:13-14; Mark 1:41	Truthful, John 14:6; Psalm 119:160
Creator and Re-Creator, Isaiah 44:24; Isaiah 44:2-3	Gracious, John 1:6	Righteous, Psalm 119:75-76; 1 John 2:1
Eternal and Infinite, Isaiah 26:4; Hebrews 1:10-12	Merciful, Ephesians 2:4-5	Protecting, Isaiah 43:1-3; 2; Thessalonians 3:3
Praiseworthy and Glorious, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 145:4-5	Patient, 2 Peter 3:9,15	Persevering, Judges 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:4-5
	Long-suffering, Matthew 23:37	Joy, Nehemiah 8:10; Zephaniah 3:17
	Peace, Isaiah 9:6; 2 Corinthians 13:11	Gentle, 1 Kings 19:12; Luke 18:15-16
	Humble, 2 Corinthians 10:1	Self-controlled, Galatians 5:22-23
	Meek, John 13:1-5	Good, 1 Chronicles 16:34; Nahum 1:7
	Just, Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 5:16	Faithful, Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 71:22-23
	Saving and Restoring, 2 Samuel 22:3; 1 Peter 5:10	Sacrificial, John 3:16; 1 John 4:10-11
		Forgiving, Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 86:5

You can use your Journal to write down your prayers together with the promise that assures you that God will answer—just as he has promised! And there are lots more for you to find.



putting the pieces together

In “the facts of his story” we saw how 1) God’s promises contain the power we need for change. However, change is not automatic, but 2) depends on whether we firmly believe God’s promises found in the Bible. 4) For God’s promises to change us, we have to hear the words, keep them in our minds, and persevere when it appears nothing is happening. If we don’t do this, Jesus says that 3) we may be deceived by Satan and be lost, give up when things get difficult, or never mature because the world shapes us rather than the Word.

In “thinking it through” you were challenged to think about your own trust in God’s promises.

In “habits for reflecting the mind of Jesus” we saw how God’s promises can shape our prayers. These promises provide the power for prayers that change us to reflect the character of Jesus.



my time with God

For each day this coming week, write one prayer request in your Journal. Next to it, find a Bible text that promises that God will answer your prayer, praying that God will fulfil his promise to you. You may want to ask someone to help you if you get stuck



pass it on!

People all around us struggle to apply God’s words to their lives. Is there someone you can encourage with a promise from God that can give them encouragement?



extra help

1. Praying God’s Word, by Beth Moore.
2. “The Parable of the Seed”, in Christ’s Object Lessons (p33), by Ellen White.