

# Devotional



## Day Four

### THE PROMISE OF GOD

*“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” - II Corinthians 9:10-11*

The faith promise concept, like any other blessing of God, can be vulnerable to misuse if we are not careful in our approach. We must never assume that the promise is ours rather than God's. God promises that He will give to us so that we in turn can give generously to His kingdom. The purpose is not to exert leverage on God, but to put a lever on our stewardship. We may think we can dictate an amount to God and promise that we will give that amount if He provides it sometime during the year. Our temptation is to challenge God, when in fact the text challenges us. We need to understand that the promise is not *to* God, but *from* Him. The challenge is for us to become more deeply involved in kingdom work through the privilege of giving.

We are finite. Even at our best, we are not always as involved as we should be, not always *there* when we're needed. We see chaos in society, dysfunction in homes, and broken lives resulting from the “absent father syndrome.” The dads have been too busy, too distracted, or too irresponsible to *be there* for their families, sometimes even when they were physically present.

Francis Schaeffer referred to our Heavenly Father as “the God who is there.” He exists. He is the great I AM, “who is, and who was, and who is to come” (Rev 1:8b). His promises are reliable. He promises to be with us always. He is with us, as Amy Carmichael writes, “all the days and all day long.”

Faith promise gives the opportunity to stop and take careful account of how God has been there for us. His promises have been 100% faithful. We often live by looking only out the “front windshield” of our lives. We see dangers and threats; we fear the uncertainties around the next curve. God, our Father, encourages us to spend more time looking out the “rear view mirror.” When God blesses the people of Israel with the Ten Commandments, He begins not with the rules, but with a review of His blessings. “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Then He says, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3). Throughout the Scripture He reminds His people of His faithfulness to their fathers. Therefore, they can be confident of His care and provision in the present.

As we give to specific workers, projects or teams, it is natural that our hearts will follow our treasure. Every missionary needs an army of faithful prayer warriors who will daily bring his or her name and needs before God's throne of grace. They need friends on the home front who befriend them, keep in touch, stay alert to special

needs, and welcome them graciously when they return. As we become involved in God's global outreach, our own worlds expand and we are enriched. The "harvest of righteousness" that comes from undergirding God's servants far exceeds the cost.

The faith promise commitment is a time for us to reaffirm our faith in the promises of God. When Paul says, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry," (Philippians 4:12b), he is reaffirming this faith in God's provision. God's resources are never limited. He gives us all we need and all He wants us to have, but we must give it away in order to gain it. "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (II Corinthians 9:6). John Maxwell tells a parable that helps drive home this point. Sundar Singh and a companion, traveling through a high pass in the Himalaya Mountains, came across an inert figure lying in the snow. Sundar wanted to stop and help the man, but his companion resisted. "We will all die if we help this man."

The companion went on while Sundar Singh lifted the poor traveler onto his back. With great effort he carried the man, and gradually the heat from his body began to warm the poor frozen fellow. Soon both were walking together, side by side. Catching up with the companion who had gone on alone, they found him dead, frozen by the cold.

#### PRAYER:

*Father God, I want my security in the present and my hope for the future to rest in Your faithful promises and not in my savings. I want You who have given me everything to be more real and more important than the gifts You have given. Father, as I consider my faith promise commitment, make Your promises so real that my response reflects far more my faith in You than it does in taking a calculator to my checkbook. Amen.*

#### QUESTIONS:

As you think of the promises of God, which are the first two that come to mind? Consider the promises found in John 16:24; Philippians 1:6; Matthew 10:29-31. In what way does giving in faith, based on the promises of God, change your attitude about generosity?

*"Let me stress that God is not promising to make generous Christians wealthy. He is promising to make generous Christians capable of even greater generosity." - John Piper*

*"If our giving is only driven by what we can get back, then we can become guilty of treating God like the stock market; do not be surprised if your shares crash. God will not feed our greed or materialism, but He will meet our needs and make us a blessing to others." - David Holdaway*