

All Promises From God Have Conditions Attached

'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart' (Psalm 37:4).

All through the Bible there are promises made to us, but before the Lord keeps those promises we have to first do something. Many people are confused when they feel the Lord has not answered their prayers, but they do not realise, every promise written in the Bible comes with conditions. People read half the verse and become upset when it is not fulfilled for them. Only if we first fulfil our side of the covenant relationship with the Lord, will He fulfil the promises. Over and over again throughout the scriptures, God tells us what we must do to please Him before we can receive what we want. People state, "God has promised to give me the desires of my heart so why has that not happened?" If we look at the above verse, we can see there is a condition attached to the promise. Yes, the Lord will give us the desires of our hearts, but first we must delight ourselves in Him.

Conditions attached to promises of blessings were revealed to Isaac regarding Abraham. Because Abraham wholly obeyed the Lord in every way, His descendants through Isaac would be blessed and would bless the nations. 'Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and will bless you. To you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the sky and will give to your descendants all these lands. In your descendants will all the nations of the earth be blessed because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My requirements, My commandments, My statutes and My laws' (Genesis 26:3 to 5). We are all blessed because Abraham was so obedient. When we obey the Lord's commands we are blessed. There are many other verses in the Bible with promises and with each individual promise, is the instruction to go with it. We can rest and feel safe under the shadow of Almighty God, but we first have to willingly dwell in His secret place. 'They who dwell in the secret place of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty' (Psalm 91:1).

Some people claim, "If we resist the devil he has to flee." It is true we have authority over the devil and can tell him to go but first, we have to submit to God and only then we can firmly resist the devil. 'Be subject to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). Many people believe we can resist the devil just because we believe in God then wonder why they have problems. The command here is, we must first be in submission to the Lord as our Sovereign. We also have to put on the whole armour of God. 'Put on the whole armour of God so you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil' (Ephesians 6:11). Once we are subject to God and have His armour wrapped around us, we then have all power and authority over the devil and his cohorts. 'Jesus called the twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases' (Luke 9:1). Jesus sent seventy other disciples to do the same work and they were amazed at the power they had over the devil. 'The seventy disciples returned with joy saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!" ... Jesus replied, "Behold, I give you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:17 & 19). As we subject ourselves to God, so then the demons are subject to us.

When people want to receive from the Lord, they must first give cheerfully. Whatever we want to reap, we must first sow to the Lord. 'Give and it will be given to you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will it be given to you. With the same amount you give, it will be measured back to you' (Luke 6:38). 'Those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly. Those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully. Let each person give according to what they have determined in their heart, not grudgingly or by coercion for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:6 & 7). 'Whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap' (Galatians 6:7).

If people want to be close to God and feel His presence, they have to approach Him before He comes down to meet with us. 'Draw near to God and He will draw near to you' (James 4:8). When we want prayers answered, the conditions are, we must draw near to God (enter His courts), giving an offering of praise and thanks. The Lord has said His people should not approach Him empty-handed, but we should approach Him with an offering. 'None of you shall appear before Me empty-handed' (Exodus 23:15; 34:20). 'Bring an offering and come into His courts' (Psalm 96:8). 'Enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name' (Psalm 100:4). 'In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Jesus for you' (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

When we desire to glorify the Father and the Son by answered prayer, the condition here is, we must love Jesus and keep His commandments. 'Whatever you will ask in My name, I will do it so the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commandments'

(John 14:13 to 15). The Lord will give us what we collectively ask for but we must first pray in harmony with other believers who are praying with us. That does not mean paying lip service and pretending to agree to keep the peace. That means we must wholeheartedly agree with our prayer partners and only then we will see results. 'Assuredly I (Jesus) tell you, if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father Who is in heaven. Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them' (Matthew 18:19 & 20).

We have to pray with boldness according to the will of God or we are wasting our time and He does not listen to us. 'This is the boldness we have in Him, if we ask anything according to His will, He listens to us. If we know He listens to us, whatever we ask, we know we have the petitions we have asked of Him' (1 John 5:14 & 15). We must keep in mind, the Lord never overrides the freewill choice of anyone. If we are praying for the salvation of a loved one, we know we are being heard because that is always the will of God, however, if the person we are praying for stands their ground and does not want to turn to God and they refuse to accept the promise of salvation, we must respect their free choice. Salvation comes from willingly submitting to God and He always respects the choice of the heart and never forces anyone to turn to Him. They must willingly choose to call on God; they must desire to turn to Him. 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Romans 10:13). 'They who are thirsty, let them come. They who desire, let them take the water of life freely' (Revelation 22:17). Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them and I will raise them up on the last day" (John 6:44). We know it is the Lord's will for people to be saved and when we ask the Lord to draw them to Him, we know we are praying according to His will but the free choice of the other person could stop our prayers being answered.

We should never give up though because we do not know what the future holds. We were praying for a lady named Helen to come to the Lord after she had resisted His call for over seventy years, then while in hospital and seriously ill, Helen accepted the Lord and was anointed with olive oil. Baptism in water was not possible because of her medical condition so we washed her face with water on a cloth. She was filled to overflowing with peace, joy and gratitude then three hours later she slipped away and into the arms of our Saviour. Another hospital patient named Gary had resisted the Lord's call for over fifty years and was struck down with terminal cancer. He died four days after accepting the Lord. Another man in his seventies named Philip was raised as a Christian but turned away after some very difficult family issues arose. For many years his parents kept praying for Philip to return to God but they died before they saw their son return to Jesus. Philip was very far from God when two exceedingly wicked men tried to kill him. A Christian lady crept passed the violent men and risked her own life to get Philip to hospital. One of the men was so furious he chased the ambulance to try to get to the dying man. Philip survived but was in a semi coma for weeks. The only time he opened his eyes was when the Christian lady prayed over him. When Philip came out of his coma the lady gently mentioned to him, he needed the Lord because only God could help him in his very critical state. That night in his hospital bed, still barely able to speak, Philip rededicated his life to God, repented and asked for forgiveness. He was left unable to live independently and was moved into an aged care facility where he continues to amaze the medical staff with his miraculous recovery. He spends all day reading the Bible and sharing the Gospel with every person he meets. Philip is loved by all the medical staff. No matter how long it takes, we must never stop praying for our loved ones. Jesus said, "I tell you ... because of persistence He will give as much as they need. I tell you, keep asking and it will be given to you. Keep seeking and you will find it. Keep knocking and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:8 & 9).

Here are other promises, each with conditions attached. If we want our plans to succeed, we first have to commit our deeds to Him. 'All the ways of mankind are clean in their own eyes but the Lord weighs the motives. Commit your deeds to the Lord and your plans will succeed' (Proverbs 16:2 & 3). When we pray and want answers, we must have the correct attitude and not pray with selfish motives 'You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so you may spend it for your own pleasures' (James 4:3). To receive from God we must have faith, be consistent and not keep changing our minds. 'Let them ask in faith without any doubting, for they who doubt are like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed around. Let those people not think they will receive anything from the Lord. They are double-minded, unstable in all their ways' (James 1:6 to 8). When we stand praying, to receive answers to our prayers we must first forgive anyone and everyone who has ever sinned against us. Jesus said, "If you forgive people their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. If you do not forgive their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14 & 15). 'Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive them so your Father Who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. If you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you" (Mark 11:25 & 26).

We have been promised eternal life, on condition we walk with God and always remain faithful to Him. 'As for you, let the Gospel remain in you which you heard from the beginning. If that which you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He promised us; eternal life' (1 John 2:24 & 25). When it comes to our salvation, there are several things we must do before the Lord will bless us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the pinnacle of our walk with God and the only way we can keep from falling into sin (Jude 1:20 & 24). We must believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15), repent, be born-again, be baptised in water by full immersion (John 3:5), before we can expect to receive the Holy Spirit and that is the only way into the Kingdom of God. 'Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). Sometimes people were baptised in the Holy Spirit before they were baptised in water. 'Can anyone forbid the water, so these who have already received the Holy Spirit should not be baptised?' (Acts 10:47). Whatever baptism takes place first, we still have to ask God for the gift of the Holy Spirit. 'If you being sinners know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?' (Luke 11:13).

When we sow to the work of the Lord, we will reap good rewards here on earth and in heaven. Jesus said anyone who has left house, family, land, country, job etc for His name's sake, or for the sake of the Gospel, or for the sake of the Kingdom of God, or to follow the Lord, will receive one hundred times as much on this earth and will receive eternal life (Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:29 & 30; Luke 18:29 & 30). For many people, the condition attached to this promise is a hard one to accept. Jesus said we would only receive the rewards if we first accept persecutions. That could mean persecution for our faith or for some people it could mean suffering severe trials and difficulties. Once we get to heaven the promise of a home is assured. Jesus said, "In My Father's house (in the Kingdom of God) are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Once we realise and then accept there are things we must do before the Lord fulfils promises and our desires are met, it should remove confusion and frustration. Instead of saying, "The Lord promised to give me the desires of my heart but that has not happened. Why? I do not understand." We can claim the following promises. "I know I must delight myself in the Lord and when I do that, He has promised to give me the desires of my heart." "When I come into full agreement with my home group fellowship, we will have our prayers answered." "Understanding we are all only human and we all make mistakes, when I have forgiven others, then I know my Lord will forgive me and I will be able to walk in His forgiveness, and when I stand praying, I will hold no grudges against anyone." "I submit my will to the Lord and examine myself to be sure I have the correct motives, then I know the Lord will hear my prayers." "I know sometimes I must ask and keep on asking with persistence, without giving up and when circumstances are right, I will receive what I asked for."

'Having boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by the way in which He dedicated for us a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say His flesh, having a great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts cleansed from a sinful conscience and having our body washed with pure water (the Word of God), let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful' (Hebrews 10:19 to 23).

Amen and God bless you.

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