

Promises Are Like Presents

What's the difference between "We should go to a baseball game," and "I promise to take you to a baseball game"?

A promise is when a person says he will or will not do something, and he really means it. He is not just thinking about it. He has decided to do it. You can count on it. He will do it.

Suppose your mom says, "I promise I will not pull your tooth out. I will only wiggle your tooth to see how loose it is." If she says that, she is telling you something she will do—wiggle your tooth—and something she will not do—pull it out. You do not need to worry that your mom will pull out your tooth, because she has made a promise. You can be sure of it.

The Bible is full of God's promises—things God has said that He will or will not do. These are promises you can count on for sure. Some of God's promises tell us what He will do. For example:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. (Psalm 32:8)

Some promises tell us how things are for the Christian, the person who is trusting in Jesus:

[Nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39)

Nothing can ever take away God's love for those who trust in Jesus. God loves His children . . . everywhere . . . all the time . . . forever! He *promises* this, so we can be sure that this is really true, that God really is like this and will always be like this.

Sometimes God's promises are found in things He tells us about Himself. When God tells us who He is, He is making a promise about what He is like and what He will do. For example:

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Psalm 103:8)

Since this verse tells us what God is like, it also has in it a *promise* about God. God is kind and doesn't become angry quickly. He is patient and full of love. This



is who God says He is. Because God is kind and patient, He is promising to act with kindness and patience. This is what He will do.

What does God promise by saying this about Himself?

**The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made. (Psalm 145:9)**

God says He is good and kind. This is what He says about Himself. But God is also promising here to show goodness and kindness to EVERYONE!

This is a wonderful promise! It is like a present. All of God's promises to bless us—to do good to us—are gifts. We don't deserve them. God doesn't have to give them to us. He gives them because He is good and loving.

Do you like to get presents? What is one present that you really liked? You will find that God's promises are the very best presents of all. Not only are God's promises wonderful, but they don't wear out or break—they are forever!

The Bible is full of God's promises—things God has said that He will or will not do. Promises that tell us what God is like and who He will always be. Promises you can count on. God's promises are sure.

In this book, you will discover some of God's many promises. They will be like opening wonderful presents—gifts from God that we don't deserve, which show us how good and loving He is.

Here is a verse for you to remember as you read this book and discover God's gift of His wonderful promises to His children.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read James 1:17 again. What does this verse tell you about God? If God never changes, what does this mean about who He is today and about His promises?
- ✦ Look through your Bible and find some of God's promises. Who is each promise for? How is each promise like a present? Look at one or two promises and thank God for that promise and what it means for your family.
- ✦ **Activity:** Get a box with a lid (big enough to hold 25 3" x 5" index cards). Wrap the box and lid in very pretty paper, or decorate the box. Make a label that says, "God's Promises," and glue it to the box. Tell someone why God's promises are like presents.

God's Promises to Believers

If your school promises a prize to everyone who reads 10 books, can third graders get the prize? How about fifth graders? Yes, this promise is for everyone in the school. But if a teacher promises her third-grade class a prize for reading 10 books, will the fifth graders get a prize? Why not? Fifth graders won't get a prize because the promise is only for the third-grade class.

Just as our promises are sometimes for everyone and sometimes only for certain people, some of God's promises are for all people and some are only for His children. Some promises are just for one person. Can you think of a time when God made a promise to just one person?

Did you think of these promises?

- God promised David that he would be the king of Israel.¹
- God promised wisdom, knowledge, wealth, riches, and honor to Solomon.²
- God promised Zechariah and Elizabeth that He would give them a son.³

God also made a special promise to Abram. He told Abram:

I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
(Genesis 17:6–7)

1. 1 Samuel 16:12
2. 2 Chronicles 1:12
3. Luke 1:13

God promised that Abram would be His special child, and that whole nations of peoples would come from Abram. God renamed him “Abraham” and promised to always be his God. But who else is this promise for? It is for Abraham’s “offspring.”

What does “offspring” mean? Offspring means children born to someone. Maybe you were born to your mom and dad. If so, you are their offspring and you belong to their family. And your offspring—everyone born to you—would be part of the family, too. So is everyone born to your children . . . and everyone born to their children . . . and on and on.

So God’s promise to be God and to be good to Abraham was for Abraham. But it was also for everyone in Abraham’s family.

God made many special and wonderful promises to the family of Abraham. God made promises to bless them—to be good to them always. He made promises like this one:

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Isn’t this a wonderful promise? It is a special, for-sure promise of God’s goodness. God made many promises like this . . . not to everyone, just to the family of Abraham.



But what if you weren't born into the family of Abraham? Does that mean the promises made to Abraham's family are not for you?

There is another way children become part of a family besides being born into the family. Do you know what that is? It's by adoption. What does it mean to be adopted into a family?

In adoption, the head of the family invites someone to be part of the family. He takes care of all the papers that make the adopted person a full member of the family with the same privileges as everyone else in the family.

If someone wants to be part of another family, he can't just decide that he is in the family. He has to be invited into the family and made a family member through adoption.

God invites people into His family, too—through faith in Jesus. We can be adopted into Abraham's family, the family of God, by trusting in Jesus as our Savior. God says that **“it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7)**. God welcomes those who have Abraham-like faith in Jesus into His family.⁴

To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

If you are trusting in Jesus as your Savior, then all the promises to God's people are for you!⁵ This is good news. Every promise of God to do good to His people can be yours through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Romans 4:16: “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all”; Galatians 3:29: “And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.”

5. 2 Corinthians 1:20: “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.”



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read the “Ten Essential Truths” in the Appendix and talk about these truths. What does it mean to be a child of Abraham by faith? Are you a child of God?
- ✦ Write out John 1:12 on an index card and put it in your “God’s Promises” box. You may want to decorate the back side of the card like a gift as a reminder that all God’s promises are undeserved gifts. Then thank God for the gift of adoption.
- ✦ **Activity:** Make a booklet to help you remember the “Ten Essential Truths,” and explain these truths to someone.