

LEANING INTO THE FATHER'S LOVE

WEEK 6

“What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. ‘This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent’ (John 17:3). What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else? Knowledge of God. ‘Thus says the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me’ (Jer. 9:23).”¹ J. I. Packer

“Rich as the Bible is in promises, we shall find abundant need for them all.” Charles Spurgeon

THE FATHER'S LOVE IN HIS PROMISES & FAITHFULNESS

1. God is a promising God

“For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, ‘Surely I will bless you and multiply you.’” Heb. 6:13-14

2. God's promises evidence his love and commitment

“Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.” Deut. 7:9; see also Joshua 1:9

“A promise is nothing but a manifestation of love, an [intention] of bestowing some good, and removing some ill. A manifestation of our mind in that kind is a promise of conferring of a future good, or removing of a future ill; therefore it comes from love in the party promising.... Now God, who is love...will not only show his love in time, but because he will have us rest sweetly in his bosom, and settle ourselves on his gracious promises...he gives us rich and precious promises....This is the nature of a promise. It is not only love, and the expression of love in deed, but the expression of it in word, when he intends to solace, comfort, establish, and stay the mind of man until the good promised be performed.”² Richard Sibbes

3. God is faithful and cannot lie (or break promises)³

1 Sam. 15:29; Gen. 9:15-16; Ex. 2:24-25; Ps. 91:4; Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13

“in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.” Titus 1:2

“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” Num. 23:19

“in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.” Heb. 6:18

¹ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 29.

² Richard Sibbes, “Exposition of 2nd Corinthians Chapter 1” in *Works of Richard Sibbes*, 7 volumes (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, reprinted 2001), 3:384. I have updated some of the language using modern spelling.

³ Watch “[God's Faithfulness](#)” video from The Bible Project at bibleproject.com.

“But the Lord is faithful.” 2 Thess. 3:3

“When we believe God as he is revealed in Christ Jesus, we believe all *his promises*. Confidence in the Person involves confidence in all that he speaks: hence we accept all the promises of God as being sure and certain. We do not trust one promise and doubt another but we rely upon each one as true, and we believe it to be true *to us* so far as it has respect to our condition and circumstances.”

Charles Spurgeon

4. Christians experience God’s presence and power through his promises

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

“in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.” Heb. 6:18

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” Heb. 10:23

“The knowledge of the glory of God must be promising if it is to carry power. We must know it and believe that we are included—that the promises are ours, that the call is to us.” John Piper

RECEIVING GOD’S PROMISES

- 1) **Need it.** It always begins with seeing and admitting our need. We are weak, inadequate, insufficient, insecure, and sinful. Before receiving from God or turning to God, we begin by confessing our own need and dependence. Like dependent children, we turn to the Father who has the wisdom, strength, and grace we lack.
- 2) **Know it.** We must know what God’s promises are. We need to be aware of specific promises. You cannot live on promises you do not know. We need a reservoir of promises filling up in our mind and we need to search the Scriptures for the promises of God. Like Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, we need promises stored up in our heart. Or, as Spurgeon says, just like it does a ship no good to not know where their anchor is in a storm, God’s promises can’t help us if we don’t know them.
- 3) **Receive it.** We must act on those promises by believing they are ours in Christ, by receiving them in faith, by trusting God in them. We not only need to know they’re true, but that they’re true for me. Promises are things that we must grab, cling to, and say confidently (in Christ) this is mine. This belongs to me and is true now. I’m going to act on this promise and believe it here in this moment in this situation of need.
- 4) **Walk in it.** This is similar to point 3 on “receiving” promises, but we must then walk in them by going forward living under the belief that God will fulfill his Word. You have to live by faith in God and then pursue the life he has for you in his promises. When your heart starts to sink or your mind wanders back into unbelief or fear, you remember the promise you’re living on and you cling to it again. It is an active walking in God’s truth with your hand on the guardrail of the Word. To live on a promise is to continually return to it so that it recalibrates your thinking, feeling, and doing.

- 5) **Wait on it.** Finally, part of this living or acting on God's promises might also include waiting. God will always fulfill his word, but not always in our timing. God's promises come with God's perfect timing. Part of banking on God through his promises is entrusting ourselves to his timing, because we trust him.

Four Reasons We Need God's Promises⁴

- 1) We Gravitate Toward Resting in Our Performance Rather Than God's Grace
- 2) We Neglect Available Resources God Wants to Give Us
- 3) We Think Wrongly About God and Promises Remind Us Who He Is
- 4) We Listen to Lies from Our Foe Instead of Truth from our Father

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- [“Which Promises Are For Me?”](#) by Jen Wilkin
- [“Let God's Promises Pour Over Your Soul”](#) sermon by John Piper at [desiringgod.org](#)
- [“Precious and Very Great Promises”](#) by Garrett Kell (includes a list of 75 promises at the bottom)
- [Future Grace](#) by John Piper
- [Doubt: Trusting God's Promises](#) (31-Day Devotionals For Life) by Elyse Fitzpatrick
- [According to Promise](#) by Charles Spurgeon, or see his sermon [“Obtaining Promises.”](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the attributes of God that come to mind when you think about these demonstrations of his love we've considered so far?
 - He delights in us
 - He reveals himself to us
 - He sends his Son to save us
 - He adopts us as beloved children
 - He provides for us and gives generously to us
 - He instructs, trains, and disciplines us
 - He protects and defends us
2. What are some of your favorite promises in the Bible? How does these reveal God's love to you, how he is for you, or the way he supplies for every need?
3. How can you better believe, receive, apply, and walk in God's Fatherly love for you?
4. As you've considered aspects of God's love over the last few weeks, has it raised any questions? Have you noticed specific obstacles or hurdles that often cause you to question or doubt what you hear about God? Has there been anything that has helped you see God in a new way or reminded you of key truths about Him?
5. What is one thing you can do different to better remember and receive God's Fatherly love?
6. How might our view of God (and of how we think he views or relates to us) affect our Bible reading and prayer?
7. What might we do different to approach our time in the Word and in prayer to more intentionally see who God is and then know and love him more because of it?
8. When you're tempted to think wrongly about God, how can you fight lies with truth? Give specifics.
9. How do we not only receive God's love but intentionally reflect his love to those around us?

⁴ See [“Why We Need God's Promises”](#) by Dustin Crowe at [indycrowe.com](#).