

Pray Believing God's Promises

Genesis 17:15–22

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When we're told something incredible our reaction can be, no way. If someone describes an amazing event we might say, you're kidding. When we hear about an unbelievable moment our response is, that's impossible.

People like you and me hear the incredible we look for some answer. People like Christians sitting at home hear the amazing consider other options. People at our jobs and in our community hear the unbelievable pass it off as exaggeration.

As we experience things that are beyond our understanding we have doubts. When things take place that are truly supernatural we don't know what to do. While we hear about miracles our minds become skeptical.

God has made some incredible promises to us. He promises to do amazing things for us. He has given unbelievable things for us to believe. God has said He would never leave us. Jesus has told us that we would do greater things than He has done. Jesus promised to forgive our sins. Jesus promised power from heaven. Jesus promised life everlasting.

You and I don't believe it. We don't fully accept His promises. We can't comprehend what He promises, so we have doubts.

Genesis 17:15–16 (NLT) Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.”

By naming Sarah the Princess of nations, God is proclaiming a great promise. If you're to take your prayer life to the next level you need to pray God's promises. Abraham is considered the father of our faith. God made Abraham righteous because of his faith, but this wasn't a moment of faith.

Out of all the people living on the planet God chose Abraham. Back then his name was Abram, he lived in what today is the region of Iran and Iraq. God told Abram three things: Leave your family; go to the land called Canaan; and he would become the father of a great nation, out numbering the sands on the seashore. Abram took his wife with him to Canaan. He struggled believing God would make him into a great nation. He was a man with weak faith. He wanted to believe, but it was hard to do.

The promises of God were magnificent, tremendous, and awesome. He had no one to verify if the promise was true. Sarah had not heard this promise from God. No one in Abram's family had heard this promise.

During Abram's life there were no written documents of God's activities. The works of God had been passed on person to person, generation by generation. Abram knew that God had brought a flood to wipe out sin and evil. Only Noah and his family survived. Abram was a descendant of many

generations. Abram knew that the people had thought too highly of themselves and built a tower trying to get to God. Abram knew Cain killed his brother Abel. Abram knew Adam and Eve were the first people created by God. Abram knew God had created all things. But Abram still struggled to believe God's promise to make him into a great nation.

God's faithfulness is the basis for believing in His promises. From all these things that Abram knew, God had made promises concerning them. In everyone of the promises God was faithful. As Abram looked around he could see the faithfulness of God to His creation. God was the creator and the sustainer of life. Abram believed in God's provision for his life. Abram and his wife got the bright idea that for Abram to be the father of a great nation that they needed to help God. So, Abram had a child by his wife's servant. The boy was named Ishmael.

Now, when Ishmael was fourteen years old God appeared to Abram. God changed his name to Abraham. God renewed the promise that his offspring would be a great nation. Abraham, his son, his male family members, and his servants were all circumcised as a sign that they believed God's promise.

Next, Abraham's wife would receive a new name, Sarah. Her name could mean princess. She was to become the princess that gave birth to Abraham's son who would carry on the promise. Simple and easy to understand, right?

Genesis 17:17-18 (NLT) Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?" So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under your special blessing!"

We're so full of our own plans that we have laughed at the plans of God. Instead of God's plans we have our own plans. Abraham laughed at God's plan. He could not believe what he was hearing. It was hilarious in a sarcastic way. He explains why it is so ridiculous. He's one hundred and she's ninety.

I might have laughed also. Being someone who speaks sarcasm as a second language I may have even said something sarcastic. Don't deny it, but you would not have believed God's promise to an old man and an old woman. With apologies to anyone who is old, one hundred is old; ninety is old. For some people their legs and hands and other body parts don't work. Why would anyone who is one hundred or ninety years old want to have a kid, change diapers, teach to the child eat and walk?

For that reason only I would be sarcastic, laugh and be unable to believe God's promise. Even though this is the God who spoke all of creation into existence, I would find it hard to believe. Even though this is the God who calms the sea, commands the wind and rain, I would find it hard to believe. Even though this is the God who raised the dead, I would still in that moment question God. I would question why now and not sooner, that was Abraham and Sarah's plan. I would question why not the one who is already fourteen, that was Abraham and Sarah's plan. I would question why God was denying my plans, that had to be on Abraham's mind.

We're guilty of praying for our plans to fit into God's plans. Don't try to count the number of times that you have tried to get Jesus do what you want. The number is higher than you can count. Think about the person you wanted to fall in love with you. Or consider the car you wanted. What about the house you thought was perfect? We get our minds set on something that we think is icing on the cake, the cake and the party. It is purely our idea but then we go asking God to put it in His will, to make it part

of His plans, to use it for His purposes. We step out in faith in ourselves and our abilities, work harder than hard only to see it become less than anyone could have imagined.

We also pray the word if. We pray if like it's an escape pod. If we're asking and it isn't God's plan, if we're asking and it isn't God's will, then we don't want to be guilty of praying the wrong thing.

We're trying not be sarcastic, but we've allowed doubt to enter our prayers. No matter how we put it our plans, sarcasm or doubt aren't acts of faith in God.

Genesis 17:19-20 (NLT) But God replied, "No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

Abraham and Sarah never saw the covenant fulfilled, but God is always faithful. They saw God's promises in their son Isaac, but never saw the covenant fulfilled.

When we believe God's promises then we are able to trust God. Take note of verse nineteen, God said NO. That is NO to Abraham and Sarah's plan. NO to their small thinking. NO to their attempts to do what they want. NO to everything that isn't His will, His plans, His purposes.

God's promises are directly connected to God's will. God makes a promise - amazing, incredible, unbelievable – and it's to bring about His will, His plans, His purposes. God has no accidents or coincidences. God has a perfect, flawless will. God's plans are complete. God's purposes will always be fulfilled.

We need to pray believing His promises. We need to pray trusting God's plan. We need to pray with faith in God. We need to pray regardless of what our eyes see. Pray God's promises even though it goes against human logic and human reason. Lift up your voice speaking God's promises even though you think it's impossible. Say in faith by the name of Jesus that God always does what is good and right.

Trusting God and praying His promises gives us hope and peace, inspiration and motivation. When you pray a promise of God in the name of Jesus the Holy Spirit begins speaking hope into your life. Not wishful thinking, but the hope that the impossible will happen. This is the hope that hope may not see the promise fulfilled but knows it can be fulfilled. Hope given by the Holy Spirit takes away doubt and fear.

As you pray a promise of God in the name of Jesus the Holy Spirit gives you peace. The enemy may still be all around you. Chaos and uncertainty may fill the air. The peace from the Holy Spirit reassures you that God is bigger than what is happening around you. The peace of the Holy Spirit gives you confidence that whatever happens God is still on the His throne.

While you are praying the promise of God you become inspired. Gone is the all is lost attitude. You can see the possibilities of what God's power from heaven can do on earth. Your mind is changed from negativity to potential. Doubt is gone. Fear is gone.

When you pray the promise of God you become motivated. Tired and sore muscles are energized. Achy and weary bones are empowered. Hands and lips are filled with action. You trust God, you know Him, you are ready to go.

Genesis 17:21 (NLT) “But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.”

God always keeps His promise, so pray trusting God for the impossible. One year later Isaac was born. The promise of God to Abraham at one hundred years old he would be the father was fulfilled. The promise of God to Sarah at ninety years old that she would give birth to a son was fulfilled. God kept His promise. As incredible and unbelievable as it sounded, God’s promise was true.

Even though it sounded impossible, God did what was amazing and gave these two old people a son. What seems impossible to you? What has God told you He would do? What promise is filled more with doubt than with hope?

God has not made promises to be ignored. God has not given you His plans and purposes for no reason. God is ready to work in your life. Pray believing. God is ready to work through your life. Pray believing. God will keep His promise. Pray believing.

Pray until one of three things happens. Pray until God says no. When God says no it’s not His will. Pray until you see the promise of God fulfilled. Pray taking steps of faith in response to God’s nudges. Pray following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Pray in Jesus’ name. Pray until you die. God’s promise may not be fulfilled in your lifetime on this earth. God may fulfill His plans and His purposes after you are gone.

Nothing is impossible for our God. You know this because your sins have been forgiven. How and why would God be able and willing to forgive your sins, unless He is the God of the impossible. Pray because you have seen God create and sustain life. You are living and breathing day after day.

Pray because God loves you. The greatest promise you have is found in God’s love for you. You have been wonderfully and skillfully made. You have been saved, redeemed, and delivered. The love of God has reached out to you from the beginning of time. God in His love has seen you at your worst. God through His love wants to be with you. There is no greater love than the love of God. For God has come from heaven to take away your sins and give you a new life. His name is Jesus.

Since you believe this, pray believing in all of God’s promises.