

# Chapter 8: Promises

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[0:00] The question that we're asking is, are we benefiting from what God is saying to us?! Well, how would we know that? How would we know if we're profiting from the Word?! A.W. Pink in chapter 8 answers that question in terms of the promises of God.

The promises of God. You can't read long in the Bible without bumping into a promise, can you? They're just loaded. And that being the case, we're profiting from the Scriptures when our attitude toward and use of the promises of God show that we are indeed profiting from the Word. So, the promises are our study this morning. And a month ago on a Wednesday evening we had this same theme. And so, some of this may be repetition for you who were there at the all-church prayer meeting a month ago.

But this is something worth repeating. Seven points then. Ways to determine whether or not we're profiting from the Scriptures. And the first point is, is we are profiting from the Word if we are learning to treasure the promises of God.

2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 4 says that God has given to us His very great and precious promises. They're very great and they're very precious.

[1:29] Spurgeon says, greatness and preciousness seldom go together. But in this instance, they are united in an exceeding degree.

And he says they're great. The promises are great because they come from a great God. They come to great sinners. And they work for us great results.

And they deal with great matters. They deal with great matters. Think of what the promises of God are about. They're about great things.

Like ensuring that everything in my life works together for my good. Is that not a great thing? A big thing? Well, then that promise is a great promise, isn't it?

What about eternal life? That's a great thing. So the promises are great. The promises that say that we will have wisdom from heaven given to us liberally.

[2:34] The promise that says that in every temptation there will be a way of escape so that we can stand up under it. What a great thing that is brought to us in the promise.

God's peace. God's peace. God's joy. God's presence. His grace. These are great things that are promised.

And so the promises themselves that hold them out to us are very great and precious promises. Peter treasured the promises of God.

And he's the one who, having lived upon them, can say to us here toward the end of his life in 2 Peter, that they are indeed great and precious promises.

David also treasured the promises of God. And he says in Psalm 119, 162, I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil. Now David was a warrior.

[3:31] And there were many times that he saw his men falling upon the plunder. And he saw the look in their eye, the great delight to lay hold of the plunder.

And he says, that describes my heart when I find a promise. I have this great delight like men who are falling upon the plunder. They were precious like great spoil.

And who of us, when our backs have been up against a wall, have not found the promises of God to be precious to us? Better than to have one sure promise from God than a thousand assurances from men.

And we've held on to that promise. And we have found it to be true. And so that promise becomes precious to us in our trials.

Again, the psalmist, 119, 140. Your promises have been thoroughly tested. And your servant loves them. The more we test them, the more we try them and live upon them, the more we see them

true, and the more we enjoy their benefits, the more we love them and we treasure them and count them as precious.

[4 : 51] Most men are blind to these riches. They find their treasures in the things that they can see and handle and touch. The promises have a certain unreality about them.

What's a promise, you know? Better one bird in the hand than two in the bush. The promise, what is that? Give me something I can see and lay my hands on.

But the Christian is learning to see by faith the value of the promises. Nowhere are riches so despised than here in terms of the promises of God.

They're like a rare painting that's found in a garage sale. And it's got the price of 50 cents on it. And still it doesn't sell.

Because no one knows the value of it. So are the promises of God. They're precious. But the world doesn't see their value and so ignores them and despises them.

[5 : 53] But we show that we are profiting from our intake of Scripture when we come to treasure the promises of God. Secondly, we profit from the Word when we understand that the promises of God become ours through Christ.

These promises become ours through Christ. Pink says, Sinners have nothing to do with a holy God.

We must come through the mediator Jesus who satisfied the Father on our behalf and receives from the Father all the good things for us. So that when the good things come to us they come second hand through our mediator Jesus.

There's one God and one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. And so all of these promises that we have we have through Him. We have them from His hand.

Think of the promise of eternal life itself. Is there a better promise? As John says in his epistle, 1 John 2.25 This is what He promised us. Even eternal life.

[7 : 17] So there's the promise. Well, who has eternal life? Well, He goes on to say this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life. He who has not the Son has not life.

And it's the same with all the other promises. He who has the Son has the promises. He who does not have the Son does not have the promises. They come to us through Christ.

So Paul can say in 2 Corinthians 1.20 No matter how many promises God has made they are all yes in Christ. They're all sure and certain for me in Christ.

So we owe it to Jesus Christ that we're so rich with the promises of God.

And we show we're profiting from the Word when we understand that. That we have these unsearchable riches in Christ. Thirdly, and we'll spend a little more time on this point, we are profiting from the Word when we are living upon the promises.

[8 : 26] When we actually live upon them. Like a man lives upon food. We're all much richer than we realize.

We're like farmers living on a hundred acre farm barely eking out his existence. Barely being able to make payments. Often late when all the while beneath his fields is an untapped reservoir of billions and billions of gallons of oil.

He can barely eke out an existence. But he has the world at his feet. But it's untapped for it's unknown. And there is in the promises of God a huge untapped capacity of treasures and resources for living the Christian life.

We simply can't afford to neglect the promises of God. We need to live upon them. We need to draw upon them. Now, Pink says, to do this we must first take the trouble to become really acquainted with them.

It's surprising how many promises there are in Scripture which the saints know nothing about. So if we're learning to treasure the promises then we'll love to pour over them and acquaint ourselves with them.

[9 : 47] Even the miser loves to count his money doesn't he? He gets out his bags and he just likes to feel the coins in his hands and he's counting them. So, we who are rich in the promises will love to go over the promises and to become acquainted with them.

We should memorize the promises. That's part of how we live upon them. We make them our own. We store them up. Pink says, it's only as the promises are stored up in our minds that the Spirit of God brings them to remembrance at those seasons of fainting when we most need them.

So, Wednesday afternoon you're going to need the promise. But again, if you don't know the promise it's like that oil beneath the farmer's field that he knows nothing about. It only benefits you as you know it. So, memorize the Scripture. Memorize the promise so that come Wednesday the Spirit of God will have that to draw upon in your mind and bring to your remembrance to help you in your time of need.

We further make the promises our own and live upon them not only by memorizing them and pouring over them but by meditating on them. Again, the Psalmist in 119, 148.

[11 : 10] My eyes stay open through the watches of the night. Now, many of us could sign on to that first half of the verse, couldn't we? My eyes stay open through the watches of the night.

Can we sign on to the last half of the verse? that I may meditate on your promises. The reason my eyes are open through the watches of the night is because I'm thinking about your promises. You have promised me these things. I'm meditating. I'm mulling them over, thinking upon them. And in meditating upon them, we personalize them.

We make them our own. We think of them in terms of our present situation, our present circumstance. This is talking about me. My situation.

Right here, right now. That's how we meditate on Scripture. The devil would rob us of the comfort and help of the promises of God simply by making us think that they don't apply to us.

[12 : 14] They don't apply to this situation. This piddly thing, God's not concerned about that. This trouble, this thing that's bothering you, that's worrying you, this promise has nothing to do with that.

And so he would steal the comfort and help of the promise by telling us that it does not apply to us. Well, we need to personalize that promise and realize that the promises of God do have to do with my life in every aspect of it.

If it's big enough for me to worry about, it has to do with the promises. 2 Peter 3.3, His divine power, has given us everything we need for life and godliness and He's given us this through His very great and precious promises.

His promises have to do with everything with life and godliness. Godliness has value for all things, 1 Timothy 4.8, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

The promises don't just deal with the life to come, they deal with this life, the present life. Pink says, reader, do you really believe this? That the promises of God cover every aspect and particular of your daily life?

[13 : 28] Then we must make them our own. We must become very familiar with them. And we're the poor for the neglect of the promises. Spurgeon has a meditation on Hebrews 13.5.

This is the promise in Hebrews 13.5. It's a command built upon a promise. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.

There's the command. Now here's the promise. Because God has said, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. Because God has said, and his meditation runs this way.

If we can only grasp these words by faith, we have an all-conquering weapon in our hand. What doubt will not be slain by this two-edged sword? What fear is there which shall not fall smitten with a deadly wound before this arrow from the bow of God's covenant?

Will not the distresses of life and the pangs of death? Will not the corruptions within and the snares without? Will not the trial from above and the temptations from beneath all seem but light afflictions when we can hide ourselves beneath the bulwark of he hath said.

[14 : 49] Yes, whether for delight in our quiet or for strength in our conflict, he hath said must be our daily resort and this may teach us the extreme value of searching the scriptures to find the he hath said.

there may be a promise in the word which would exactly fit your case but you may not know of it and therefore you miss its comfort.

You're like prisoners in a dungeon and there may be one key in the bunch which would unlock the door and you might be free but if you will not look for it you may remain a prisoner still though liberty is so near at hand.

There may be a potent medicine in the great pharmacy of scripture and you may yet continue sick until you will examine and search the scriptures to discover what he hath said.

Should you not besides reading the Bible store your memories richly with the promises of God? You can recollect the sayings of great men. You treasure up the verses of renowned poets.

[15 : 55] Ought you not to be profound in your knowledge of the words of God so that you may be able to quote them readily when you would solve the difficulty or overthrow a doubt since he hath said is the source of all wisdom and the fountain of all comfort let it dwell in you richly.

So again the importance of laying hold of the promises of God understanding them being acquainted with them as they're found in the scriptures.

He really plays upon Pilgrim's Progress there in that reference to the prisoner and the keys. You remember when Christian and Hopeful were in Doubting Castle giant despair and his wife gloom threatening them tormenting them and there they are locked up in their prison and full of depression there was no light in the dungeon nothing to encourage they actually think of ending their own lives they were given every reason to give up all hope and then we read about midnight Saturday night they've been there since Wednesday Christian and Hopeful began to pray and continued until almost break of day then Christian suddenly broke out in amazement what a fool what a fool I am to lie here in this stinking dungeon when I might walk free on the highway to glory I have a key in my bosom called promise which I am sure will open any door in Doubting Castle

Hopeful says that is certainly good news my brother get out your key and try it then Christian took the key of promise and pushed it into the lock of the dungeon door the bolt fell back and the door came open and so it was with every other door and gate until they were out and back on the road to the celestial city there may be a promise in the word which would exactly fit your case Spurgeon says but you may not know of it and therefore you miss its comfort do you know what that's talking about do you suppose that there could have been some comfort you would have enjoyed this week if you had just known a promise that just matched your need I found it true in my own life this week I'm sure we don't have to look far to see its reality so we ought to scour our Bibles and as we're reading them and as we're hearing them preach we ought to have an eye and an ear to the promises of God what has God said about this situation in my life note them treasure them memorize them meditate on them live upon them believe them so there's the first three ways we know we're profiting from the word we're treasuring the promises we're realizing that we have all the promises through Christ our mediator and then we are living upon the promises now let's tease out a little more what it means to live upon the promises the fourth point then is we profit from the word when we draw comfort and encouragement from the promises therefore our comfort and encouragement and we're profiting when we experience the comfort encouragement of the promises now one of the reasons

God gave us the promises in the first place is to encourage us Pink says there's three steps in God doing good to his people there in the heart of God is this love to do good to his people now there's three steps in his actual doing of good to his people the first is his purpose to do good his plan he first plans to do good to his people and the last is that he actually executes his plan and brings good to his people but between the two there is the gracious making known of his purpose to do us good in other words the promises between his plan to do us good and his actual doing us good is the promise in which he makes known to us I'm going to do you good I'm going to do this for you I'm going to do this I am this for you he not only plans to do us good and in actual time will actually do us good but in the interim he informs us of his plans that we might rest comfortably upon his sure promise you know if

[20 : 32] God had been pleased to do so he could have just surprised us with every one of his good things couldn't he could have said nothing in advance about it and then just all of a sudden bang we're blessed in a certain way and oh we're very happy to have that that blessing but our kind father wanted us to enjoy his gifts twice over Pink says first by faith and then by fruition he would have us know the comfort ahead of time before it arrives and then to know the actual blessing of receiving it think of the return of Christ and the joys of heaven all that the Bible says in way of promise about Christ's return and what's going to happen to the saints in that day and about heaven many promises with regard to that but he wouldn't have had to tell us that he could have still been preparing a place for us still going nothing's changed as to what's actually going to happen to us just that he wouldn't have told us ahead of time that it's coming but that would be to miss the present comfort and encouragement of his promises and he wants to encourage us along the way think of it of this illustration you're having a terrible

Monday morning the kids are acting up they're not obeying maybe you had a flat tire on your way to work the boss is upset at you for being late everything is going wrong but all through the day you're not letting it get you down you're maintaining a joyful thankful spirit why how because of something

you know you know that tomorrow morning you and your spouse and your family are going on a two weeks vacation and you're going to be with your best friends and you're going to go to your favorite places and you're going to be eating your favorite foods and you're just going to be chilling and enjoying life for two weeks and just the knowledge of that enables you to get through Monday because you know what's happening Tuesday morning and I say it's similar with the Christian there are trials in this life there are heartaches there are we must through great tribulation enter the kingdom but God has given us the promise of how great the kingdom is and how great heaven is going to be and just the promise and the knowledge of that gives us endurance gives us patience gives us hope buoys our spirit in the present trials of life all because

God promised it to us to let us know the comfort of it ahead of time think of the that familiar passage 1st Thessalonians 4:18 turn to that would you 1st Thessalonians 4:18 I've been racing through these texts because we have so much to cover but let's look at this one 1st Thessalonians 4 in the last verse of that chapter most familiar to us we've heard it often at funerals perhaps at graveside services verse 18 of 1st Thessalonians 4 therefore comfort or encourage one another with these words okay there's some words here that bring comfort and encouragement what are those words do you remember from the passage ahead what's he talking about in this passage that would have brought comfort and encouragement the resurrection we don't grieve like those who have no hope because our brethren who have died in the

Lord are going to be raised to life again for when the trumpet sounds and Jesus Christ returns the dead in Christ will rise first and then we who are alive and still remain on the earth will be caught up together with them to be with the Lord in the air and so we shall be with the Lord forever and ever therefore comfort one another with these words what are those those are promises Jesus is coming back and when he comes back the dead will rise we'll go to be with Christ forever and ever comfort each other with these words these promises are meant to support us in the midst of our journey think of these two scenarios you're captain of a unit of soldiers being sent into the battle and you're well trained and well armed and you're just told go and attack this stronghold of the enemy and off you go well you may be going with many fears think of this second scenario and what a difference it would make it's the same situation only you're given a promise and the promise runs this way if at any time you're in need of help just call in on your radio and

I'll have air support there in 60 seconds that will take out any resistance that you would face the promise ahead of time puts strength in your legs puts courage in your heart and backbone in your spine it steals you you move out why because you've got a promise I am just one radio click away from air power support help and so it is with the Christian why the promises that we might go into life confident in our God assured enjoying the encouragements and comforts of the promises David again from Psalm 119:50 my comfort in my suffering is this your promise preserves my life in the midst of his afflictions he had strength and comfort through the promises think of the resurrection did Jesus ever make any promises about rising again yes or no one or maybe a lot of times he promised often to rise again didn't he destroy this temple in three days

[27:01] I'll raise it well that was a bit veiled under the term of the temple and his body but the closer he got the more unveiled his language I'm going to Jerusalem man and I'm going to be handed over by the Jews and I'm going to be crucified and then three days later I will rise again and they're saying I wonder what he means by rise again he told them often why what was he promising what's the purpose of the promise what a difference it should have made in the disciples lives for those three days between Friday and Sunday morning they've lost all hope we had hope that he was the redeemer but they lost all hope but if they lived on the promise they had comfort and encouragement Adoniram

Judson went to Burma as a missionary and he found himself in prison there rotting away for months in a stinking rat infested prison in Rangoon and he writes to his wife from prison my future is as bright as the promises of God what would give a man hope for tomorrow in that scenario the promises doesn't matter what I'm going through I've got these promises and they're true and that dungeon of despair for Adoniram Judson that's what it means to draw comfort from the promises and we're showing that we're profiting from the word when we are drawing encouragement and comfort from the promises but then we also profit from the word when the promises of God have a sanctifying effect upon us not only an encouraging!

effect but when they actually sanctify us from sin again turn over to chapter 1 the same passage that we began with where Peter tells us that God has given us these great and precious promises

very great and precious promises notice the purpose that is cited here in this verse 2 Peter 1 4 through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires so the promises are given to us to escape the corruption that's in the world that's caused by our own evil desires the world only incites and stirs up the evil desire in my heart how am I going to conquer the world inciting of my own evil desires how can I ever do battle and win against the flesh and the world and the help us to escape from these corruptions that are in the world through evil desire do you not wrestle with with discontent do you not wrestle with a desire and a greed for more that we're not happy with what we have that we must have more the world incites that lust in us it stirs it up in us how do you do battle with that this this this discontent with your present circumstance with wanting more well he tells us here and again this is just back where we were a bit earlier there's the command built upon the promise keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because

God has said God has given us a promise and the promise is never will I leave you and never will forsake you and so we say with confidence the Lord is my helper I will not be afraid what can man do to me we find that the promise that God is with us he is our treasure he is our portion he is everything to us if we have him we have it all and so if I am living on the promise that this God will never forsake me he's always that breaks the back of this temptation to want more and more and to love the world to love money to love the things that money can buy what will break that temptation it's treasuring God who is promised to ever be mine so that's just an example of the way that the promises have a sanctifying effect upon us and keep us from sin not only comfort in us but also sanctifying us second

Corinthians chapter seven turned there for another example of this sanctifying effect of the promises second Corinthians chapter seven at the end of chapter six Paul has been telling the church to not be yoked together with unbelievers what what do they have in common he says so you need to come out and be separate from the world live separated lives and then he piles up promise after promise there at the end of chapter six maybe we'll just begin at verse verse 16 what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols for we are the temple of the living God as God has said I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their

[33 : 31] God and they will be my people well those are those are rich promises aren't they I will live with you I will walk with you I will be your God you will be my people therefore come out from them and be separate says the Lord touch no unclean thing and here's another promise I will receive you here's another promise I will be a father to you!

chapter 7 verse 1 since we have these promises dear friends let us purify ourselves you see the purifying effect of the promises let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit perfecting holiness out of reverence to God just a couple observations from this passage Paul's talking to Gentile Corinthians Gentile believers at Corinth and these promises that he is referring to are Old Testament promises to Israel you can take the time and look them up they're talking to Israel come out from among the Babylonians don't be like them be separate but he's he's applying these promises not to physical descendants of Abraham but to Gentile believers in other words they too are possessors of these promises to Israel they are the true

Israel of God they have believed in Jesus and Jesus is the heir to all the promises and so in Christ they too have become the heirs of the promises and these promises then hold the sanctifying effect God not only motivates his people by threats you find threats in the Bible but more often you find he motivates his people by promises and that's what he's doing here you come out from among them and be separate and you will find me to be your God walking with you and guiding you helping you being a father to you providing all that you need!

away If you abide in me and my word abides in you, you can ask whatever you want, whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Because what God promises, he intends to do for his people. So we take hold of the promise and we say, God, do it. Do what you've said. That's what David did. God promised to build a dynasty through him that from his loins would come an everlasting line of kings, leading to Messiah who would reign forever and ever.

[37 : 07] And what does David do in response to such a promise? And now, Lord, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant in his house. Do as you have promised. That's praying.

That's praying the promises. Do as you have promised. I've sought your face with all my heart. Be gracious to me according to your promise.

May your unfailing love be my comfort according to your promise to your servant. Defend my cause and redeem me. Preserve my life according to your promise throughout Psalm 119.

The psalmist is praying the promises. And so, as we come to prayer, ask yourself, has God said anything? Has he promised me anything with regard to what I'm about to do?

You came to worship today? You want God to draw near and have dealings with you? Is there a promise anywhere in the Bible about, Lord, you said that if we would draw near to you, you would draw near to us?

[38:07] Remember your promise to me this morning. You're on praying ground when you pray the promise. And then lastly, we profit from the word when we patiently await the fulfillment of the promises.

Sometimes saints are made to wait a long time for the fulfillment of the promise. Can you think of any in the Bible? Had to wait a long time?

We all are waiting a long time. That's right. Jesus hasn't come back yet. We're still waiting. Who else had to wait? Abraham. What do you have to wait for? Had to wait for the seed of promise.

Some 25 years. From the promise to the fulfillment. What else did you have to wait for? He was promised. He went out not knowing where he was going, but he had a promise.

God was going to give him what? A land. He died without having received that promise. So, yeah, there's many examples that we could point to.

[39:16] Noah had to wait a long time for the promise flood. The human race had to wait a long time for that promise in Genesis 3.15 about the seed of the woman coming to crush the head of the serpent.

They wait a long time until Christ came. And as Dennis said, we're now waiting for a second coming. David had to wait a long time between being anointed king of Israel.

That was an enacted promise. You're going to be the next king. But he had to wait many, many years before it was fulfilled. So, why do you suppose God makes his children wait for the promises? What's he trying to do with us by making us wait? Grow our faith. Grow our faith. Teach us patience.

Anybody need patience? Anybody need faith? I mean, God's just doing what needs to be done to teach us these things, right? Real faith is not destroyed by God's delays.

[40:21] But these delays can sorely try the faith of the child of God. Listen to Asaph in Psalm 77.8. Has his unfailing love vanished forever?

Has his promise failed for all times? Psalmist says, my eyes fail looking for your promise. I say, when will you comfort me?

The saints can feel like the promises are going unfulfilled. But what will help us wait patiently without slacking in faith and hope and comfort of the promise is realizing who the promiser is.

Three things about the promiser. His faithfulness, his power, and his righteousness. Hebrews 11.11. By faith Abraham, even though he was past age and Sarah herself was barren, was unable to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

And as you keep thinking, God, you're faithful. You can't lie. You must keep this promise. And you hang on. So Abraham held on. Because you're faithful who made the promise.

[41:32] You are powerful. Secondly, Romans 4.21. Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. And lastly, that he is righteous.

Nehemiah 9.8. You have kept your promise to Abraham because you are righteous. And so we believe that he is strong enough to pull off what he has promised. We believe that he is too righteous and too faithful to ever let one of his promises fall to the ground unfulfilled.

And that enables us to wait patiently for the promise. Well, these are some of the ways that we know whether or not the scriptures are profit in us. As the promises of God become treasured by us and we make use of them in our lives, let's do so this week as we seek to honor him for his faithfulness, his power, and his righteousness.

We're dismissed.