

Lesson # 4 -- The Promise Regarding the Believer's Confidence.

Introduction

A. What would you say about a person --

Who could truthfully call God his Father;
Who was completely forgiven and righteous;
Who had been promised that all his needs would be supplied;
Who was assured that he could make a success out of his life;
Who could live knowing everything in his life worked for his good;
Who could always look forward to going to Heaven?

B. It would be an understatement to say, "He could live with a sense of confidence!"

C. The Christian is one who has all of these promises and provisions. This should bring a great deal of confidence to us even though we live in a world that is not conducive to spirituality and with many hindrances.

D. It will help us a great deal to understand what God desires to do for us in our daily life. He wants us to have the right attitude to expect Him to keep His promises. If we fail to claim His Word, neglect His promises, and have a low level of expectation, we bring spiritual failure into our life and family.

I. The Promise Stated.

A. The theme of these lessons.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect (equipped) in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. Hebrews 13:20,21

Comment: We are here given the promise that God will equip us to do His will. It is important that we understand the relationship between the promise and the will of God. While in some areas the will of God is the same for each of us, as the Ten Commandments, in many other areas it is different.

While God is always gracious and merciful with us -- we cannot claim a promise in an area where it does not apply. And we must make sure that we understand how He brings His will to pass. If a young man is called to preach, that is surely the will of God, but he will have to study and learn how to do so before he becomes very effective.

An understanding of this principle will help us to know how to claim the promises of God by faith.

B. Illustrations of this principle.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart perfect toward him. . . . II Chronicles 16:9

Comment: This was God's promise to king Asa. For many years he had lived and ruled by trust in God. He had learned how to claim the will and the promise of God (14:11). In the latter years of his life, however, he neglected his spiritual life and was rebuked by God for his unbelief.

This promise was given to Asa as a part of that rebuke. It reminded him of the life and rule that he could have had. The principle of this promise is true for every believer. If we want the will of God, and are willing to trust Him -- He will reveal Himself and His power to us. It is important to see that we cannot separate the promise or the power of God from God's person (to shew himself strong). The Christian is called to walk with God and to fellowship with Him. In that relationship the truths of God's will and faith become clear.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. II Corinthians 9:8

Comment: This promise is a New Testament parallel to the one given to Asa. It applies to every believer. The verse is clear. Whatever we need to do the will of God -- we may have.

This truth appears to be too simple. We immediately ask why such power and grace is not more evident? We must face the facts:

1. We may not have accepted nor even want the will of God for our daily life.
2. We may not know how to express faith or live in the will of God.
3. We may not be willing to submit to the divine order in which the will, promise, and power of God may be known.

Summary: God is our Heavenly Father. He desires our best and has made every provision for us. As His children we must learn how to live in His will and trust Him.

II. The Promise Explained.

A. We may have confidence about our eternal future.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens . . . Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. II Corinthians 5:1,6,8

Comment: It is the express will of God that every believer have this confidence about their future. The Lord Jesus has promised to be with us in the moment of our death. (John 14:1-3) He has paid the debt of our sin, defeated our death, and has the keys of hell and death (Rev. 1:18). We may not allow ourselves to be afraid of the future.

It may be helpful for you to learn how to express your faith in God's promises. Write out a few of the verses, read them each day, claim them by saying -- "I believe God's Word, this verse has been given to me, I know this truth will come to pass in my life, I am grateful for the provision God has made for me, I look forward to meeting the Lord Jesus."

B. We may have confidence about our acceptance by God.

In whom (the Lord Jesus) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (the Lord Jesus). Eph. 3:12

Comment: In this section of Ephesians Paul is talking about the way God had involved him, and all believers, in the spiritual world. In the verse before us he states that the Christian has access into this spiritual world and in particular into the presence of God. He reminds us how this is possible because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus and through the ability He has given to us so we can express faith.

Every believer needs to know and experience his acceptance by God. The entrance of sin into the human race brought the tragedy of spiritual separation. As believers we may be more emotionally aware of alienation than the truth of our acceptance with God. It is necessary for each of us to understand how Jesus Christ, in His death and resurrection, made it possible for every Christian to be fully accepted and well-pleasing to God. We must accept this by faith and practice it.

C. We may have confidence about God's keeping power.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

Comment: This is an area of our daily life, as we considered in the last lesson, in which we are often confused and defeated. Every Christian will have a temporary problem with some sin. As soon as we learn how to overcome one there is another one bothering us. In this process of growth we often become discouraged. Usually this is due to a lack of understanding the provision of God.

Too many believers associate any weakness or sin with being lost. They believe the error that we are saved only as long as we do not commit any sin whatsoever. This is not only unbiblical -- it leads such a person to call all his sins "weaknesses." The Biblical message is clear -- we may not sin. But if we do, we are to confess it, make it right, and learn how to live a more holy life.

The verse before us reminds us that God does not desert us when we sin. He continues to maintain the relationship He established with us in salvation. He expects us to accept this truth and live with confidence in Him.

D. We may have confidence about our coming judgment.

And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. I John 2:28

Comment: The Bible is clear about a coming judgment. Every person, believer and unbeliever, must stand before God and give an account. We will do this following His coming, and the unbeliever at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

The issue in our judgment as believers is not whether we will enter Heaven -- but as to how faithfully we lived up to the truth that we should have known (II Cor. 5:10). All neglect to learn and obey the Word of God will cause us to lose reward. Those sins that we have committed and refused to make right will cause us great shame in that day. Because of the abundance of God's provision we do not have to fail and be ashamed. We can look forward to meeting our Lord with confidence. In that moment we will want the past straightened out and will be filled with relief that it is in the hands of our Savior.

E. We may have confidence about our prayer life.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. I John 5:14

Comment: Again we have the relationship between confidence and the will of God emphasized. In the light of this lesson this should be a great encouragement to us. God has not only promised to equip us and meet our every need so we may live in His will -- He has also obligated Himself to answer any request we bring in regard to His will. One reason why our prayers are not answered is because we neglect the issue of God's will and pray selfishly (James 4:3). If we want His will we are assured that we can come to Him in confidence.

III. The Promise Applied.

A. The Biblical Warning.

For thus saith the LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not. Isaiah 30:15

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Matthew 23:37

Comment: These terrible indictments are stated by God because of the infinite and loving provision He had made for His people. They could have lived in safety as the children of God -- but they would not.

As believers we must face our responsibility to accept the Bible and live in harmony with it. God has given His Word to each of us and He expects us to believe Him and to respond to Him in faith, love, and obedience. When we get to Heaven we will be shocked as to how much pain, trouble, and failure we have caused simply because we did not respond.

B. A Suggestion.

In order to learn how to claim the promise of God it may help to begin with only one practical facet of the will of God -- the Bible. It is His will that we read and study the Word of God with and for spiritual growth and enjoyment (I Peter 2:2; I John 1:4). Buy a good study Bible, a concordance, a dictionary on the Scripture, and a book on how to study the Word of God. Take some time each day to read and study. Claim the promise each day that is found in Psalm 119:18. Keep at it as an expression of your love and faith in God. As you grow in an understanding of the will of God apply these principles to other areas of your life. God is worth fighting for!