

ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES
TOOLS FOR LIFE
ASSOCIATE PASTOR DANIEL GOLOVENKO

PRAYING GOD’S PROMISES IN THE SPIRIT

God has given us many promises in the Bible to meet our every need. Both the Old and New Testaments have outstanding examples of God’s people claiming the promises of His Word when facing difficulties.

One of my first exposures to the Bible teachings on prayer was in *The ABC’s of Bible Prayer*, a book by Glen Coon. I learned the concept of claiming God’s promises in prayer as a young Christian, and it has proved to be a great blessing throughout my life and ministry. The prayer formula is simple:

Ask:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7).

Believe:

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24).

Claim the promise with thanksgiving before any answer is seen:

“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:41 – 43).

In these verses we see that Jesus thanked the Father for hearing and answering His prayer before there was evidence of it being answered.

God’s promises are sure. We can be confident that God will do what He says:

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).

And He can do what He promises:

“Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee” (Jer. 32:17).

Just as the oak tree is in the acorn, so is the fulfillment of God’s promise in the promise itself when claimed by faith. Concerning the promises of God’s Word, Ellen White writes:

“In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 38).

God’s power and very life is contained in the promises of the Bible. Nothing can stand in the way of His promises being fulfilled when we claim them by faith in persevering prayer.

In 2 Chronicles 20 we find a marvelous prayer model of claiming God’s promises. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was facing an imminent invasion by a confederacy of armies. He had made preparation for such a crisis by building up Judah’s army and defenses. He had more than 1 million well-trained men ready for battle. However, when the threat became known to the king, his first response was not to look to his preparations for war, but rather look to the Lord.

When we face problems in life our response should be the same – look to the Lord first. This doesn’t mean that we don’t do what we can to meet whatever situation may arise. The danger is that we have the tendency to go immediately to our human resources for help and deliverance. Our mind often begins formulating ways to solve the problem rather than turning to God first. Jehoshaphat’s response is a good example for us to follow.

Jehoshaphat’s prayer is recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:6-13:

“And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name,

saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.”

This prayer reveals five steps for victoriously praying for the promises of God:

- First, the king began by *praising* God’s attributes, especially those related to the problem he was facing (verse 6). When facing an attacking enemy, as Jehoshaphat was, it was encouraging for him to recall that God rules over all the kingdoms of the nations, that “power and might” are in His hand, and that no one can withstand Him.
- Second, the king recalled *past victories*, similar to the present victory Judah needed (verse 7). Recalling God’s provision in the past, as related to our present need, reminds us of God’s faithfulness and builds our faith.
- Third, he stated in prayer a promise God had made to His people in the past – a *promise* related to the problem he was facing (verses 8 and 9).
- After these three steps in prayer, Jehoshaphat then stated the *problem* (verses 10 – 12).
- Finally, he *praised* God before any evidence of victory was seen (verses 18 and 19).

Note the formula for praying God’s promises – and not focusing on the problem: *praise, past victories, promise, problem, praise*.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

Relate a time when you prayed God's promise, and how that differed from a time you only focused on the problem in prayer.

What are the ABC's of prayer?

What are the elements of King Jehoshaphat's prayer?

What can you do to begin praying God's promises rather than the problem?

List your favorite promises in God's Word:

From *40 Days: Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming* by Dennis Smith, 2009. Reprinted with permission.