



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

HOW TO CLAIM A PROMISE

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 10:34-36 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 8:54-56 | Psalm 23:1; 32:8; 34:17-19; 37:4 | Isaiah 59:1-2 | Matthew 7:7 | Luke 11:9 | John 3:16 | Romans 10:9 | Hebrews 13:5
James 1:5-6 | 1 John 1:9; 5:14-15

► SUMMARY

The Lord's promises are expressions of His love and care for us.

Through them, He accomplishes His will and plans for our lives as well as His purposes for the kingdom of God. His unconditional promises are unchangeable, and there's nothing we can do to thwart them. However, the fulfillment of His conditional ones depends on our responses and behaviors based on our faith in Him.

His promises should be a vital part of our lives because our entire belief system is dependent on them; they are the basis for how we live each day. Although we have access to this amazing resource, some people never realize the answers to our needs are readily available in the Word of God. That's why all scriptural promises are just words on paper unless they are claimed and applied in life situations.

► SERMON POINTS

God's promises are essential to our daily lives as Christians.

To understand how to personally claim them, we must answer some vital questions:

■ Are all the promises in the Bible meant for us today?

No, sometimes they only apply to specific people, times, or situations. For example, His commitment to give Abraham and Sarah a baby in their old age does not apply to us today. However, many of the scriptural

promises that are not to us can be for us because they illustrate how God meets needs, grants desires, and works in the lives of His children. Since His ways never change, we can count on Him to work in a similar style today with us.

■ Who has a right to claim a promise from God? The Lord's promises belong only to believers, with one exception. Unbelievers are free to claim His promise of salvation when they trust Jesus as their personal Savior (Rom. 10:9). Until they take that step of faith, there's no assurance that God will answer their requests. However, even if we belong to the family of God, we forfeit our right to claim His promises when we live in sin (Isa. 59:2). The Lord will not contribute to our disobedience by blessing us with the fulfillment of His promises, but confession and repentance will bring us back under His canopy of blessing (1 John 1:9). Another essential requirement for claiming a promise is trust (James 1:5-6). We must believe that God will do what He has said.

■ Why does God promise us anything? First of all, the Lord makes promises because He loves us unconditionally and wants to give us guidance, provision, and protection. Secondly, He reveals Himself in ways that display His awesome wisdom, power, and grace. There's nothing we can do to deserve His promises, so it's our responsibility to simply believe and depend upon Him to fulfill them all.

■ How can we know God will keep His promises?

His character is our guarantee. Since He's perfect, unchanging, constantly truthful, and all-powerful, He won't fail to keep His word. Nothing is impossible for

Him. There is no situation the Lord does not have a solution for, and there is no question He can't answer. Every promise in God's Word is sure, and if we use the Scriptures as our compass, He'll show us how we should live.

When can we claim a promise?

Although God's promises belong to us, it's essential for us to understand when we can claim one and know it will be accomplished. We can do so when:

■ **It fits a personal need He wants to fulfill.** For example, if we're asking for instruction and direction regarding a decision, we can rely on the Lord's commitment to teach us the way we should go because this promise fits our specific situations (Ps. 32:8).

■ **The context of the Scripture allows it.** No one should pluck a promise from the Bible and claim it without considering its context. For example, in 1 John 5:14-15, the Lord promises to answer our prayers, but the context reveals that it's conditional—our requests must be made according to His will. We must make certain we meet the qualifications before claiming them.

■ **Its fulfillment honors Him.** We shouldn't expect the Lord to answer selfish requests that don't glorify Him. But when we have legitimate needs and claim His promise of provision, God will fulfill our petitions because doing so brings Him honor.

■ **It is consistent with His immediate will for our lives.** Whatever the need, we can claim God's promise to meet it, but there are situations when His timing and methods don't match our expectations. When this happens, we must remember that He has something even better in mind. If we're unsure about His will in a particular situation, we can simply ask Him to show us what He desires (Matt. 7:7).

■ **Its fulfillment is encouraging to others.** If we ask God to provide reassurance to others, we can claim His promise to provide. When people around us see the fulfillment, they discover how faithful and good He is.

■ **We are walking in His will.** Choosing to live obediently gives us the right and privilege to claim His promises. But if we're rebellious and living according to our own desires, we've positioned ourselves outside His will and made His promises ineffective. Although God is the one who fulfills His promises, we also have responsibilities in the process. We must be living in obedience to God so sin isn't hindering our relationship. We must ask in faith, believing He will do what He's promised.

■ **The Spirit of God confirms it.** One of the Holy Spirit's responsibilities is to reveal truth. When we seek God's thoughts on a particular subject and believe He's leading us in a certain direction, the Spirit gives us quiet confidence. If it's not the right path, we'll feel static in our souls instead.

■ **He gives us a sense of peace.** Finally, we'll know we have a right to stand confidently on our requests to God when there's peace in our hearts that comes from knowing our requests fit who we are as children of God and that they are aligned with His Word. We must be patient and wait for His timing. He knows exactly when to fulfill every promise because His judgment is perfect. If we do, God will always provide His best.

► RESPONSE

- Can you name a particular promise that God has given you?
- When is the last time you claimed a promise from God? What blessings came of that?
- Have you found peace in a situation where God fulfilled a promise for you or your family?

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