

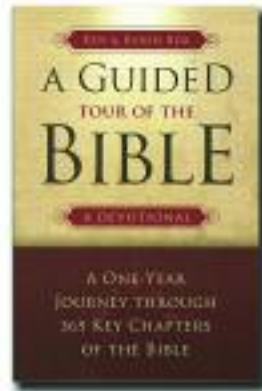
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# THE PROMISES OF GOD

PROMISES, PROMISES • 2 PETER 1:4

## GOD'S PROMISE TO YOU:

**"God's Promise to You: I make promises to give you hope; I fulfill them to give you joy."**

Some view promises like the White Queen in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*: "The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam today." That is, promises are for the purpose of living on hope rather than fulfillment. The modern cynic would agree with the Austrian novelist Hermann Broch: "What's important is promising something to the people, not actually keeping those promises . . . . The people have always lived on hope alone" (*The Spell*).

Those perspectives on promises should cause the Christian to shudder, for that is not God's perspective at all. God does not promise to titillate or to tempt; He promises to deliver! He has delivered much already, and by that we know that he will deliver more in the future. With God, it is not the promise, but that which is promised and received, that brings him joy. For instance, Peter tells us that God has given us great and precious promises which have two powerful implications for our lives. First, we participate in the divine nature of God himself. Second, we escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Did God promise that we would become "gods?" That we would be untouched by sin in the world? Not at all. But he did promise that we would share in his life; that we would receive his Spirit (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16-21;38) and receive his law written upon our very hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13). Jesus

himself promised that he would remain with us by sending the Spirit who would live in us (John 14:16-17). All of those promises have been fulfilled by God. His Spirit has come and empowers us to live godly lives, resisting the temptations of this world. It is the fulfillment of these great and precious promises that give us absolute certainty of the promises yet to be fulfilled.

Don't fall victim to the pie-in-the-sky view of promises. God's word is as good as done the moment it is spoken or written. The only thing separating you from the realization of the last divine promise is God's timetable—not his truthfulness.

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# REFLECTIONS MINISTRIES



## IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER

If I had my life to live over again I'd try to make more mistakes next time.

- I would relax, I would limber up, I would be sillier than I have been this trip.
- I know of very few things I would take seriously. I would make more trips.
- I would be crazier I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers, and watch more sunsets.
- I would do more walking and looking. I would eat more ice cream and less beans.
- I would have more actual troubles, and fewer imaginary ones.
- You see, I'm one of those people who live life prophylactally and sensibly hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had to do it over again I'd have more of them.
- In fact, I'd try to have nothing else, just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead each day.
- I've been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot-water bottle, a gargle, a raincoat, aspirin, and a parachute.
- If I had to do it over again I would go places, do things, and travel lighter than I have.
- If I had my life to live over I would start barefooted earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall.
- I would play hooky more. I wouldn't make such good grades, except by accident.
- I would ride on more merry-go-rounds. I'd pick more daisies.

— Tim Hansel *When I Relax I Feel Guilty*

A TEACHING LETTER TO ENCOURAGE BELIEVERS TO  
DEVELOP A CLEAR MIND AND A WARM HEART





## WARFARE SPIRITUALITY— PART 13

The spiritual warfare is not optional for believers in Christ. Scripture clearly teaches and illustrates the dynamics of this warfare on the three battle fronts of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The worldly and demonic systems are external to the believer, but they entice and provide opportunities for the flesh, which is the capacity for sin within the believer. This series outlines a biblical strategy for dealing with each of these barriers to spiritual growth.

### The Weapons of Our Warfare

After discussing the armor of God, we looked at eleven resources in the spiritual warfare in the last issue of *Reflections*. Here is the twelfth resource.

I created the following set of “Morning Affirmations” to help people renew their minds at the beginning of the day. It guides you through a biblical perspective on the fundamental issues of life: *Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?* In this way, you review God’s perspective on your faith, your identity, your purpose, and your hope. These affirmations can serve as a useful tool in the threefold spiritual warfare:

**Review God’s perspective on your faith, your identity, your purpose, and your hope. a useful tool in the threefold spiritual warfare:**

### MORNING AFFIRMATIONS

#### 1. SUBMITTING TO GOD

- Because of all You have done for me, I present my body to You as a living sacrifice for this day. I want to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, affirming that Your will for me is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

#### 2. ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

- Offer a brief word of praise to God for one or more of His attributes (e.g., love and compassion, grace, mercy, holiness, goodness, omnipotence,

omnipresence, omniscience, truthfulness, unchanging character, eternity) and/or works (e.g., creation, care, redemption, loving purposes, second coming).

- Thank Him for the good things in your life.

#### 3. EXAMINATION

- Ask the Spirit to search your heart and reveal any areas of unconfessed sin. Acknowledge these to the Lord and thank Him for His forgiveness. (Psalm 139:23-24)

#### 4. MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST

- “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)
- I have forgiveness from the penalty of sin because Christ died for me. (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3)
- I have freedom from the power of sin because I died with Christ. (Colossians 2:11; 1 Peter 2:24)
- I have fulfillment for this day because Christ lives in me. (Philippians 1:20-21)
- By faith, I will allow Christ to manifest His life through me. (2 Corinthians 2:14)

#### 5. FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

- Ask the Spirit to control and fill you for this day.
- I want to be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18) When I walk by the Spirit, I will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16) If I live by the Spirit, I will also walk by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

#### 6. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- Pray on the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but

rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

#### 7. PURPOSE OF MY LIFE

- I want to love the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and I want to love my neighbor as myself. (Matthew 22:37, 39) My purpose is to love God completely, love self correctly, and love others compassionately.
- I will seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness. (Matthew 6:33)
- I have been called to follow Christ and to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19)
- I will be a witness to those who do not know Him and participate in the Great Commission to go and make disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
- I want to glorify the Father by bearing much fruit, and so prove to be Christ’s disciple. (John 15:8)

#### 8. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DAY

- I will trust in the Lord with all my heart, and not lean on my own understanding. In all my ways I will acknowledge Him, and He will make my paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28; also see 8:29) I acknowledge that You are in control of all things in my life, and that You have my best interests at heart. Because of this I will trust and obey You today.
- Review and commit the events of this day into the hands of God.

#### 9. PROTECTION IN THE WARFARE

##### Against the World: Renew

- I will set my mind on the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8:5)
- Since I have been raised up with Christ, I will keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. I will set my mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1-2; also see 3:3-4 and Hebrews 12:1-2)
- I will be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving I will let my requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, I will let my mind dwell

on these things. (Philippians 4:6-8; also see 4:9)

##### Against the Flesh: Reckon

- I know that my old self was crucified with Christ, so that I am no longer a slave to sin, for he who has died is freed from sin. I will reckon myself as dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. I will not present the members of my body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but I will present myself to God as one alive from the dead, and my members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:6-7, 11, 13)

##### Against the Devil: Resist

- As I submit myself to God and resist the devil, he will flee from me. (James 4:7)
- I will be of sober spirit and on the alert. My adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But I will resist him, firm in my faith. (1 Peter 5:8-9)
- I will take up the full armor of God, that I may be able to resist and stand firm. I put on the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness; I put on my feet the preparation of the gospel of peace; and I take up the shield of faith with which I will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. I take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition I will pray at all times in the Spirit and be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:13-18)

#### 10. THE COMING OF CHRIST AND MY FUTURE WITH HIM

- Your kingdom come, Your will be done. (Matthew 6:10)
- You have said, “I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)
- I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to me. (Romans 8:18)
- I will not lose heart, but though my outer man is decaying, yet my inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for me an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- My citizenship is in heaven, from which also I eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20)
- (Also consider 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 11:1, 6; 2 Peter 3:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 3:2-3.)

## A MATTER OF INTERPRETATION



Ken Boa, President Reflections Ministries

In all innocence, children have for centuries sung a nursery rhyme that is in truth anything but an innocent verse: **Ring-a-ring o’roses, A pocket full of posies, A-tishoo! A-tishoo! We all fall down!**

The rhyme arose about 1665 in the streets of London during a plague epidemic of the Black Death. Each phrase of the rhyme refers to an aspect of the plague.

“Ring o’roses” is a reference to the small, red rashlike areas that developed on people infected with the plague.

“Pocket full of posies” is a reference to the ancient belief that evil smells were the poisonous breath of demons who afflicted people with the disease. It was thought that sweet-smelling herbs and flowers would drive them off.

“A-tishoo! A-tishoo!” is a reference to the sneezing that was a symptom of the plague.

“We all fall down!” is a reference to death.

Thus, a common children’s rhyme is an fact a sinister parody of one of the most dreaded plagues ever to strike—the Black Death.

The same loss of context and therefore of meaning can affect those who study the Scriptures. And that is why when we seek to interpret the word of God, we do in part by studying its historical, grammatical context.

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a teaching letter of

