

Our Part In The Sanctification Process (Part Eight) Cultivating The Fruit Of Faithfulness

Cultivating the Spirit of Faithfulness

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Greetings brothers and sisters from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, a truly Millennial venue on the beautiful Atlantic Seaboard. We will turn to several related scriptures upon which I intend to weave a theme for this message. Most scriptural references will be taken either from the Lockman Foundation's *Amplified Bible* or the Lockman Foundation's *New American Standard Bible* or the *New American Standard Bible E-Prime*. All three of these versions are available in electronic format on the Church of the Great God website.

The context of Luke 18:7 is our Lord and Savior's command to be persistent in prayer, following His commendation of the persistent widow who wore out the unjust judge with her endless petitions. Jesus concludes in verses 7 and 8:

Luke 18:7-8 (AMP) And will not [our just] God defend and avenge His elect [His chosen ones] who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay [in providing justice] on their behalf. I tell you that He will defend and avenge them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find [this kind of persistent] faith on the earth?

Last year on day six of the Feast of Tabernacles, John Ritenbaugh in his sermon "Israel's Missing Characteristics of God" identified faith and faithfulness as Israel's most lacking godly characteristics, reminding us that of the 70 billion people who have lived on the earth, only one human being, Jesus Christ, has been faithful to the Creator. Everyone else from Adam and Eve down to us today has had highs and lows regulated by our carnal human nature, which continually displays enmity against God and His laws. Sadly, carnality is a huge part of our make-up, requiring a steel band to be drawn around it to give us even a fighting chance.

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We have the same fickle, carnal nature that our ancient forbears labored under in the wilderness. We can only demonstrate our love and faithfulness to God by keeping His commandments, realizing that love is an action rather than merely a warm, fuzzy feeling. John continues, “What distinguishes godly love from human affection is faithfulness. Faithfulness means living continually by faith, completing a commanded act, even though doing so may cost us something of value. Love is not primarily a feeling but faithfulness in applying His Word.”

My former colleague Doug Winnail, in his Bible study “How Do You Build Real Faith?,” explained that the tendency to doubt seems to be a wired-in proclivity of human nature, as demonstrated by the apostle Peter’s failed attempt to walk on water (Matthew 14:31), the disciples lack of faith that Christ had actually been resurrected (Luke 24:38), and Thomas’s refusal to believe without certain rock solid physical evidence (John 20:24-29), reminding us that we are not any different from the disciples, having the same tendency to doubt until we prove something otherwise. In this same study, Doug Winnail demonstrates that faith has been attacked and ridiculed for centuries:

Mark Twain once remarked “faith is believing in what ain’t so.”

Atheist H. L. Mencken asserted, “faith is an *illogical* belief in the occurrence of the *improbable*.” (emphasis added)

Karl Marx termed faith in religion “the opium of the people.”

One prominent American businessman has contemptuously stated that religious faith “is for losers.”

One dictionary definition states that faith is “a firm belief in something for which there is *no proof*”—a statement which we will learn is just the opposite of the truth. (emphasis added)

To those whom the Father has not yet extended the John 6:44 calling, which includes the vast majority of the human population, faith is foolish or “non-sense” because it cannot be apprehended or detected by the senses,” even

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though its results are often experienced by the senses—just as surely as the effects of unseen physical laws of gravity, electricity, or electromagnetic waves.

Hebrews 11:1 (AMP) Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact that which cannot be experienced by the physical senses].

The Greek word for faith here is identical to the word for faith in our lead-off scripture Luke 18:8, as well as the seventh listed fruit of God's Spirit in Galatians 5:22 transliterated as *pistis*, translated as trustworthiness or reliability as applied to faith, belief, trust, confidence, fidelity, or faithfulness. William Barclay in his commentary on Galatians explains, "This word (*pistis*) is common in secular Greek for *trustworthiness*. It is the characteristic of the man who is reliable" (p. 51).

Greg Ebie, in his article, "The Fruit of the Spirit, Part 9: Faithfulness," adds another dimension, asserting that "Faithfulness is love-proving. Faithfulness is love that hangs on to the end; it's love that won't quit. Faithfulness is not just a one-time display; faithfulness proves itself over and over and over again. Faithfulness is a lifestyle of consistent dependability; it's the superglue of the heart that won't let go."

This kind of faithfulness is exemplified by Our Savior's promise in Hebrews 13.

Hebrews 13:5 (AMP) I will never [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE or LET YOU DOWN or RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!

This promise echoes and amplifies Moses encouraging words in Deuteronomy 31 stating,

Deuteronomy 31:6 (AMP) Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble in dread before them, for it is the **LORD** your **GOD** who goes with you. He will not fail you or abandon you.

The successor of Moses felt compelled to remind the often-wobbly faithless children of Jacob in Joshua 1.

Joshua 1:5 (AMP) No man will [be able to] stand before you [to oppose you] as long as you live. Just as I was [present] with Moses, so will I be with you; I will not fail you or abandon you.”

Richard Ritenbaugh in his sermon, “Seeking God’s Will (Part Two): Faithfulness,” adds this further nuance using the synonymous word for faithfulness, *sure*: “It can have a sense like, “you have a sure foundation,” meaning it is trustworthy, or solid: it is firm, and it is not going to be moved. You can see where it is similar—sure, trustworthy, reliable, faithful, solid, unmovable.”

James 1:5-6 (AMP) If any of you lacks wisdom [to guide him through a decision or circumstance], he is to ask of [our benevolent] God, who gives to everyone generously and without rebuke or blame, and it will be given to him. But he must ask [for wisdom] in faith [derived from the same word as our lead-off scripture and the seventh listed fruit of God’s Spirit in Galatians 5: 22—*pistis*], without doubting [God’s willingness to help], for the one who doubts is like a billowing surge of the sea that is blown about and tossed by the wind.

What Jesus’ half-brother James calls for is our willing steadfast faithfulness to unconditionally trust our heavenly Father to safeguard our best interests.

The only tangible measure of our faith is our faithfulness, trust, or loyalty to Almighty God. Matthew Baker, in his article titled “Faith or Faithfulness?” makes a compelling case that Christ’s disciples, then and now, may have been inadvertently asking for the wrong thing. “They didn’t need to increase their faith—they needed to increase their faithfulness—there is a big difference. Faith is a gift from God. He gives us the amount of faith that we

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need, and it never runs out [unless we purposely choose to quench it] In this context, to ask God to increase our faith seems a kind of insult. But faithfulness, on the other hand, is our response to our faith. It's what we do with our faith. And that is up to us. Faithfulness is defined as being loyal to the person we put our trust in. We put our faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We also must be faithful to him." Matthew Baker challenges us, "When we get the feeling that something is not quite right in our walk with God, it's not that we lack faith. It's that we lack faithfulness."

This is quite similar to a statement made by the late Joseph Tkach (one of the things which Richard claims he got right), "When you think God has gone far off, you have to ask, 'Who moved?'"

Hebrews 11:6 (AMP) But without faith [again having the same root as the word in the lead scripture and the seventh listed fruit of God's Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22—having the semantic range of both faith and faithfulness] it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him.

The apostle Peter made it clear in his Pentecost sermon that there is a quid pro quo for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, that is—to repent of sins and become baptized in a watery grave (referencing Acts 2:38) and to make a concerted effort to obey the laws of Almighty God (Acts 5:32). In short—no obedience, no Holy Spirit.

As Doug Winnail asserts in his Bible study, "How Do You Build Real Faith?" "We will grow in faith—as we trust God—and actually follow His instructions. As our faithfulness to God increases, we will become more staunch, firm, determined, resolute in our belief in God."

The book of James, which Martin Luther sadly referred to as an epistle of straw, makes a significant caveat on our understanding of faith, namely, belief that God exists is not faith sufficient for salvation:

James 2:14 (AMP) What is the benefit, my fellow believers, if someone claims to have faith but has no [good] works [as

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evidence]? Can that [kind of] faith save him? [No, a mere claim of faith is not sufficient—genuine faith produces good works.]

Lyle Welty, in his sermon-article “How to Grow in Faith,” asserts that “It’s comforting to know that if we just do the things God tells us to do, our faith will grow. We don’t have to figure this out for ourselves; we just need to do what God tells us to do!” In other words, instead of wasting our precious time wishing for more faith, we need to find what God requires of us and then faithfully set about to accomplish those objectives or works, involving obeying and living by every Word of God. James provides a concrete example of godly works in James 2.

James 2:15-17 (AMP) If a brother or sister is without [adequate] clothing and lacks [enough] food for each day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace [with my blessing], [keep] warm and feed yourselves,” but he does not give them the necessities for the body, what good does that do? So too, faith, if it does not have works [to back it up], is by itself [stone] dead [inoperative and ineffective].

Lyle Welty contends that “faith without obedience is a counterfeit. In God’s eyes, it is a mockery of true, living faith.”

James 2:19 (AMP) You believe that God is one; you do well [to believe that]. The demons also believe [that], and shudder and bristle [in awe-filled terror—they have seen His wrath!]

Could anyone make a convincing case that the demons are pleasing God just because they believe? The same holds true of human beings who claim to believe in God’s existence but refuse to obey God’s commandments.

James 2:20 (AMP) But are you willing to recognize, you foolish [spiritually shallow] person, that faith without [good] works is useless?

The thesis or SPS for this message is that we, as God’s called-out ones, are wasting our precious time if we wish for or try to work up faith without faithfully obeying God, keeping His commandments, and trusting His

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purpose for us. God Almighty's desire for us is that we become as faithful to Him as He is for us. Jesus Christ's desire for His fiancé (the collective Body of Christ, the Israel of God) is that she demonstrates the same kind of faithfulness to Him as He does for her.

In his article, "Called to be Faithful," Christian Cheong insists that "We cannot be faithful to someone who is fickle and disloyal. There will be no grounds for faith and faithfulness. We can be motivated to become faithful today because we know of a God who is absolutely faithful. His faithfulness is the reason we can aspire to be faithful today."

Keep your bookmark here in James because we are going to come back this way. But for now, turn to Deuteronomy 5, exposing or explaining the reason the Old Covenant was not sufficient.

Deuteronomy 5:29 (AMP) "Oh, that they had such a [mind and] heart in them always [reverently] to fear Me and keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them and their children forever!"

Now let us go to Hebrews 8. Here we learn that the fault with the first covenant was not the harsh ceremonial law, which antinomian Protestant theologians foolishly assume, but it was with the rebelliousness of the people and their failure to remain faithful to the covenant keeping God's Holy Laws for their own good. In Hebrews 8:8-10 is the announcement about the terms of the New Covenant—and my favorite verse in the entire Bible (a reprise of Jeremiah 31:33).

Hebrews 8:8-10 (AMP) "BEHOLD, THE DAYS WILL COME, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE and RATIFY A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT ABIDE IN MY COVENANT, AND SO I WITHDREW MY FAVOR and DISREGARDED THEM, SAYS THE LORD. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE

DAYs, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL IMPRINT MY LAWS UPON THEIR MINDS [even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding], AND ENGRAVE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS [effecting their regeneration]. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

This prophecy has both a pre-Millennial application, referring to the earnest payment God gives to the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) as a pledge, down payment, deposit made by Almighty God assuring His called-out ones of their future eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14) and it refers also to a promise to the clientele of the resurrected saints—the chastened and humbled remnant of Israel, rescued from stark oblivion at the beginning of the Millennium.

Regarding the promise to the Israel of God having received the John 6:44 calling from the Father, one of our commentary entries on the “Earnest Payment of the Holy Spirit” uses the metaphor of an engagement ring with which Jesus Christ gives His fiancée as a pledge for the future marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9).

Again, as John Ritenbaugh has stated, of the estimated 70 billion people who have ever lived on the earth, only Jesus Christ has remained faithful to all covenants ratified between God and mankind and between God and Israel. Sadly, physical Israel, God’s chosen people, has been disgustingly fickle, unreliable, rebellious, often behaving as a brazen impudent whore, whom Hosea was commanded to rescue and buy back—not so that she could whore around some more, but repent of her disgusting sins and in a humble chastened state be redeemed. Gomer represents the current immoral, degenerate state of modern Israel, whose Supreme Court has made infanticide (murdering more innocent human lives than Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, and Pol Pot combined) and sodomy and tolerance for perversion the law of the land, hypocritically invoking women’s and minority rights.

Deuteronomy 7:9 (AMP) Therefore know [without any doubt] and understand that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who is keeping His covenant and His [steadfast] lovingkindness to a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

I fail to see that physical Israel has ever been able to carry her faithfulness for even one generation—let alone even a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a thousand generations. All too often Gentiles have put God’s chosen people to pathetic shame.

In his September-October 1998 Forerunner “Personal,” John Ritenbaugh writes that “Historians say that faithfulness was such a hallmark of the Roman Republic that not one divorce occurred in its first seven hundred years! But in the last fifty years [or I should emend—the last 70] years, this nation has seen a calamitous, family destroying rise in the divorce rate that threatens the very stability of society.

In the “What We Believe” creed in the self-acclaimed, queer-affirming, Marxist organization Black Lives Matter, the following tenet appears: We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.”

Candace Owens, in an interview with commentator Sebastian Gorka, has exposed the ‘progressive’ leftist politicians’ diabolical satanic plan to destroy the black family in order to grow government through dependency upon welfare, militating against the institution of fatherhood and the nuclear family.

Back in 1998, Julie, Aaron, and I had the privilege of hearing one of the leading black economists, Dr. Walter Williams, speaking at a standing room only event at Tyler Junior College. He attacked the erosion of our personal liberties by the federal government. At one point he said, “The welfare system has done irrevocable damage to the black community, carrying out what slavery and reconstruction couldn’t do, that is—to create a perpetual system of slavery and dependency.”

Jacob’s children, from the time of the Exodus to the present day, have been plagued with the sins of faithlessness and rebellion, far in excess of the Gentiles, to whom a kingdom of priests were supposed to have taught God’s ways by their example. In his Feast of Trumpets sermon 3 1/2 weeks ago,

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“The Necessary Punishment of Israel,” Richard Ritenbaugh describes a horrendous time characterized as “Jacob’s Trouble” or “Israel’s Day of the Lord” prophesied by the contemporaneous prophets Amos and Ezekiel, referring to a future event at the end times involving the contemporary physical House of Israel:

Ezekiel 5:6-9 (AMP) And she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the [pagan] nations and against My statutes more than the countries that are round about her; for [Israel] has rejected My ordinances and as for My statutes, they have not walked in them. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you were more turbulent and raged [against Me] more than the nations that are round about you and have not walked in My statutes, neither have kept My ordinances, nor have done according to the ordinances [concerning] the nations that are round about you [This certainly describes the cancel culture mobs ironically composed to a large degree by white, post-millennial ‘progressive’ college-educated women smashing windows, burning down businesses, and murdering innocent people.]; therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I, I Myself, am against you, and I will execute judgements among you in the sight of the nations. And because of all your abominations, I will do among you that which I have not done, and the like of which I will not do again.

Ezekiel 6:8-9 (AMP) “Yet I will leave some of you alive [a remnant], for you will have some who escaped the sword among the nations when you are scattered throughout the countries. Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be exiled, how I have been broken by their lewdness and their adulterous hearts which have turned away from Me, and by their eyes which lust after their idols; and they will loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed, for all their repulsive acts.

These hapless chastened refugees will constitute our clients as Jesus Christ’s government will be established on this earth. Just as Hosea could not be again united with Gomer until she renounced her whorish ways, approaching Hosea in chastened humility, Israel will continue to be cut off or estranged

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from God Almighty until she has totally, in abject shame, followed by sincere humility, renounced or forsaken her sins, accepting God's faithful leadership.

Chris Benjamin, in his book *Life on the Vine: Cultivating Faithfulness*, contends that "Faithfulness is the character of God. This isn't a unique quality of God's relationship with Israel. This is the way God treats all of creation. This is the way God treats us even when we are unfaithful."

Romans 3:3-4 (AMP) What if some did not believe and were without faith? Does their lack of faith and their faithlessness nullify and make ineffective and void the faithfulness of God and His fidelity [to His Word]? By no means! Let God be found true though every human being is false and a liar, as it is written, That You may be justified and shown to be upright in what You say, and prevail when You are judged [by sinful men].

Paul repeats this theme in II Timothy 2.

II Timothy 2:13 (AMP) If we are faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.

Paul echoes a principle made by Balaam in Numbers 23.

Numbers 23:19 (AMP) God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken and will He not make it good and fulfill it?

Let us turn over to Exodus 34, beginning with verse 5, the passage in which our Lord reveals not only the depths of His faithfulness to His people, but also His resolute hatred for iniquity in any form.

Exodus 34:5-7 (AMP) Then the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with Moses as he proclaimed the Name of the L_{ORD}. Then the L_{ORD} passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The L_{ORD}, the L_{ORD} G_D, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and

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abounding in lovingkindness, truth, and (faithfulness); keeping mercy and lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin; but [unlike the Protestant—evangelical assumption of cheap grace] He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting (avenging) the iniquity (sin, guilt) of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations [that is, calling the children to account for the sins of their fathers].

We can see the ripple effect of every sin ever committed. No sin is ever committed in a vacuum—and all unrepented, *willful* sins are sins unto death. The Scriptures are heavily saturated with assurances of God's faithfulness lasting for eternity. Please turn over to Psalm 100 indicating the vast scope of His faithfulness.

Psalm 100:5 (AMP) For the Lord is good; His mercy and loving-kindness are everlasting, His faithfulness and truth [endures] to all generations.

The shortest psalm in the Bible, Psalm 117, focuses on the eternity of God's love and faithfulness toward us.

Psalm 117:2 (NIV) For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

In the longest psalm in the Bible, Psalm 119, David examines multiple facets of God's faithfulness. In verse 30, David connects faithfulness to setting one's heart to following God's laws.

Psalm 119:30 (NIV) I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.

In verse 75, David recognizes that God's afflicting us in loving correction demonstrates His faithfulness.

Psalm 119:75 (NIV) I know LORD, that your laws are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

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We remember Jeremiah's epiphany of God's faithfulness in the midst of Jerusalem's siege, when he expresses his feelings of hope and gratitude in Lamentations 3.

Lamentations 3:21-25 (AMP) But this I recall and therefore have I hope and expectation: It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His [tender] compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great and abundant is Your stability and faithfulness. The Lord is my portion or share, says my living being (my inner self); therefore will I hope in Him and wait expectantly for Him. The Lord is good to those who wait hopefully and expectantly for Him, to those who seek Him [inquire of and for Him and require Him by right of necessity and on the authority of God's word].

When God's hand sternly and severely corrects modern Israel for its immorality and transgressions, we may be compelled to hide Jeremiah's words in our heart, "Great is Your faithfulness."

Returning to Psalm 119, let us scroll down to verse 90, another reiteration of the eternal scope of God's faithfulness:

Psalm 119:90 (NIV) Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

Psalm 119:113 (NIV) I hate double-minded people, but I love your law.

We recall that James has warned us that when we pray for wisdom, we are not to be double-minded or become wobbly in the knees. In verse 113, David equates single-mindedness or steadfastness with faithfulness to God's law.

Psalm 119:140 (NIV) Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.

In his article "God's Promises: Rock-Solid Hope and Assurance," John Foster asserts that "the promises of God, are sure, transcending anything we

could possibly seek. God has made thousands of promises. Some sources suggest that the Bible contains approximately 30,000 promises!"

Psalm 119:148 (NIV) My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

Psalm 119:162 (NIV) I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil.

Psalm 119:170 (NIV) May my supplication come before you: deliver me according to your promise.

Lyle Welty, in his article "How to Grow in Faith," asserts that growing faith must be based on what God promises, stating, "Faith must be based on God's specific promises in the Bible. And we have to be sure that we understand the promises correctly." Without knowing these promises, we have no basis for understanding His will for us and His instructions to us as to our part of the covenant. The apostle Paul assures us that faith comes by hearing the words of the Scriptures (Romans 10:17) which are chockfull of God's promises to those who surrender to Him and keep His commandments.

Both John Foster in his article, "God's Promises: Rock Solid Hope and Assurance" and Lyle Welty in his article, "How to Grow in Faith," have compiled helpful compendiums or lists of God's promises to His called-out ones. Here are just a few of over 30,000 promises recorded in Scripture.

- God will provide us with all our physical and spiritual needs (Matthew 6:31-33; Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:9).
- He will finish the spiritual work that He's begun in us (Philippians 1:6).
- He will give us the wisdom we ask for as we go through life (James 1:5).
- He will never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
- He will never allow our trials to be more than we can bear (I Corinthians 10:13).

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- He will give us peace of mind (Philippians 4:7).
- He will forgive any and every sin once we have repented of it (I John 1:9).
- He will make it possible to grow and become like Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:15).
- He will cause everything that happens in our lives to eventually work out for good (Romans 8:28).

Our Lord and Savior, in the evening of His last Passover as a human being gave us many promises.

- In John 14:27, He promises His disciples then and now “Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.] (AMP)
- He promises us joy, stating in John 15:11, “I have told you these things so that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy may be made full and complete and overflowing.” (AMP)
- He promises us love! Stating in John 14:21: “The person who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me, and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him [I will make Myself real to him].” (AMP)
- He promises us the ability to have boldness as we approach God’s throne room because Jesus Christ serves as our High Priest, Mediator, and Advocate as we learn in Hebrews 4:14, “Inasmuch than as we [believers] have a great High Priest who has [already ascended and] passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith and cling tenaciously to our absolute trust in Him as Savior], enabling us to boldly proclaim, “ The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Psalm 118: 6) (AMP)

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The apostle Paul (presumably the author of Hebrews) states that Jesus serves as the Mediator of a New Covenant, established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6). Here are some of those “better promises” which have been emphasized throughout the writings of the apostles.

- Our sins will be forgiven. As we are assured in I John 1:7, “But if we [really] are living and walking in the Light, as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son (removes) us from all sin and guilt [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations] something the Old Covenant with all the animal sacrifices could not possibly accomplish.” (AMP)

In verse 9, John continues, “If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].” (AMP)

- We have the promise that God’s Holy Spirit will be in us, as Paul teaches us in Galatians 4:6, “And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father or Daddy)!” (AMP)
- God promises that His called-out ones will be resurrected from death, as Paul assures us in I Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the [blast of the] trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (AMP) God promises His resurrected saints eternal life of the highest quality—to live as God lives. We learn from I John 2:25, “This is the promise which He Himself promised us—eternal life.” (AMP)

God promises His sanctified called-out ones that they will be partakers of His divine nature as we learn from the apostle Peter’s second epistle.

II Peter 1:3-4 (AMP) For His divine power has bestowed on us [absolutely] everything necessary for [a dynamic spiritual] life and

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godliness, through true and personal knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has bestowed on us His precious promises [of inexpressible value], so that by them you may escape from the immoral freedom that is in the world because of disreputable desire, and become sharers of the divine nature.

Some may be wondering, is Dave Maas going to list all 30,000 of God's promises in the Bible? Actually, I have so far only listed only 16, which is roughly .0005 percent of the total. I will identify one more because it constitutes our job description of resurrected saints, members of God's Family serving in the Millennium.

Revelation 5:10 (AMP) "You have made them to be a kingdom [of royal subjects] and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth."

If we should ever get the feeling that God has moved way off, we need to ask ourselves—who moved? After examining the plethora of promises God Almighty has made to His called-out saints, we need to apply the following faith/faithfulness formula supplied by Jesus' half-brother James.

James 4:8 (AMP) Come close to God [with a concrete heart] and He will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; and purify your [unfaithful] hearts, you double-minded [people].

In the final analysis, we may be wasting our time asking God for more faith, if we have not done a thing to increase our faithfulness and obedience to His holy law. There is no such thing as faith without law keeping or works.

Three weeks ago Congressman Louie Gohmert, in an interview with Sebastian Gorka, related an amusing story about a pastor who sternly told his congregation, "Yes, God is in control, but that does not mean He wants us to lean on the shovel and pray for a hole."