

Pursuing the Promises of God – October 2018

In his book "Up From Slavery," Booker T. Washington wrote about meeting an ex-slave from Virginia. *He said that before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, the man had made a contract with his master to buy himself, by paying so much per year. While he was paying for himself, he was permitted to work where and for whom he pleased. Realizing that he could earn more money in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he still owed his master about three hundred dollars. Even though the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this ex-slave walked back to Virginia where his old master lived and placed the last dollar—with interest—in his hands.*

Washington said the man told him that he knew that he did not have to pay his debt, but he had given his word to his master, and his word he had never broken. He said that he could not enjoy his freedom until he had fulfilled his promise."

This is a true, profound and moving account of an era gone by, but it demonstrates the integrity of a promise. This man's word was his bond so he went out of his way to keep his promise. God's promises to His children are similar—God gave His Word to us, and He fulfills them, but sometimes they come with conditions. One significant difference, however, is we can *never* repay, nor are we expected to pay Christ for the debt we owe Him.

We want and even expect God to honor His promises to us, but oftentimes we ignore the *conditions* of His promises. In other words, we want the harvest, but we don't want to put in the hard work. For example, Psalm 37:4 tells us to, "*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*" God promises to give us the desires of our heart but they're conditional upon delighting ourselves in Him. Our desires should not be contrary to God's Word, will or character, Knowing God's Word and character requires that we have an up close, personal relationship with Him.

Throughout scripture God makes promises. Here are just a few of them:

- I will be with you (*Matthew 28:20*)
- I will protect you (*Proverbs 18:10*)
- I will give you strength (*Isaiah 40:29*)
- I will forgive you (*1 John 1:9*)
- I will provide for you. (*Philippians 4:19*)
- I will give you peace (*John 14:27*)
- I will always love you (*Romans 5:8*)

God's promises and blessings are not ours to enjoy regardless of how we choose to live, but as we die to self, embrace and reflect His character, God is a Promise Keeper. Pursue Him, get to know Him intimately and stand on His promises!

Peace and power,

Pastor Marriner