

The Promise And The Oath

[Part Two]

How do we apply God's Promises

Promise – God's declaration that He will or not do a certain thing.

Oath – God's solemn declaration, by swearing, that He will or not do a certain thing.

God stoops to our weakness, when He gives the oath, as He makes what He declares very easy to believe.

The promise is given before the full assurance of the oath is made.

It is by the promises of God that we are to live on a day-to-day basis.

The purpose of the oath is to put an end to all argument and when given little if any faith is needed to believe what has been declared by God.

Even when the oath is given it doesn't mean we will never doubt again. A good example of this is John the Baptist.

John 1:29, 32-34 [NIV] *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ... “Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”*

John was given the full assurance that Jesus was the Messiah directly by God there could have been no doubt in his mind.

Yet, John did have doubts afterwards.

Luke 7:18-20 [NIV] *“John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?’”*

How do we then apply the promises of God in our life?

The oath doesn't normally need any application because it brings such assurance that we are left with no doubts.

The promise does need application for us to experience its full benefit.

Why?

It is the promise we have to believe, if we are to be righteous in God's eyes.

Abraham believed and it was accounted to him as righteousness, this is the only way we can become righteous.

Romans 4:3 [NIV] *“What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Why do we need to know how to apply the promises of God?

We all need to increase our faith and it is through applying the promises that our faith is increased.

We all need to not only know God’s promises in our head but believe and live by them in our heart. They need to become the driving force of our lives.

We are children of Abraham and we can experience in our lives what Abraham did in his.

Hebrews 6:10-12 [NIV] *“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”*

We also by applying the promises as Abraham did may also then experience the absolute confidence, the oath from God, as Abraham did.

Hebrews 6:13-15, 17-18 [NIV] *“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.” ... “Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”*

The Bible is a book full of promises and when we understand how to apply these promises the God’s Word becomes more than just head knowledge, it becomes our way of living.

How we apply God’s promises is an indication of how much faith we have and how seriously we take God’s Word.

Why does the promise need to be applied?

The promise is often conditional, sometimes it will have the word “if” in it or some conditions are implied.

For example:

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

God’s love gift of Jesus Christ was for everyone but not all will be saved, only those who believe.

Salvation is a free gift to all but not everyone will be saved, only those who believe in and accept this gift from God.

The gospel promise itself is a conditional promise.

Examples of other conditional promises:

2 Chronicles 7:14 [NIV] *“...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

A wonderful promise but there is an “if” included in the promise.

Humility, prayer, seeking God, repentance.

Deuteronomy 11:22-23 [NIV] *“If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to hold fast to him—then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you.”*

A wonderful way to deal with our enemies but conditional to obeying God, loving God and faithfully walking in the way He shows us.

Psalms 37:4 [NIV] *“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.”*

We all have many desires in our lives but for God to give them to us is conditional to our delighting ourselves in Him. **No “if” but it is implied.**

“Delight” the Hebrew word “*ânag*” to be soft and pliable in a feminine way, to yield to God in a trusting way, as a wife does to a husband she trusts completely. *“Keep company with God”* [Message Bible].

What happens when we apply this promise is that when we yield to God in this way the desires of our heart change to harmonise with God’s desires for our lives.

Proverbs 3:6 [NIV] *“...in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*

Proverbs 3:6 [Message Bible] *“Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go, He is the One who will keep you on track.”*

No “if” but conditional to acknowledge God in everything. We do this through prayer. Talk to God each morning about every known or planned event that our day will bring.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 [NIV] *“...pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Talk to God about what is happening as it happens. Thanking Him for both blessings and trials.

1 John 1:7-8 [NIV] *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*

This is a verse that refers to fellowship. **A promise with the condition of our walking in the light.** To allow this promise to be fulfilled the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us and the righteous life of Jesus, credited to us through faith, makes us acceptable to fellowship with a Holy God.

How do we “walk in the light”?

a) **Psalms 119:105** [NIV] *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”*

God’s Word is a light to guide us on our pathway of life.

b) **John 8:12** [NIV] *“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

When we look to Christ we are seeing the light in which we are to stay.

c) **Ephesians 5:11-18** [NIV] *“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”*

A walk with the Holy Spirit on a day-to-day basis is the way we live in the light. The Holy Spirit will lead us and teach us.

All the above promises have conditions attached, our obedience and faith.

Some promises will be fulfilled with or without our obedience or faith, these are like the oath for nothing will stop them being fulfilled.

Genesis 3:15 [NIV] *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

The promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ and nothing was going to stop it.

Isaiah 55:11 [NIV] *“...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

This is a promise for all of us as we speak God’s Word to others and notice that there is no conditions attached. We may never see or recognise the fruits of God’s Word as we utter them, but they will accomplish all that God wants them to accomplish.

Psalms 100:5 [NIV] *“For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”*

Because God is love itself, totally faithful and eternal, this is a promise we can hold on to, and it comes to us without conditions.

Lamentations 3:22 [NIV] *“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.”*

Although we deserve only death because of what we are and have done, God’s love and compassion towards us will never diminish.

Romans 8:38-39 [NIV] *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

“... God is love ...” God does not just love us, He is the very source of true love.

All the above promises are true even if we don’t believe in them.

No promise conditional or unconditional is of any real value to us unless we apply it, that is, believe and act on the promise.

How we apply a promise shows whether we believe it.

Why does God give us promises and not the oath right away, for the oath needs very little if any faith?

a) **Habakkuk 2:4** [NIV] *“See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright, but the righteous will live by his faith”*

“... the righteous will live by His faith ...” Hebrew actually says **“His faithfulness”**, the faithfulness of God, that is the promises of God that are sure.

When we lean on and live by God’s faithfulness shows that we have faith.

b) **Ephesians 2:8** [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”*

God has decreed we will be saved by faith **not** by works of righteousness.

c) **Hebrews 11:1** [NIV] *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

Faith links with the promise **not** the oath. **Faith in what is promised yet unseen.**

d) **It is through the applying of God’s promises to our life that we truly show that we believe God’s Word.**

Nothing pleases God more than for us to just believe His Word without signs and wonders.

Think of it this way.

If I asked you to do something for me and you promised to do it, how would you feel if I then returned and said, “will you put what you have promised in writing and swear to me you will keep your promise.”

Would this please you?

No! What would please you is if I had faith in your spoken word alone. Asking for more proof would make you feel disappointed that your spoken word was not enough.

God is no different. If we believe what He promises without visible proof that really pleases Him, for such a belief in His promises, affirms God’s faithfulness, and He loves that in His children.

Arther Blessed, the man who carried a wooden cross around the world as a witness tells this story in his book about that journey.

One day in the Middle East at the close of a very long and tiring day in which it had rained constantly he sat cold, exhausted and soaked to the skin on a wooden bench on the roadside. Arther prayed earnestly to God for the rain to stop to give him relief and rest. Arther then cried out *“in the name of Jesus Christ stop raining”*.

What do you think happened?

Did the rain stop?

Well that is what Arther hoped! But at that very moment it thundered and lightened and the sky opened up and the rain poured down heavier than ever before. Arther said *“God, I love you anyway”*. **God likes that attitude.**

Job 13:15 [NIV] *“Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him...”*

If we want to please God just live our lives believing and claiming His promises without the assurance of signs or evidence of an oath.

Perhaps then at the end of our lives we can say the same as one 90 year old Christian lady, *“I have been serving God so long that I can hardly tell the difference between a blessing and a trial.”*

Think about that!! When a trial comes we can say *“God you must love me a lot to bless me with this trial”*, that is faith.

This is what James was talking about.

James 1:2-4 [NIV] *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

What promises are to be applied?

All of them, whether there are conditions that come with the promise or not.

When we apply those that are unconditional we receive the benefit of them as we believe them and live by them, as much as when we believe and obey those with conditions.

It is for everyone who believes **not** for everyone whether they believe or not.

Hebrews 2:9 [NIV] *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”*

Only those who believe this promise are saved.

This and other scriptures tell us that Jesus died for everyone.

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

But it is only those who apply this promise by believing it who are saved from eternal death.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 [NIV] *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”*

We have the promise that God has reconciled the world to Himself through Jesus Christ but we are commended to be reconciled to God. We have to apply what God has promised and done.

The gift of salvation is not ours until we accept it in belief.

We can tell people of the Good News of what God has done for them but it never is theirs until they accept and believe it.

The promise of the Holy Spirit

Luke 11:13 [NIV] *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

God is more than willing to give us the Holy Spirit but there are conditions.

a) **We ask God constantly on a daily basis, first that we may be cleansed of sin and receive the gift of Christ's righteousness that we can receive the Holy Spirit.**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 [NIV] *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”*

The Spirit of God is Holy and He will not dwell in any place that is not holy, that is a person who is sin free and righteous [right with God, justified, as if we had never sinned].

b) **Romans 8:12-14** [NIV] *“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

We are to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, we submit to His Will, we don't use His Power to fulfil our desires.

Acts 5:32 [NIV] *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”*

We obey the lead of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:3 [NIV] *“Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”*

The proof we have the Holy Spirit is that “Jesus is Lord”, director, ruler of our lives.

John 16:8 [NIV] *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

Acts 2:38 [NIV] *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

It is the Holy Spirit who reveals our sin and brings us to repentance, changing our loyalty from ourselves and this world to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

This is how we apply the promise of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of reward

Not everyone who enters the Kingdom of Heaven will receive a reward!

Entering the Kingdom of Heaven is a type of reward for faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us. We can be saved from death but only just and some will be in the Kingdom of Heaven without any rewards.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17 [NIV] *“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you*

know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."

Being saved from death is the foundation on which we build, and it is what we build with the help of the Holy Spirit, that will determine our reward.

We may say *"I don't need any encouragement of future reward, I just want to serve Jesus Christ."* This is the *"Uriah Heep"* mentality, *"I'm just a humble servant of God."*

I ask such a person *"would you question the spirituality of the apostle Paul? Reward was very important to him!"*

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 [NIV] *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

Paul is not talking about losing out on eternal life but of not receiving a reward from God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Luke 12:2-3 [NIV] *"There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs."*

The day will come when everyone will know if you and I are mature children of God or not, whether we receive a reward or not. The same will be for all who have received Christ and been saved from eternal death.

Luke 12:8-10 [NIV] *"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."*

Note the context. What determines our future is our relationship with Jesus Christ and our desire to be reflecting that relationship in our lives for others to see.

Note, the relationship with Jesus Christ is through the Holy Spirit.

Receiving a reward is not automatic with our being saved

Peter understood this.

2 Peter 1:4-10 [NIV] *"Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,"*

Our seeking to add to our faith, and building godly character will determine the richness of our entry into the eternal Kingdom of God. This reward is also called our inheritance in scripture.

Matthew 25:22-23 [NIV] *“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ ‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*

To hear the *“well done, good and faithful servant”* from the lips of Jesus Christ is the greatest reward I seek.

The main reason we become a Christian is to avoid hell when we die.

But becoming a Christian does have *“fringe benefits”*.

The main reason Jesus died on the cross is that we may miss hell and enjoy eternal life in the Heavenly Kingdom of God.

The man on the street carrying a placard advising us to *“flee from the wrath of God to come”* is giving good advice.

Yet such an announcement embarrasses us and Satan has made it an object of scoffing and humour, to blind us from this truth.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

The wages or the reward of sin is eternal death in hell.

This is a promise of God as sure as that of eternal life through faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

There are many promises that are *“fringe benefits”* that are available to the Christian. One who has surrendered their life to Christ as a living sacrifice.

Philippians 4:19 [NIV] *“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”*

A promise that God will supply all our needs.

James 4:7 [NIV] *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

A promise that Satan will free from our presence, but note it is a conditional promise.

John 14:26 [NIV] *“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

The promise that the Holy Spirit will teach us and bring what we have learnt to remembrance when we need it.

Even though the unconditional promises have no conditions to receiving them they also have to be applied.

No promise is of any benefit to us unless we believe it and live our lives as if it is true.

We benefit from these unconditional promises only to the degree we believe them.

The promise of Christ's second coming is an unconditional promise. He is coming whether we believe it or not. **But this promise will only be of benefit to us now if our belief is so strong that it motivates us to be prepared every day of our lives for that event.**

Romans 10:9-11 [NIV] *“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

We need to believe the promises of God not only with our mind [intellectually] but with our heart [the driving force of our life] and with our tongue [not be ashamed to confess we are servants of Christ].

For example:-

The promise of salvation is applied by: a) repentance; b) baptism; c) active fellowship in a church family; d) personal witness for Christ.

Such action encompasses the mind, heart and tongue.

The promise of the Holy Spirit

This is applied by:

a) asking [the intellect]

Luke 11:13 [NIV] *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

b) being led by [the heart]

Romans 8:14 [NIV] *“because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

c) fruits of spirit in our lives are a powerful visual witness of the Holy Spirit [tongue]

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

2 Corinthians 5:10 [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

Holy living that is the result of self denial.

Philippians 2:4-7 [NIV] *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”*

To develop the heart of a servant.

Matthew 25:31-40 [NIV] *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”*”

We are to use our talents and wealth to serve those in physical or spiritual need.

1 Corinthians 9:19 [NIV] *“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.”*

Living the life of a servant to all is a powerful witness.

Romans 12:6-15 [NIV] *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”*

All this is contained in the goal of becoming a “*people builder*”, seeking by our example and our words to encourage and help others attain their full potential in life.

James 1:12 [NIV] *“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”*

If our Christian way of living brings with it trials we are to accept them with dignity, honouring God in the most difficult times of our lives, even when we don’t understand why!

Genesis 22:1-2 [NIV] *“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”*

What God asks of us sometimes makes no sense whatsoever, but if we are to receive an oath from God we must do the same as Abraham. Follow God’s instructions even when we don’t know why God is telling us to do what He is commanding us, even when it brings suffering.

Matthew 16:24-27 [NIV] *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”*

If we live a life of serving ourselves, seeking to fulfil our desires only, we will end up with no future, let alone any future reward.

Finally, the best way to get God's attention is to remind Him of His promises and claim them in faith, knowing He will always fulfil them.

Hebrews 11:6 [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Faith in and acting on the promises that God has made in His Word is the key to our eternal future.