

Steps to Appropriating God's Promises



God's Abundance (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hands through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I'll be continuing with the theme I commenced last week, God's Abundance.

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you so please take time to write, even if it's only a brief, personal note. Now, back to our theme, God's Abundance.

In my talks last week, I showed you that God's Abundance can only be apprehended by revelation from the Word of God by the Spirit of God and that there is a direct connection between the abundance of God and the promises of God. I shared with you five basic principles that link God's abundance to His promises and I'll recapitulate those.

First, God's provision is in His promise. Second, the promises are our inheritance. Third, all God's promises are now available to us in Christ. Fourth, the promises are the expression of God's will. God never promised to do anything that was not His will to do. And fifth, the fulfillment of God's promises does not depend on our circumstances but upon our meeting God's conditions. That's very important. We must never take our eyes off the promises and begin to look at the circumstances and then say the circumstances are too difficult. God actually delights to do the most in the most difficult circumstances.

Today, and in the days following, I'm going to explain to you in simple, practical terms, how to go about appropriating God's promises. You remember I said the promises are our inheritance. How do we move into our inheritance, which is the promises of God? I want to suggest to you three simple, practical steps to appropriating God's promises. First, let the Holy Spirit direct you to the appropriate promises. That's very important. It really isn't up to you to select the promise that you want. I'm, of course, familiar with the habit of having a "Promise Box" and handing it to people and letting them select a promise and I've experienced many times God

actually does work through that, but only if it's the Holy Spirit that's leading you. The Holy Spirit is the administrator of our inheritance. He's the one who shows us the promise that's in the will of God and relevant to our situation at any given time and when the Holy Spirit directs us to a promise, He also imparts to us the faith to appropriate that promise. So that in the last resort, the initiative is still with God and not with us. We don't make demands on God, we don't give orders to God, but by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we discover God's will for us in any given situation revealed in His promises. I have had need of healing from God several times in my Christian experience and it's interesting to me as I look back that in one situation the Holy Spirit would direct me to one promise but if I tried to go back to the same promise in the next situation, it didn't work because that wasn't where the Holy Spirit was directing me.

So it's not a formula. You can't just reduce God to a formula. God is Spirit. That's the most important fact. God is Spirit. You can't put Spirit in a box or reduce Spirit to a mathematical equation—that isn't how it works. But if you relate to the Holy Spirit as a person, make friends with Him, become intimate with Him, He will direct you into your inheritance in the promises. Listen to what Jesus says about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 16, verses 13 through 15. This is very relevant to our topic. Jesus said this:

> "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, [and notice that He did not call the Holy Spirit 'it,' He called Him 'He.' He's a Person.] When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you." (NIV)

So, on that basis, I say the Holy Spirit is the administrator of the total inheritance. All that belongs to the Father, belongs to Jesus. But what belongs to the Father and to Jesus is administered, imparted to us, by the Holy Spirit. He takes what belongs to Jesus and makes it known to us and as we receive from the Holy Spirit, we become really heirs to the whole inheritance but the initiative is with the Holy Spirit. He's the one who guides us into all truth. If we part company with the Holy Spirit, we'll soon find that we've parted company with the truth. We are not capable of coming into the real truth of God apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in any given situation, knowing God's plan for our lives and knowing the Word of God perfectly, will direct us to that part of the Word of God which will also fulfill God's plan for our lives.

There's another Scripture in Romans 8:14, which says very briefly the same thing:

> "For all who are being led the the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (NASB)

That's a continuous present tense. Those who are continually being led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. This is not a once-for-all contact—it's an ongoing association with the Holy Spirit. As we are regularly and continually led by the Holy Spirit, we live as sons of God. We become children of God through the new birth, through being born again of the spirit but we live as God's mature sons when we're regularly led by the Holy Spirit.

All right. The second step to appropriating God's promises is this: When the Holy Spirit has led you to a given promise in the Word of God, study and fulfill the conditions. That's important. Most of God's promises are conditional. In most cases, the promises of God begin with a word like "if." God says, "If you do so, I will do so." Now it's childish and immature to try to claim God's promise without studying and fulfilling the condition. You cannot ignore the "if." You cannot try to tie God down to doing something He's promised to do on certain conditions if you don't first meet the conditions. A very good example is a promise that's very close to me at the moment, Exodus 15:26.

> "If thou will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord and will do that which is right in His sight and will give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put upon thee none of the diseases that I have brought upon the Egyptians for I am the Lord that healeth thee." (KJV)

That's a tremendous promise! God says I'll put no sickness upon you. I'll be your healer. But you can't claim that without noting the "if." There are four conditions: "If thou will diligently hearken," "if thou will do that which is right in His sight," "if thou will give ear to His commandments," "if thou will keep all His statutes." On those four conditions God says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Do not claim the Lord as your healer and bypass the conditions.

The third step to appropriating God's promises is this: Maintain an attitude of faith and act appropriately. There is both attitude and act. You have to adopt a posture of believing and then, where appropriate, you have to act in accordance with what you believe. Scripture says, "Faith

without works [without appropriate acts] is dead."

Let me give you two Scriptures from Hebrews that emphasize this. Hebrews 6:12:

> "That you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (NASB)

Notice, it's not enough to have faith, you've got to have faith and patience. When you've located the promise, when you've met the conditions, you have to hold on in an attitude of faith or trust until the promise is fulfilled. There's often a time lag between your meeting the conditions and the promise being fulfilled. That the test of whether you really have faith.

And then again in Hebrews 10:36:

> "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." (NASB)

The same principle is true there. There's a time lag. You do the will of God, you meet the conditions and then you hold on. You don't give up. And in due course, in God's sovereignty, the promise is completely fulfilled. It's very important to maintain that attitude of faith and to act accordingly.

Let me give you a brief example that comes to my mind: Some years back a woman who had been crippled in childhood with infantile paralysis or polio, came to a meeting where I was ministering to be healed. One of her legs was about one and a half inches shorter than the other and she wore a shoe with a corresponding build-up. When I ministered to her, by the grace of God, the short leg moved down the full one and a half inches and she stood up on equal legs for the first time in many years. Then she turned to a brown paper sack that she had with her and pulled out a new pair of shoes without any build-up that she bought to bring with her because she was so sure that she'd walk away with her legs equal. And I said to myself, "That's a good example of faith and works." She'd maintained the attitude of faith and she'd acted according to what she was believing. So she didn't have to go out and look for a pair of shoes without a build-up, she already had them with her. It was one of the neatest and most inspiring acts I've ever seen from a child of God. So bear that in mind: maintain the attitude and act appropriately.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll continue with this theme of God's Abundance. Tomorrow we'll be examining the specific promises that relate to abundance.

Radio Program

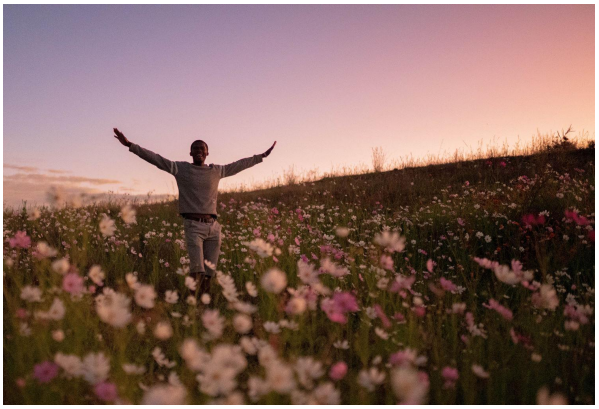
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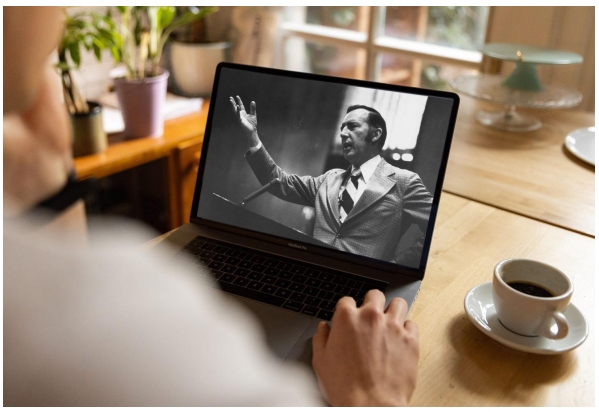
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