

Specific Promises of Abundance



God's Abundance (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

We're continuing today with our theme of God's Abundance. We've seen that the abundance of God is directly related to the promises of God. In my talk yesterday, I explained three practical steps to appropriating God's promises. First, let the Holy Spirit direct you to the appropriate promises. I said that the Holy Spirit is the administrator of our inheritance which is the promises of God. So we do not select our own promise at random, but we allow the Holy Spirit to direct us to the promise that suits our need and fits in with God's plan for our life. That's very important. That ultimately, the initiative always must be with God, though there must be a response from us.

Second, when you have been directed to the promise, study and fulfill the conditions. I pointed out that most of God's promises in the Bible are conditional. God says if you do so-and-so, I will do so-and-so. It's childish to ask God to do His part if we have not first studied the condition, the "if," and then done our part.

Third, maintain an attitude of faith and act appropriately. Once you have laid claim to the promise, act as if you expect the promise to be fulfilled. That's maintaining an attitude of faith.

Today we're going to examine two specific promises that relate to abundance. Both of them are found in the Psalms. The first one is in Psalm 34, verses 9 and 10.

> "O fear the Lord, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing." (NASB)

And then the second promise is in Psalm 84, verse 11.

> "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." (NASB)

Clearly, there are some very beautiful promises given in those verses. But before we get all excited about the promises, we need to examine the conditions. There are actually three conditions clearly stated in those verses. Just to give you practice in doing this for yourself, I'm going to read those two promises, the two passages in Psalms carefully and slowly. I want to you to listen and, as you listen, see if you can pick out the three conditions that we have to fulfill. Now I'm going to read:

> "O fear the Lord, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing." (NASB)

> "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." (NASB)

I wonder if you picked up those three conditions. They're very clear - of course, it easier when you have the words in front of your eyes. The first condition is fear the Lord; the second, seek the Lord; the third, walk uprightly. Let me go back over the promises and show you where the conditions come. Psalm 34:9, "Fear the Lord, O you His saints; for to those who fear Him, there is no want." It's no good saying there is no want. If you miss out the fact that that applies only to those who fear the Lord. The second condition: seek the Lord. Psalm 34:10—"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing." Now, it's childish to say, "Isn't that wonderful! I'm not going to be in want of any good thing from now on!" But you omit the condition which is, "they that seek the Lord." That promise is only for those who seek the Lord. And then, in Psalm 84, verse 11, the latter part of the verse, "No good thing does He (the Lord) withhold from those who walk uprightly." Again, it's childish to say, "Well, I've just discovered that the Lord's not going to withhold any good thing from me!" You can't say that. You can say, "I've just discovered that if I walk uprightly, the Lord will not withhold any good thing from me." So, that's a very clear and a fairly simple example of selecting promises and finding out the conditions. We'll state the conditions once more, they're threefold: first, fear the Lord; second, seek the Lord; and third, walk uprightly. And I'd like to suggest to you actually, the second and third conditions flow out of the first. The first is the basic one. If we fear the Lord, it will be natural to us to seek the Lord and to walk uprightly. But those are the three conditions: fear the Lord, seek the Lord and walk uprightly. Any preacher who tells you that you'll not want any good thing without qualifying it, without impressing upon you the conditions that God has laid down in His Word, is really not doing you a service. Because you'll start out with the impression that everything is going to be fine and you find out, after a little while, everything is far from fine. But don't blame God. You may perhaps, blame the preacher, but you must really accept the responsibility yourself. You tried to claim the promise without examining and fulfilling the conditions.

Now let's look at the promise. It's stated in similar language in both passages. In Psalm 34:10, it says, "they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing." In Psalm 84:11, it says, "No good thing does God withhold from those who walk uprightly." What is promised in each case is that nothing good, no good thing, will we lack. In one case it just says that we will not want it, we will not lack it; in the other case it says God will not withhold it from us. But the final bottom line of the promise is: We shall not be in want of any good thing. That's a wonderful promise. But before we go ahead, we need to understand that there are two ways in which a thing may be good. And I think many, many Christians do not understand this and consequently they're frustrated and they think that something's gone wrong. A thing may be good in itself—what I would call in philosophic terms "essentially good"—in itself a thing is good, period. But this still leaves open the possibility that though the thing is good in itself, I call it essentially good, it may not be good for me in my particular situation. That's what I call "relatively good." So, if you can accept this kind of terminology, and my background is in philosophy, a thing may be essentially good and yet may not be relatively good for me in my particular situation.

Now, it's best to illustrate this with a simple example. I'll give you a couple of examples of actually come out of real-life experience.

A businessman has discovered a new invention, he thinks he's going to make a tremendous fortune, but he lacks the capital to get it launched. So, he's a Christian and he prays and he says, "God, if I had ten thousand dollars, I could get this thing launched and I'd make millions and I'd give you know nine-tenths of my income to You." It all sounds very good. God, who is a very smart businessman, happens to know that really it isn't a viable invention and it's not going to make millions of dollars. Now, the ten thousand dollars that the man prayed for is, in itself, essentially good. Ten thousand dollars is essentially good. But for that man in that situation, it's relatively not good. Because if he gets the ten thousand dollars, he'll go ahead with a tremendous commitment, set up a factory, an organization and end up

bankrupt. So God in His wisdom and in His mercy, withholds the ten thousand dollars. Not because ten thousand dollars is not essentially good, but because it's not relatively good for that man in his particular situation and his particular condition.

Take another example. A very wealthy man has a teenage son. The teenage son has an ambition to own one of the latest, most powerful and most expensive sports car. Now, the father is perfectly well able to buy the son the car but he knows that the son's character is not fully developed. He's unstable, he's emotional, he wants to impress his girlfriends and if he gets that car, it's more than probable he'll end up in a wreck. And so, the father, who's wealthy and can easily afford the car, in fact, he could afford ten cars like that, nevertheless, when his son says, "Dad, give me this car for my birthday, my sixteenth birthday." The father says, "No." Now, in the terminology we're using, that very expensive sports car is essentially good. It's beautifully manufactured, it's beautifully put together, it's very smart and attractive—it's essentially good. But for that son, at his age development, with his emotional instability, though it's essentially good, it's not relatively good. Because if it's put in his hands, without him being properly disciplined and trained and matured, it will be an instrument of destruction and not of good.

So, those are two examples of the difference between that which is essentially good and that which is relatively not good. And you see when we say God will withhold no good thing from us, it's not enough to know that the thing is essentially good, we also have to know that it's relatively good for us in our condition. Otherwise, God may act like the father of the son who wanted the sports car and say, "My son, I could afford ten. There's no problem about my being able to afford it. I've got all the sports cars in the world at my disposal. But if you're going to destroy yourself with it, then I'm going to withhold it from you." So you've got to bear in mind that when God says He will withhold no good thing, we've got to view it two ways: Is it essentially good? Is it relatively good?

Well, 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 see how this distinction between the two ways in which a thing may be good applies to the promises of abundance.

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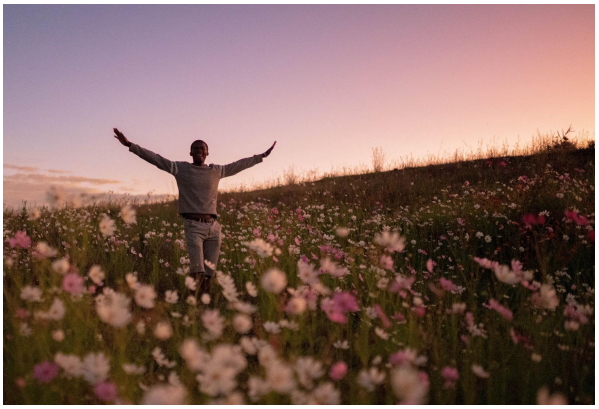

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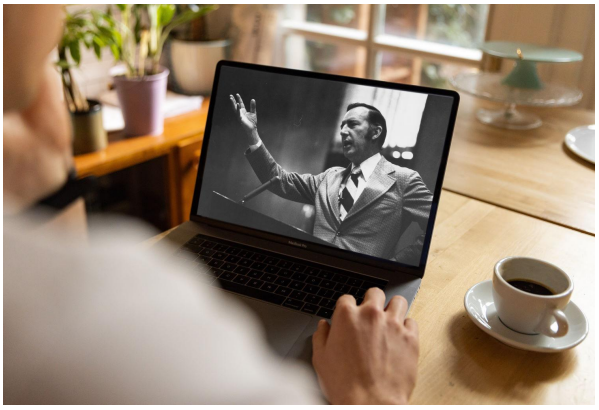

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