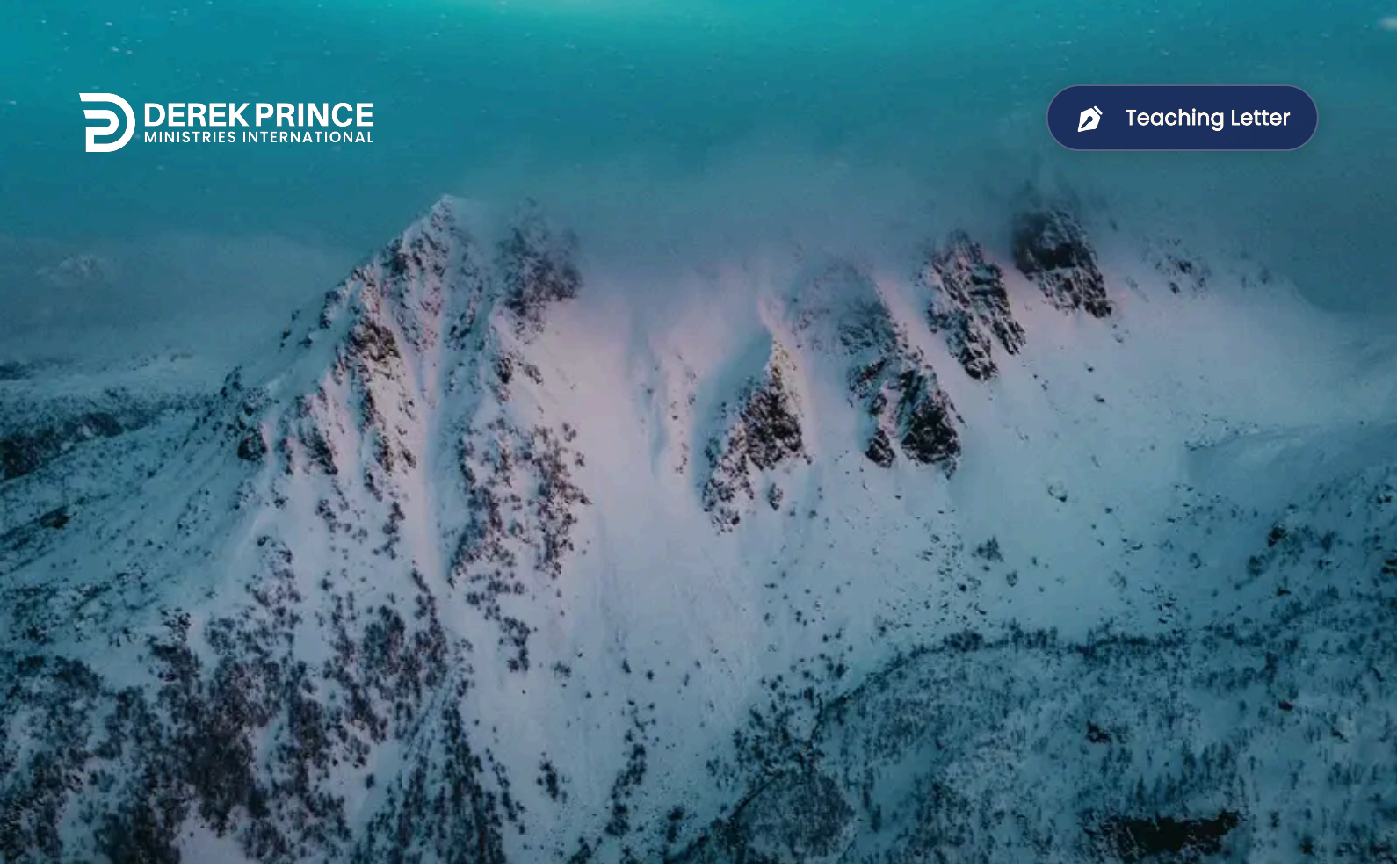


Tapping the Source - Part 2



Part 6/6

God's Abundance
By Derek Prince

In my first letter in the series *God's Abundance*, we first looked at the words having to do with abundance, giving their specific meanings so we could have a better grasp of what abundance really entails.

I then went on to detail the first two of the five basic principles related to God's promises, which I believe God has revealed to me from Scripture. They are:

1. God's provision is in His promises—these promises are provided for us in the Word of God.
2. The promises are our inheritance—they are legally ours. It is like when Joshua entered the Promised Land. God promised him that every place the sole of his foot tread would be his—but it was up to Joshua to tread upon it.

Now we will turn to Principles 3, 4 and 5.

The Third Principle: The Promises are the Expression of God's Will

God never promised anything that was not His will. We need to understand this important fact.

Suppose I have a young son and I say to him, "If you'll sweep the garage out, put everything in order and do a good job, I'll give you ten dollars." My son agrees and goes in, sweeps out the garage, does a good job and makes everything neat and orderly. He comes back to me and says, "Dad, I want my ten dollars." What would you think of me if I said, "I never meant to give you ten dollars. It wasn't my will"? You would write me off as an unreliable and undependable person—a failure as a father.

So it is with the promises of God. Suppose we discover a promise that meets our need, and then we obediently fulfill the conditions that God has laid down. If we then come to Him for what He has promised, He will never tell us, "It's true that I promised you that, but I never really meant to give it to you. It's not My will." Such behavior would be unbecoming even in an earthly father. It would be totally inconsistent with the nature of God as our heavenly Father. In fact, Jesus Himself has assured us of the very opposite:

> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more

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> will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him! (Luke 11:13).

We see, then, that the promises of God are the expression of His will.

When we know God's will, we can pray with confidence. Let's look at 1 John 5:

> Now this is the confidence that we have in Him [God] (v. 14).

The Greek word here translated "*confidence*" means literally "freedom of speech." It was a very important word in the political background of the Greek people. One of the things they fought for in democracy was freedom of speech, which is, of course, very familiar to American democracy. So the verse could read, "This freedom of speech we have in God." The implication is that confidence needs to be expressed in what we say. It is not enough merely to "believe in the heart"; we must also "confess with the mouth" (see Romans 10:10).

> Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14–15)

All successful praying revolves around the knowledge of God's will. Once we know that we are asking for something according to the will of God, we know we have it. Not "we're going to have it," but "we have it." In Mark 11:24 Jesus says, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you received them [this is the correct, literal translation], and you will have them." When do we receive? When we pray. The receiving is in the present—now. The actual experiential outworking of what we have received—the "will have them"—is often in the future. But if we do not receive now, we will not have later.

The teaching of Mark 11:24 agrees exactly with that of 1 John 5:14–15. In each case, the lesson is: we must receive, by faith, at the very moment that we pray. Thereafter, we must boldly express our confidence that we have received —even before the thing received is actually manifested in our experience.

One of the devil's favorite tactics is to get us to put off to some future moment the thing that we ought to appropriate now. In my book, *Faith to Live By*, I illustrate this with a story that has always been very vivid to me. As a young man of about twenty, while I was studying Greek philosophy at Cambridge University, I was given a grant to visit Greece in order to study the various antiquities on the spot. I went with a friend of mine who was son of the vice-chancellor of Cambridge University. We stayed in a hotel in Athens and went out about the same time every morning for the day's sightseeing.

Every day when we walked out of our hotel, there was a little group of shoeblacks on the sidewalk waiting to polish our shoes. Now, if you have never been in the Middle East or the Mediterranean countries, you will find it hard to picture the scene. But in those countries shoeblacks are determined! I mean they are going to polish your shoes whether you want it or not.

Every morning the shoeblacks would approach us and say, "Shine your shoes?" Every morning we would say in Greek, "No!"—"Ochi!" When you say "no" in Greek you say *ochi* and you throw your head back at the same time. The motion of the head enforces the meaning of the word. But every morning the shoeblacks just went ahead and polished our shoes anyhow.

Since this method wasn't working, one morning my friend decided to try a different tactic. When we got out of the hotel door and the shoeblacks approached us asking, "Polish your shoes?" my friend replied in Greek, "Avrio." This caught the shoeblacks off their guard. They paused for a moment and looked at us uncertainly. Taking advantage of their momentary hesitation, we got by without having our shoes polished. Can you guess what *avrio* means? It means "tomorrow."

Many times when you are on your way to appropriating God's blessings the devil resorts to the same tactic. He does not say "No." But he says, "Tomorrow." As a result, you hesitate just for a moment and so fail to appropriate the blessing you are praying for. What does Scripture say is the accepted time? Now! People often say, "Today is the accepted time." But Scripture does not say that. It says, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). God lives in the eternal now. When you meet God, it is never yesterday and never tomorrow. His name is not "I was," nor "I will be." It is always "I AM." (see Exodus 3:14).

The Fourth Principle: All God's Promises are Now Available to us Through Christ

As a basis for this principle, let us look at 2 Corinthians 1:20. This is a key verse when we deal with "dispensationalists"—that is, people who relegate nearly all of God's blessings and provisions either to the past ("the apostolic age") or to the future ("the millennium"). There are several different versions of this verse, but it seems to me that the New King James Version says it about as clearly and emphatically as it is possible to say it.

> For all the promises of God in Him [Jesus] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by [or through] us.

Whatever translation you use, there are certain key words that do not change. First of all, "all the promises"—not some, but all. Second, "are"—not "were" or "will be." Third, "in Him"—there is only one channel through which God makes His promises available to us. That unique, all-sufficient channel is Jesus. Fourth, "to the glory of God." Every promise that we appropriate in the will of God, glorifies God. God has so arranged His promises that when we appropriate them, He is glorified.

Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." There are different ways of translating that, but in essence I understand it to mean, "By our sin we have robbed God of His glory." How, then, do we repay to God the glory that is due Him? One way is found in Romans 4 where it says about Abraham that he "was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what He [God] had promised He was able also to perform" (vv. 20–21). So we give back to God the glory that our sin has robbed from Him by believing His promises. The more we claim God's promises, the more we glorify Him. And all His promises are now available to us through Christ.

Finally, I like the two little words that come last in 2 Corinthians 1:20 (kjv)—"by us." It's not "by the apostles"; or "by the early church"; or "by special Christians—such as evangelists or missionaries." It is "by us." "Us" means you and me. **All God's promises are now available to you and me through faith in Christ.**

Of course, you do not need all of God promises right now. In fact, you could not claim all of God's promises in just one moment. **But any promise you need that fits your situation is available to you right now. This is the way I sum it up:** ***Every promise that fits your situation and meets your need is for you now.***

The Fifth Principle: The Fulfillment of God's Promises does not Depend upon our Circumstances, but upon our Meeting God's Conditions

When God gives a promise, it is not limited to a particular set of circumstances. It does not have to be easy for God to accomplish what He promised. One common mistake we make when confronted with a promise of God is to say, "Yes, I see that is what God says. But in this particular situation it would be too much," and our faith wavers. The truth of the matter is, **God's promises do not depend upon the circumstances in which we find ourselves.** Circumstances make no difference. You can be a hundred years old and your wife can be ninety years old, but if God says you are going to have a son, you are going to have a son.

It does not depend on anything around you or in you. Nothing physical, nothing temporal, and nothing in the space/time world can change the eternal promises of God. That's the lesson. It is why God so often allowed men of faith to get into totally impossible situations. He wanted to make it absolutely clear that in no case were His promises dependent upon a favorable set of circumstances. In fact, He usually lets the circumstances become just about as unfavorable as they could be.

Real faith refuses to be influenced by circumstances. For instance, when Elijah wanted the fire to come down from heaven to consume the sacrifice on his altar, he doused the sacrifice in water three times and let the water run around and fill up the ditch. Then he said, "Now let's see what God can do." And when the fire came, it burned up the water, it burned up the dust, it burned up the wood, it burned up the sacrifice. God's fire has no more problem with a ditch full of water than with dry wood. Wet or dry, difficult or easy, possible or impossible—it makes no difference with God.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of this fact is the provision of God for Israel in the wilderness. For forty years He fed them, clothed them, provided for them, and He guided something like three million people—men, women, old people, infants, cattle, everything—in a totally barren desert where there was no water, no food—nothing in fact, except sand and sun. **God went out of His way to say, "Make it difficult, and let Me show you what I can do." In fact, He made it difficult. He was the one who arranged the situation. It is so important to understand that you must not let your focus move from the promise to the situation.**

Whenever you do that, like Peter walking on the water, you begin to sink.

The Five Principles

Let's review those five principles just to fix them in your mind, and then conclude this first part of our series. They are:

1. God's provision is in His promises.
2. The promises are our inheritance.
3. God's promises are the expression of His will.
4. All God's promises are now available to us through Christ.
5. The fulfillment of God's promises does not depend upon our circumstances, but upon our meeting God's conditions.

In the next teaching letter in this series, we will be examining how Scripture evaluates each of the two opposites that we are studying—that is, poverty and riches, lack and abundance.

Teaching Letter
Transcript: TL-L073-100-ENG
Last Updated: 27 Oct 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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