

THE TEACHING LEGACY OF DEREK PRINCE

The Provision Is in the Promises

Most Christians know that we have an inheritance from God—promises He has made that He intends to provide for us. However, many Christians have never clearly understood the actual form in which our inheritance comes to us. Consequently, they have not been able to enter into their inheritance and claim its promises as God intends.

The key passage for understanding this principle is 2 Peter 1:2–4:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His [God's] divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these [the glory and goodness of Jesus] he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them [the promises] you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

NIV

Please keep two phrases from that excerpt in mind: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness” and “he has given us his very great and precious promises.”

I sometimes marvel at the writings of Peter, who was a relatively unlearned man. Yet his letters hold tremendous truth—concepts and words that indicate a high level of education. Of course, Peter got his education through the Holy Spirit—still the best educator in the world today.

Important Points to Grasp

In logical order, I would like to make a few points about what Peter is saying in this passage, starting with the second verse: “*Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*” The first point is this: God’s provision for us is in abundance. God is not a stingy God. He is not poor. He is not in financial need. He is the author and source of everything in the universe. When He provides for us, He provides in abundance.

Peter goes on to say, “*Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” This indicates that every provision of God comes through knowing God and Jesus. I put it this way: God is the *only* source; Jesus is the *only* channel.

Then we come to that astonishing statement at the beginning of verse 3: “[*God*] has [*already*] given us everything we need.” Please note the tense of the verb—it does not say that God *will* give us; it says God *has* [*already*] given us everything we need. Lay hold of that fact, because if you miss it, you won’t be able to understand



the nature of God's provision.

In the second part of verse 3, Peter returns to the theme that it is all contained in Jesus: "Through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness [virtue]." This concept is so important that Peter states it twice. However, the word translated as "knowledge" in verse 3 is not exactly the same word as is translated "knowledge" in verse 2. In the third verse, the word knowledge in Greek means "acknowledging." Peter is not referring to an intellectual or theological knowledge of Jesus, but to an acknowledgment of Him—seeing who He is and giving Him His rightful place in our lives.

Let's review those four comments:

First, God's provision for us is in abundance.

Second, God is the only source; Jesus is the only channel.

Third, God's power has already given us everything we will ever need. God has already done it!

Fourth, it is all contained in knowing Jesus as a person and giving Him His rightful place as Lord in our lives.

What Are We Missing?

At this point you may look at your life and say, "Well, if God has given it, I don't see it. There are needs in my life that have not been met—yet I'm a believer. I'm doing my best to walk as a Christian and be one of His people."

If God has already given us everything, where is it? Why don't we seem to have it? Let me give you an important insight the Holy Spirit revealed to me years ago about this perceived conflict. It is based on verse 4 of our Scripture passage:

Through these [the glory and goodness of Jesus God] has given us his

very great and precious promises.

NIV

The previous verse reads, "God has given us everything we need." This verse reads, "God has given us His very great and precious promises." What is the conclusion? It is very simple and logical. Everything we need is contained in the promises of God. God has given us His promises—and in them He has given us everything we are going to need for time and eternity. I say it this way: **The provision is in the promises.**

So many Christians are lacking what they need because they haven't discovered where God's provision is. It is in His promises. In order to receive your provision, you have to know the promises of God. And, you have to know how to claim them—how to move in and possess them.

Changed by the Promises

When we find the promises we need and begin to claim them and apply them to our lives, two amazing results follow. Verse 4:

. . . so that through them [the promises] you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

NIV

There are two results of claiming the promises of God—one positive, and one negative. The positive result is that we participate in the nature of God Himself. That is an amazing statement! If it wasn't right there in the Bible, I don't think I would ever dare to say it. But it is explicitly stated: through appropriating God's promises we become partakers of God's nature. The very nature of God Himself comes into us, and we become

more and more divine.

That leads us to the negative result, which is that "we . . . escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." Our old fallen nature is essentially corrupt—morally, spiritually and physically. But as God's nature comes in, the corruption of our fallen nature is replaced by the nature of God, which is incorruptible. So a new kind of nature, personality, and life comes into us as we appropriate the promises of God.

This leads us to a very important and wonderful conclusion: Ultimately, God Himself becomes our inheritance. Not blessings, not experiences—but our ultimate inheritance is God Himself! Experiences, blessings and gifts are all wonderful. But His real purpose is that we inherit God Himself through His promises.

Seven Truths about Provision

The following seven statements summarize the truths about God's provision found in our core Scripture, 2 Peter 1:2:

First, God's provision is in abundance.

Second, God is the only source; Jesus the only channel.

Third, God's power has already given us everything we need.

Fourth, it is all contained in knowing and acknowledging Jesus.

Fifth, (and this is the key to understanding everything) the provision is in the promises.

Sixth, by appropriating the promises, we participate in the divine nature of God Himself.

And seventh, in proportion as we do this, we escape the corruption in the world through evil desires because the nature of God and

corruption are incompatible.

Stepping into Our Inheritance

The actual steps we take to enter into our inheritance can be found in the Old Testament book of Joshua, which describes how God's people, Israel, entered into the land God had promised to them. Rightly understood, Joshua provides a pattern that we, too, can follow. Let's begin with the first three verses of Joshua 1:

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses." Joshua 1:1–3 NASB

Notice the tenses God uses in these Scriptures. In verse 2 He uses the present tense, "I *am* giving," but in verse 3 He uses the perfect tense, "I *have given* them the land." The lesson is this: Once God says, "I give it to you," as far as God is concerned, from then on it **has been** given. I believe that for the people of God, there is something similar ahead when all believers will be enabled to come into our full inheritance.

From the point of God's promise onward, Israel had the legal right, given them by God, to the entire land. But they still did not have experiential possession of the land. I want you to see this vital principle: there is a difference between the legal right and the experiential possession

of what God has promised us as our inheritance.

Walking Into the Promises

The actual process by which Israel moved into the land began with their first two successes, which came through miracles. A miracle opened the way for them to cross the Jordan, and through a miracle they captured the first city, Jericho. But listen carefully—after that, they had to fight for all the rest. God said, "*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you*" (verse 3). The only way they gained experiential possession was by actually placing their feet on the ground they were claiming.

This closely parallels what happens as we gain our inheritance. In the Old Testament, under a leader named Joshua, God led His people into a promised land. In the New Testament, under a leader named Jesus (which is the same name), God leads His people into a land of promises.

When we are born again and legally become God's children, from then on we are heirs to all that God has. This is what Paul says in Romans 8:16–17:

The Spirit himself [the Holy Spirit] testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . .

That is exciting. We share the inheritance with Jesus Christ as sons of God. But there is an important "if" that follows:

. . . if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. verse 17 NIV

So we are heirs to the whole inheritance—heirs to all the blessings,

but also heirs to the sufferings. We cannot skip the sufferings and expect to inherit the blessings. The condition is "if we suffer with Him."

What We Must Do

To gain experiential possession of our inheritance as Christians, we need to apply the lesson of Joshua. I would suggest the following as the main principles:

First, God will do miracles. But God will not do miracles where they are not necessary.

Second, like Israel, we will have to fight for most of our inheritance. We will not enter into our inheritance unless we are prepared to take on the opposing powers of darkness and defeat them.

Third, we have to set our feet on what God has promised us and take possession of it individually and personally. When we do that, we will find that we inevitably share in Christ's sufferings.

Essentially, there are two actions we have to take: first, we must be prepared to fight, and second, we need to set our feet on what we claim as our inheritance.

In other words—**FIGHT! SET YOUR FEET!**

All the Promises

The full extent of our inheritance is no less than **all the promises of God**. The key verse for this truth is 2 Corinthians 1:20, which we will read in two translations: the King James Version, which is very beautiful, and the New International Version, which has a powerful translation of this verse.

For all the promises of God in him [Jesus Christ] are yea, and in him

Amen, unto the glory of God by us. KJV

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. NIV

Whichever translation we follow, certain important points emerge which I will explain as we go along. First of all, our inheritance includes all the promises of God. Not **some** of them—**all** of them.

Yes and Amen!

Secondly, the promises are in the present tense. All the promises of God *are* YES and AMEN—not in the past, not in the future. Scripture is sometimes interpreted in an unfortunate way that robs us of practically everything worth having. Here are some examples: “Miracles died with the apostles,” or “Prosperity is for the millennium.” Meanwhile, we are left hanging on to a bare crust that just barely sustains life. But this Scripture clearly says *the promises are now*.

God doesn't make promises and then change His mind. He doesn't say, “I'll do this,” but then say, when you go to Him for it, “I'm not sure I will do it after all.” Here we have one of the most emphatic and positive verses in the whole Bible: “*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.*” Just a plain, simple, clear, emphatic **yes**.

However, there is something added to God's “Yes.” The New International Version says, “...through him [Jesus] the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.” The word *Amen* means “so let it be,” or “be it established.” When God says, “Yes,” we appropriate it by our

“Amen!” This makes the promise ours at that very moment.

Someone calculated that there are about 8,000 promises of God in the Bible, and they are all available to us when we need them. This is the way I sum up our key verse, 2 Corinthians 1:20: “Every promise that fits my situation and meets my need is for me now.”

Meet the Condition, Keep the Conviction

In closing, I want to point out an important aspect of claiming God's promises that many Christians overlook. Most of God's promises are conditional. In most cases, when God gives a promise He says, “If you will do so-and-so, then I will do so-and-so.” We have no right to claim the promise unless we first meet the condition.

We also need to understand that the fulfillment of God's promises does not depend upon our circumstances. It depends upon our fulfilling God's conditions. We keep our eyes on the conditions and make sure we fulfill them rather than allowing our faith to be influenced by our circumstances. What often happens is that a believer finds a promise he needs. When he begins to claim it, he looks instead at his unfavorable circumstances and concludes, “Well, it's true, God made that promise. But it won't work in my situation.” That is where many of us lose our inheritance.

Let's look to the example of Abraham. God had promised Abraham a son, an heir, but Abraham reached the age of 99 and no son had come.

Why does God often allow us to come to a place of seeming impossibility before He fulfills the promises we are claiming? I believe there are two practical reasons. First of all, we are emptied of self-confidence.

We come to the point where we know that if it's going to be done, God will be the one who does it. That's the point Abraham reached. He knew there was no natural possibility for the promise to be fulfilled. Therefore, he had to focus exclusively on God.

I believe the second reason is that when the promise happens, all the glory goes to God. When there is a possibility that we can do it by our own effort, then we may take some of the credit for it. But when we come to the place where we know we cannot do it by our own effort—and are exhausted of self-confidence—then all the glory truly goes to God.

Let's take Abraham as our inspiration. Let's step past our circumstances to meet God's conditions—and enter into the glorious inheritance contained in His promises.

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