

# **SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESOURCES**



**WEEK 14 | FEB 6-13**

**TOPIC:  
PROMISE**

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# PROLOGUE

The Carmichael SDA Church is providing spiritual growth resources for individuals, couples, families, and small groups as an extension during this pandemic for a church that is scattered like salt and to indeed be salty; to be light and receive another infusion of power. Pick and choose from these resources for your spiritual growth, whether it's during your time of personal devotions or family worship or small group gathering. The 10 options include:

1. Video
2. Bible Dialogue
3. Prayer Experiences
4. Discussion Questions
5. Application Ideas
6. Sharing Options
7. Bible-In-My-Head, Heart, and Hand
8. Sing-Along
9. Inspirational Music
10. Kids of All Ages

# PROMISE

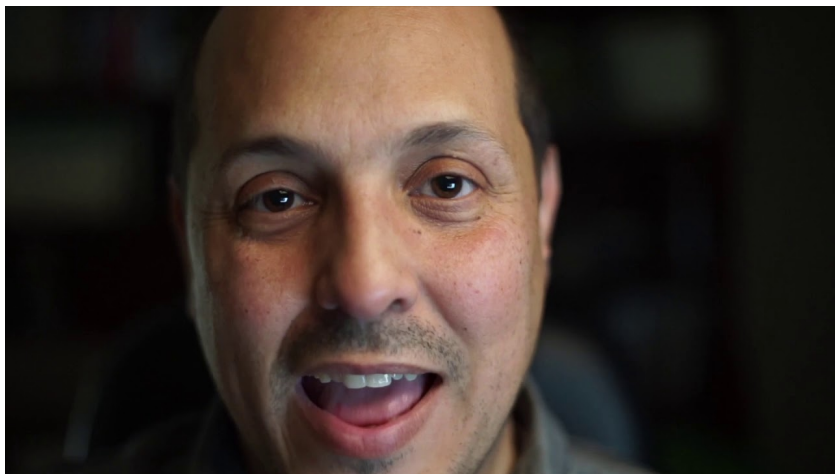
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## INTRO AND VIDEO

After five weeks of Spiritual Growth Resources on the January theme of “Making Things Right,” we’ve entered the month of February and the theme of “Love.” Don’t limit this to Valentine’s Day (February 14)! That’s certainly part of it; but not all. We’ll lead up to that romantic emphasis by beginning with this week’s topic of “Promise.”

Promise begins early in life. For many parents, a newborn exemplifies promise and reminds the parents of promises they have made previously to each other.

But promises started with God. And he continues them. In fact, God continues to be the reason we even have promises, as you’ll see in this week’s Spiritual Growth Resources.



# BIBLE DIALOGUE

What promises did God make in Bible times? What promises does he still make today? God's promise for Mary to conceive the Messiah may have been a promise to her, but it hasn't been given to others. The promise of healing has been given to some, but not to everyone. God's promise, "I will be with you" seems true for all, even though sometimes it seems more pervasive than at other times. This week's "Bible Dialogue" looks at the promises God made to Moses at the burning bush. Put yourself in the story. Imagine being Moses, and remember you've spent the first half of your life preparing to be the leader of the most powerful country in the world, and the second half of your life tending sheep. Now you're ready for Exodus 3.

## STUDY

### PROMISES, PROMISES READ EXODUS 3:1-22

1. What makes ground become "holy ground"?
  - A. Being at the foot of Mount Sinai.
  - B. Whatever God calls "holy" is "holy."
  - C. Being in the church sanctuary.
  - D. Wherever you happen to be to watch church online.
  - E. Being bare-footed.

- F. Any shrine.
- G. God's presence.
- H. Any place that humans have dedicated to God.
- I. Other.

2. Where was God during the 400 years of Egyptian slavery?

- A. Their time in Egypt had started great with Joseph.
- B. Treatment of God's people deteriorated, so he acted.
- C. Listening to their prayers.
- D. Busy with other things in the universe.
- E. It was like Job's oppression—Great Controversy stuff.
- F. Right with his people, suffering with them.
- G. Looking for a Joseph or Moses type of person.
- H. The Israelites had been unfaithful to God.
- I. Other.

3. What made Moses capable of leading the Israelites out of Egypt?

- A. His 25+ years of training to become the next Pharaoh.
- B. Herding sheep in the desert for 40 years.
- C. The cool miracles God empowered him to do.
- D. Feeling incapable of leading.
- E. God's promises.
- F. Humble dependence on God.
- G. God's revelations to him in the desert.
- H. His miracle survival in life destined him for greatness.
- I. Other.

4. What does the name "I AM THAT I AM" mean?

- A. I have no idea.
- B. God exists.
- C. Always NOW: past, present, and future combined.
- D. The God who is about to act.
- E. It's a code only a few people understand.
- F. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- G. God of all nations.
- H. God of all time.
- I. Other.

5. What promises did God make to Moses at the burning bush?
- A. I won't ignore you like I've done lately.
  - B. You will plunder the Egyptians.
  - C. God's presence.
  - D. Resistance from Pharaoh.
  - E. Returning the Israelites to the Promised Land—Canaan.
  - F. Support from Israel's leaders.
  - G. Safety in Egypt.
  - H. Moses would worship God at Sinai with the freed Israelites.
  - I. Other.
6. Who would believe the promises God made to Moses?
- A. Moses.
  - B. Zipporah—Moses' wife.
  - C. Israelite leaders.
  - D. All Israelites.
  - E. Pharaoh.
  - F. The priests of Egypt.
  - G. All the Egyptians.
  - H. The Canaanites.
  - I. Other.
7. When do you believe a promise? When do you not believe a promise?
8. What promises has God made to you? What promises have you made to God?

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# PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Read the story of Jacob's ladder found in Genesis 28:10-22. Remind yourself of the context: Jacob was running for his life after he and his mom deceived his father and brother in order to snatch the birthright. Yes, by trying to pronounce the birthright blessing/promise on Esau, Isaac was acting contrary to God's direction to give the birthright to Jacob. Talk about "broken promises" throughout the story! Let this put you at ease in your time of prayer to a God who has seen broken promises for centuries!

Remember the song "Jacob's Ladder"? The lyrics repeat that "we are climbing Jacob's ladder." But Jacob didn't climb the ladder. Are we putting ourselves in the place of angels? The whole point of the imagery is that God connects heaven with earth; not that we can now climb our way to heaven. Let God follow through with his promise!

In your prayer, meditate on verses 20-21. Jacob makes a vow/promise to God. Most translations use a lot of "if's" in Jacob's promise. One wonders why he's setting such conditions for God, especially at this time when Jacob has felt overwhelmed and labeled this spot the house of God, "Bethel."

The children's version of the NIV renders this passage in this way: 20 Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "May God be with me. May he watch over me on this journey I'm taking. May he give me food to eat and clothes to wear. 21 May he do as he has promised so that I can return safely to my father's home. Then you, Lord, will be my God. 22 This stone I've set up as a sacred stone will be God's house. And I'll give you a tenth of everything you give me."

That's quite a different attitude, and probably fits the setting better.

Based on that passage of Scripture, what has God done for you? Perhaps you haven't been running for your life. Maybe you

haven't had a dream of a stairway connecting you with heaven, with angels descending and ascending on your behalf. But what has God promised you?

And what have you promised to God? What are you willing to promise to God at this time?

For a New Testament prayer experience, take the story from last week's "Bible Dialogue" in which Peter repented after denying Christ three times. Do you remember the lead up to that part of the story? Here's the promise Peter made to Jesus the very night he betrayed him. The context is the Last Supper. Jesus announced that all of the disciples would desert him." Let's pick up the story in Matthew 16:33:

33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

In defense of Peter, he was willing to die with Christ that night. That seemed to be his intention in the Garden of Gethsemane when he drew his sword and clipped off the ear of the high priest's servant (John 18:10). But Jesus rebuked Peter and miraculously reattached Malchus' ear right on the spot. That left Peter reeling and later that night he did his three-peat denial of Jesus.

Promises! They mean so much when made, and so little when broken. Jesus literally forgave Peter the same night as the betrayal, and even before it (Luke 22:31-32).

Based on the story of Peter's broken promise, let this open your heart to God on broken promises you've made. Repent like Peter did. You had good reason to make your promises, and you probably have an explanation for why you broke your promise. You are forgiven!

Another prayer option is to transition to the "Application" portion of these "Spiritual Growth Resources" and incorporate them in your prayer experience.

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Select from these questions, or let them prompt your own questions. You can reflect on these by yourself, or discuss them with another person or group of people.

1. Do you think promises are a good thing or a bad thing?
2. How often do you make promises?
3. How often do others make promises to you?
4. When has a promise given you hope?
5. When have you been let down by a broken promise?
6. What are examples of promises God has made?
7. What promises has God made specifically to you?
8. Which of God's promises have come true in your life?
9. Which of God's promises are you still waiting to be fulfilled?
10. Can you name any of God's promises that you've discarded?
11. What promises have you made to God?
12. Based on Matthew 5:37 "Let your 'yes' be yes, and let your 'no' be no; anything beyond this comes from the evil one," should we ever make promises? (see <https://www.gotquestions.org/let-your-yes-be-yes-and-no-be-no.html>)
13. Which is better: a promise to do something or a promise to not do something?
14. What's an example of an unspoken (but expected) promise?
15. What promises do the people at your church make to one another?
16. What promises do the people at your church make to those outside of their church?
17. How often does a promise need to be repeated?

18. When you are looking for a promise from God, how do you find it?
19. Do promises give you hope or disappointment?
20. How does Christ's promise to return affect the way you live day-to-day?

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## APPLICATION IDEAS

Claim one of God's promises today. Since "Promise" is the topic all week, claim one promise per day from God. Go to the website [365Promises.com](http://365Promises.com) for a new promise each day of the year. Here are seven for you for this week (or replace with your own favorite seven for right now):

Joshua 1:9 (NCV)—"Don't be afraid, because the LORD your God will be with you everywhere you go."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (MSG)—Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track."

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIRV)—"Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. Serving me is easy, and my load is light."

Deuteronomy 31:8 (RSV)—"It is the LORD who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed." (see also Hebrews 13:5)

2 Timothy 3:12 (NCV)—"Everyone who wants to live as God desires, in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted."

Romans 8:37-39 (TLB)—"Overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us enough to die for us. For I am convinced that mothering can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers

of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us.”

Revelation 3:19 (VOICE)—“Those I love I also correct and discipline. Therefore, be shamelessly committed to Me, and turn back (repent).”

If you'd like to check out some other Bible promises, here are some favorites, seven more than you could use for the following week: Psalm 34:8; Isaiah 40:31; Jeremiah 29:11; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:6-7; and Philippians 4:19.

These applications take God's promises to you. But what about the other side of the coin? What about promises you can make to God?

Some say that we shouldn't make any promises to God because we might think we can work a deal with God rather than relying on God's gift—grace. But if your relationship with God is indeed a relationship, then there are promises that go both ways. Consider the examples of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and others. Why did they make promises to God? Why can't you? Here are several different categories from which you can make promises to God, not to strike a deal with God, but because of your commitment to the relationship you have with God:

1. Where you place God in your priorities
2. Time you will spend, uninterrupted, with God each day/week
3. Your “go to” source for love, hope, peace, and joy
4. The one whose messages you will take to heart, rather than all the other noise
5. Go to God rather than avoid or “hide” when you feel guilty or too busy
6. Seek God and his kingdom ahead of everything else in your life
7. Intentionally engage in worship to God

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# SHARING OPTIONS

Some people promise the Bible has more than 7,000 promises, and others claim there are well over 8,000. Some of these might be directly related to you right now, while others might be more marginal for a specific person in a specific situation. But there's actually a website (of course) with a Bible promise for each day of the year. Just go to [365Promises.com](http://365Promises.com) and get a promise for today. Since this is the sharing portion of the Spiritual Growth Resources, share the promise of the day with someone else.

Our recommendation is that you start to collect some of your favorite Bible promises and use those to share with others. Just as some people post on social media whatever is playing in their head at the moment, share a Bible promise right after you place it in your head.

Invite others to share with you their favorite Bible promises. In order to share, someone has to receive. Ask others to share with you, and be gracious about receiving what they share.

In addition to sharing promises, you can share why those particular promises have special significance to you. This can become a testimony about how a promise from God has seen you through challenging times by sustaining you and giving you hope. Your testimony might highlight the realization of the promise in your life. That might spark the memory for another person. Enter their story and praise God for the promises that have been realized by others as well.

And here's one more sharing option. Please share your experimenting with these Spiritual Growth Resources with Pastor Pedro Trinidad. Phone or text at 925-951-7041, or email at [ptrinidad@carmsda.org](mailto:ptrinidad@carmsda.org).

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# BIBLE-IN-MY-HEAD, HEART, AND HAND

You probably already have a number of God's promises memorized. Review some of those. Add another one to your head, heart, and hand this week. Here's one from 2 Peter 1:4 (CEV):

"God made great and marvelous promises, so that his nature would become part of us. Then we could escape our evil desires and the corrupt influences of this world."

## SCROLL THROUGH BIBLE IMAGES



... by which he has granted to us

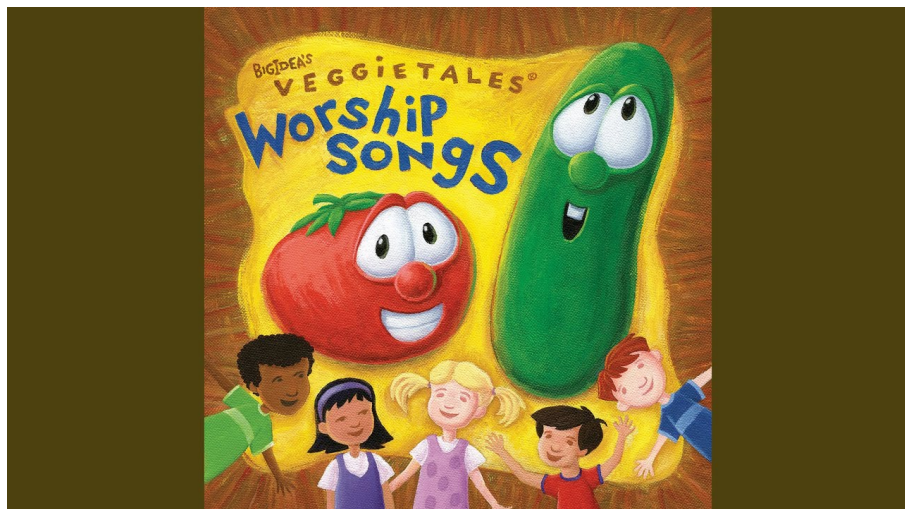
*his precious &  
very great promises,*

so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

**2 Peter 1:4**

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# SING-ALONG





The Promise - The Martins



# INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC





# KIDS OF ALL AGES

Promises, promises....!

"You don't seem okay," my friend Corri said as we filed out for lunch recess. "What's wrong?"

A lot was wrong. I felt upset about many things. I got in trouble at home, and I also found out some very hard news. I wanted to talk to someone, but I wasn't sure if I could trust her?

"I'm just having a hard day," I replied.

"Oh no! Why? It's okay," she assured me, "you can trust me. I won't tell anyone else. I promise!"

A promise was an extremely important thing in 4th grade. So important, that you didn't really say it unless you knew for SURE you could keep it.

"You promise not to tell ANYONE?" I asked Corri.

"I promise," she reassured me. "It can be our secret."

I made a choice that day to tell Corri about all the things that were bothering me. But I didn't make a good choice. Because just a few hours later, at the next recess, I saw the other girls over on the swings, laughing and pointing at me. Corri was there in the middle of them. When I walked over to the group, they all started chanting, "Melissa's in trouble! Melissa's in trouble!"

What? How could they know I was in trouble, unless....unless Corri broke her promise. I looked her right in the eye. She looked down in shame, and that's when I knew: Corri told everyone my secrets. She broke her promise to me.

Has anyone ever made you an important promise? Did they keep it, or break it? Were you afraid to trust them?

I'm so glad that Jesus isn't like other people, who sometimes keep promises, and sometimes don't. Jesus always always ALWAYS keeps His promises. In the Bible, He promises to never leave us or forsake us. He promises to be with us to the very end of the world. He promises to be with us no matter where we go or what we do. I love knowing that Jesus is trustworthy to keep all His wonderful promises! What's your favorite promise that Jesus makes?

Family Talk Time:

1. Share a time when someone made a promise to you, and either kept it or broke it. How did it feel? How did it change the way you trusted people after that?
2. Read Matt 28:19,20 or Joshua 1:9, or Jeremiah 29:11 or even the first half of Psalm 139. What kind of promises does Jesus make to us?
3. Is it easy or hard to trust Jesus? Is it easy or hard to believe His promises? Why?
4. Why do you think people struggle with the idea of trusting God? Do you? When?

5. Share your very favorite promise that Jesus makes to us in the Bible. You might know the text, or it may just be something you think you heard. Why does that promise mean so much to you? How can this promise help you through a hard time?

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