



God's Promise



SALLY MICHAEL

“If you want to bring the delights of God to your children, get this book.” —Tedd Tripp

God's Promise



Making HIM Known

God's Names

God's Promise

God's Providence

God's Wisdom

God's Promise

BY SALLY MICHAEL



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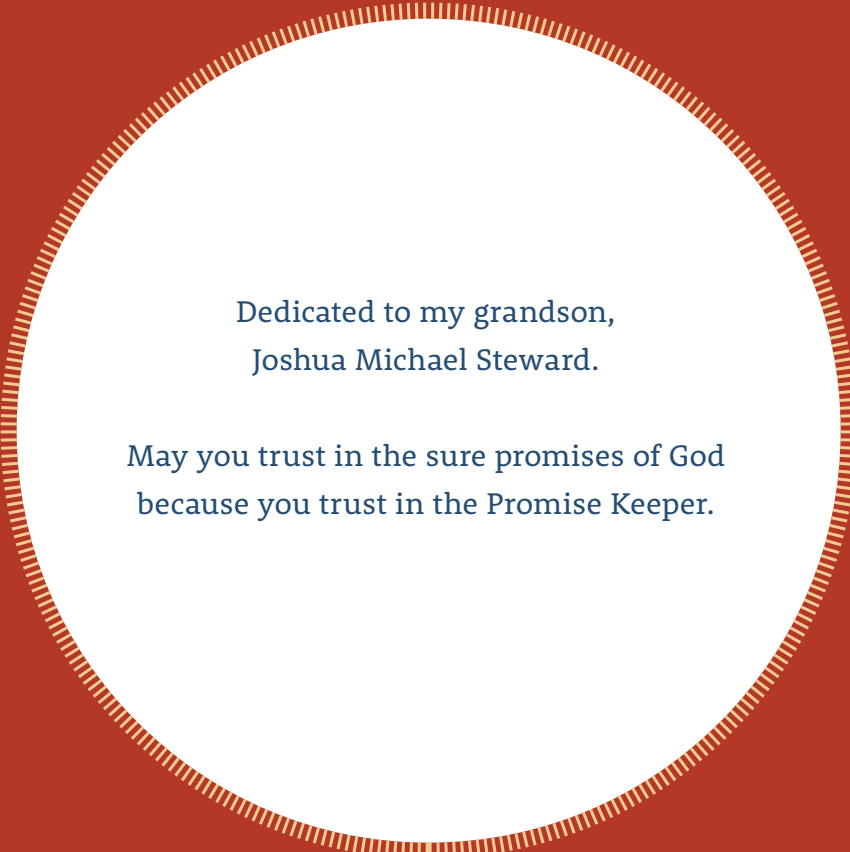
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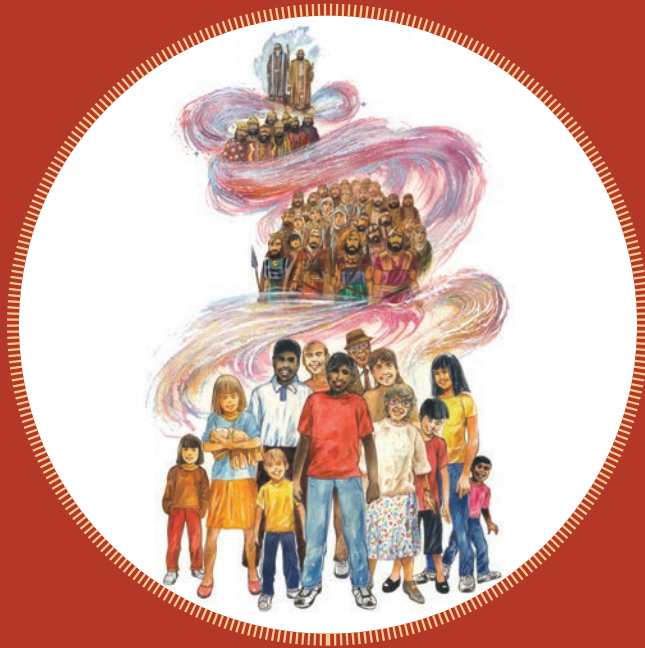
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Dedicated to my grandson,
Joshua Michael Steward.

May you trust in the sure promises of God
because you trust in the Promise Keeper.



Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

The LORD is faithful to all his promises
and loving toward all he has made.

—Psalm 145:13 (NIV)

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Preface

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? —Numbers 23:19

God's promises of blessing are like presents to His people. They are undeserved, but given because God is good and loving. People break promises, but not God. His Word is sure and trustworthy. It stands from age to age, unchanging and unbroken. What He has said, He will do.

God's promises are precious, and they are powerful. Behind them stands the all-powerful, unchanging, wise, loving, patient, good, faithful, sovereign Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He watches over His Word and accomplishes all His purposes.

God has given His children these precious promises to remind us of His goodness and to strengthen our faith when we are weak. They will assure you of His care, comfort you in sorrow, replace weakness with strength, remind you of His presence, and bring courage when you are fearful. Cling to them like a vine clings to a tree. Wrap your arms around them and don't let them go. Trust in them without wavering, for they are the very Word of God Almighty.

When your faith is weak, look up to God, your loving and strong Father, not down at your circumstances. Trust His wise plans for your life and His ways and means of bringing about His purposes for you. He never makes mistakes, and His heart is always for His people. Stand on His promise that He will do good to you . . . always . . . and forever.

**I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living!**

Wait for the LORD;

be strong, and let your heart take courage;

wait for the LORD! (Psalm 27:13–14)

Introduction

How to Use This Book

This book was written to give parents an opportunity to present solid truth to their children and to encourage real-life application of the truth.

Relational

Children receive more encouragement to learn when truth is presented by a trusted individual. Your positive, relational parent-child commitment will be a real benefit when you sit down together to read this book. Your time together over the Word should be positive, affirming, and loving.

Interactive

There is a greater impact when an individual discovers truth, instead of just hearing it presented. Many questions have been incorporated into the text of this book to encourage your child to wonder and think critically. The process of discovery will be circumvented if you don't give your child adequate time to think and respond. After asking a question, wait for a response. If your child has difficulty, ask the question a different way or give a few hints.

Questions and responses can be springboards for more questions and discovery as you interact with your child's mind and heart. The Holy Spirit is the real teacher, so depend on Him to give both you and your child thoughts and truths to explore together, and to bring the necessary understanding. Take the time to work through each story at a leisurely pace—giving time for interaction and further dialogue. The goal should be to get the material into the child, not just to get the child through the material.

Understandable

These stories have been written with attention given to explaining difficult or potentially new concepts. Some of these concepts may take time for your child to digest. Allow your child to ponder new truths. Read the story more than once, allowing the truth to be better understood and integrated into your child's theological framework. At times, have your child read parts of the lesson, giving an opportunity for visual learning.

Because vocabulary can be child-specific, define the particular words foreign to your child. Retell difficult sections in familiar wording, and ask questions to be sure your child understands the truth being taught.

Theological

More than just acquainting your child with the promises of God, this book is building a biblical theology beneath your child. As your child begins to correctly understand who God is and how He interacts with the world, he or she won't just have a vague notion of God, but will be able to relate to the God of the Bible.

Because the Word of God has convicting and converting power, Bible texts are quoted word-for-word in some parts. Some of these verses may be beyond the child's understanding, so you may need to explain unfamiliar words or thoughts. Even though clear comprehension may be difficult, hearing the Word itself is a means the Holy Spirit can use to encourage faith in your child (Romans 10:17). Do not minimize the effectual influence of God's Word in the tender souls of children.

Since the Word of God is living and active, allow the child to read the Bible verses as much as possible. Also, encourage your child to memorize some of the verses so he or she can meditate on them at other times.

The gospel is presented numerous times throughout the book. Use this as an opportunity to share God's work of grace in your life, and to converse with your child about his or her spiritual condition. Be careful not to confuse

spiritual interest with converting faith and give premature assurances to your child. Fan the flames of gospel-inspired conviction and tenderness toward the sacrificial love of Jesus without prematurely encouraging your child to pray “the sinner’s prayer.”¹

Application

Understanding the truth is essential, but insufficient. Truth must also be embraced in the heart and acted on in daily life. Often, children cannot make the connection between a biblical truth and real-life application, so you, the parent, must help bridge the gap.

Consider the following quotation by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

We must always put things in the right order, and it is Truth first. . . . The heart is always to be influenced through the understanding—the mind, then the heart, then the will. . . . But God forbid that anyone should think that it ends with the intellect. It starts there, but it goes on. It then moves the heart and finally the man yields his will. He obeys, not grudgingly or unwillingly, but with the whole heart. The Christian life is a glorious perfect life that takes up and captivates the entire personality.²

Spend a few days or even a week on each promise. Reread the story, discuss the truths, and follow the suggestions in the Learning to Trust God section. Most importantly, help your child to see that God is who He says He is, and to act in response to the truth. Point out God’s involvement in daily life, and thank Him for being true to His promises.

1. Some excellent resources for parents regarding the salvation of children can be found at www.children.desiringgod.org. Resources include: a booklet, *Helping Children Understand the Gospel*; and two seminars from the 2007 conference, “‘How Great a Salvation’: Leading Children to a Solid Faith” and “Presenting the Gospel to Children.”

2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 61–62.

Prayer

Ultimately, our efforts are effective only if the Holy Spirit breathes on our teaching and quickens it to the heart. Pray not only before going through the stories, but also in the succeeding days, that your child would see God's character and respond in faith to Him.

Note: *God's Promise* is a topical study with stories ordered in a logical progression. The introductory story acquaints children with promises, followed by two stories identifying the recipients of God's promises—believers and unbelievers. An explanation of conditional and unconditional promises is presented next to show children the difference between these two kinds of promises. Stories 5 and 6 assure children that God's promises are trustworthy because God, the Promise Giver, is trustworthy, thus showing the connection between God's character and His Word.

The following seventeen stories expose children to specific promises God has made to believers, starting with two that explain how a person inherits the promises through salvation. The book ends with three stories challenging children to trust in God's promises.

Promises Are Like Presents

What's the difference between "We should go to a baseball game," and "I promise to take you to a baseball game"?

A promise is when a person says he will or will not do something, and he really means it. He is not just thinking about it. He has decided to do it. You can count on it. He will do it.

Suppose your mom says, "I promise I will not pull your tooth out. I will only wiggle your tooth to see how loose it is." If she says that, she is telling you something she will do—wiggle your tooth—and something she will not do—pull it out. You do not need to worry that your mom will pull out your tooth, because she has made a promise. You can be sure of it.

The Bible is full of God's promises—things God has said that He will or will not do. These are promises you can count on for sure. Some of God's promises tell us what He will do. For example:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. (Psalm 32:8)

Some promises tell us how things are for the Christian, the person who is trusting in Jesus:

[Nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39)

Nothing can ever take away God's love for those who trust in Jesus. God loves His children . . . everywhere . . . all the time . . . forever! He *promises* this, so we can be sure that this is really true, that God really is like this and will always be like this.

Sometimes God's promises are found in things He tells us about Himself. When God tells us who He is, He is making a promise about what He is like and what He will do. For example:

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Psalm 103:8)

Since this verse tells us what God is like, it also has in it a *promise* about God. God is kind and doesn't become angry quickly. He is patient and full of love. This



is who God says He is. Because God is kind and patient, He is promising to act with kindness and patience. This is what He will do.

What does God promise by saying this about Himself?

**The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made. (Psalm 145:9)**

God says He is good and kind. This is what He says about Himself. But God is also promising here to show goodness and kindness to EVERYONE!

This is a wonderful promise! It is like a present. All of God's promises to bless us—to do good to us—are gifts. We don't deserve them. God doesn't have to give them to us. He gives them because He is good and loving.

Do you like to get presents? What is one present that you really liked? You will find that God's promises are the very best presents of all. Not only are God's promises wonderful, but they don't wear out or break—they are forever!

The Bible is full of God's promises—things God has said that He will or will not do. Promises that tell us what God is like and who He will always be. Promises you can count on. God's promises are sure.

In this book, you will discover some of God's many promises. They will be like opening wonderful presents—gifts from God that we don't deserve, which show us how good and loving He is.

Here is a verse for you to remember as you read this book and discover God's gift of His wonderful promises to His children.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- * Read James 1:17 again. What does this verse tell you about God? If God never changes, what does this mean about who He is today and about His promises?
- * Look through your Bible and find some of God's promises. Who is each promise for? How is each promise like a present? Look at one or two promises and thank God for that promise and what it means for your family.
- * **Activity:** Get a box with a lid (big enough to hold 25 3" x 5" index cards). Wrap the box and lid in very pretty paper, or decorate the box. Make a label that says, "God's Promises," and glue it to the box. Tell someone why God's promises are like presents.

God's Promises to Believers

If your school promises a prize to everyone who reads 10 books, can third graders get the prize? How about fifth graders? Yes, this promise is for everyone in the school. But if a teacher promises her third-grade class a prize for reading 10 books, will the fifth graders get a prize? Why not? Fifth graders won't get a prize because the promise is only for the third-grade class.

Just as our promises are sometimes for everyone and sometimes only for certain people, some of God's promises are for all people and some are only for His children. Some promises are just for one person. Can you think of a time when God made a promise to just one person?

Did you think of these promises?

- God promised David that he would be the king of Israel.¹
- God promised wisdom, knowledge, wealth, riches, and honor to Solomon.²
- God promised Zechariah and Elizabeth that He would give them a son.³

God also made a special promise to Abram. He told Abram:

I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
(Genesis 17:6–7)

1. 1 Samuel 16:12
2. 2 Chronicles 1:12
3. Luke 1:13

God promised that Abram would be His special child, and that whole nations of peoples would come from Abram. God renamed him “Abraham” and promised to always be his God. But who else is this promise for? It is for Abraham’s “offspring.”

What does “offspring” mean? Offspring means children born to someone. Maybe you were born to your mom and dad. If so, you are their offspring and you belong to their family. And your offspring—everyone born to you—would be part of the family, too. So is everyone born to your children . . . and everyone born to their children . . . and on and on.

So God’s promise to be God and to be good to Abraham was for Abraham. But it was also for everyone in Abraham’s family.

God made many special and wonderful promises to the family of Abraham. God made promises to bless them—to be good to them always. He made promises like this one:

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Isn’t this a wonderful promise? It is a special, for-sure promise of God’s goodness. God made many promises like this . . . not to everyone, just to the family of Abraham.



But what if you weren't born into the family of Abraham? Does that mean the promises made to Abraham's family are not for you?

There is another way children become part of a family besides being born into the family. Do you know what that is? It's by adoption. What does it mean to be adopted into a family?

In adoption, the head of the family invites someone to be part of the family. He takes care of all the papers that make the adopted person a full member of the family with the same privileges as everyone else in the family.

If someone wants to be part of another family, he can't just decide that he is in the family. He has to be invited into the family and made a family member through adoption.

God invites people into His family, too—through faith in Jesus. We can be adopted into Abraham's family, the family of God, by trusting in Jesus as our Savior. God says that **“it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7)**. God welcomes those who have Abraham-like faith in Jesus into His family.⁴

To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

If you are trusting in Jesus as your Savior, then all the promises to God's people are for you!⁵ This is good news. Every promise of God to do good to His people can be yours through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Romans 4:16: “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all”; Galatians 3:29: “And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.”

5. 2 Corinthians 1:20: “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.”



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- * Read the “Ten Essential Truths” in the Appendix and talk about these truths. What does it mean to be a child of Abraham by faith? Are you a child of God?
- * Write out John 1:12 on an index card and put it in your “God’s Promises” box. You may want to decorate the back side of the card like a gift as a reminder that all God’s promises are undeserved gifts. Then thank God for the gift of adoption.
- * **Activity:** Make a booklet to help you remember the “Ten Essential Truths,” and explain these truths to someone.

You have probably seen your children's eyes light up at receiving a present.

How excited would they be to get a present directly from God?

God already has a present to offer your children. And you can be the one who helps them discover it.

God has left all of his children many promises through his Word as gifts that flow from his goodness and love. Each one is backed up by his power and trustworthy character, so we can be confident in them.

This book, for you and your children to read together, will help them learn these promises and put their own confidence in them. Each chapter looks at a new promise and explores it in the context of a Bible story.

God has left his promises with his people so they can trust him . . . and through these pages your children can trust him too.



“This engaging, attractively illustrated book teaches not only the promises of the Bible, but also the character of the God who makes and keeps his promises.”

—**Tedd Tripp**, President of Shepherding the Heart Ministries

“This book is clear, profound, helpful, and at every point grounded with faith and confidence in who God is. A tremendous resource!”

—**Elizabeth Groves**, Lecturer in Old Testament, Westminster Seminary

“Sally Michael does not sugarcoat any of the more difficult promises, but explains them in a way that shows a high view of God. . . . I highly recommend it.”

—**Martha Peace**, Biblical Counselor, Co-author of *The Faithful Parent*

“Will greatly help believers of all ages. . . . A powerful expression of biblical truth for children.”

—**Tony Kummer**, Children's Pastor; Founder of Ministry-To-Children.com

SALLY MICHAEL is the co-founder of Children Desiring God and developed their widely used Sunday school curriculum for young people. She is the Minister for Program Development and Resources in the Family Discipleship Department at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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