



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

THE FULFILLMENT OF A PROMISE

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 12:1-3 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 12:6-11, 17-19; 15:1-7; 16:4; 17:16-19; 22:1-8; 26:2
Joshua 1:6, 9 | Psalm 32:8 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Isaiah 54:17 | Acts 16:31 | Romans 10:9 | 1 John 5:14-15

► SUMMARY

The Bible is an amazing record of God's promises.

We can study it to discern the Lord's will for every situation in our lives. However, it can sometimes feel like God isn't answering our petitions. There are two possible reasons why. First, our requests may not be according to His will; and second, they might not have a true foundation. In other words, we can't expect God to give us something if we're asking for it according to our own desires instead of relying on His promises in Scripture. However, when we come to God with requests anchored in the Bible, we can be assured He will fulfill them. Instead of wishing and hoping, we can have complete assurance that God will grant our requests because they're made in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14-15).

► SERMON POINTS

Abraham's life is a wonderful example of God's ability to fulfill all His promises.

It begins in Genesis 12:1-3 with the Lord's eightfold, unconditional covenant with Abraham. By examining this passage of Scripture, we can learn the value of waiting on God and observe the negative consequences that come from jumping ahead of Him. The details and circumstances of our lives differ from Abraham's, but the principles and lessons that worked in his time still apply to us. Why? Because God doesn't change. Whenever you become frustrated by something going on in your

life and you begin to wonder if God will keep His word to you, remember that:

- **The promises of God are always stated clearly** (Josh. 1:6, 9). Our heavenly Father never gives us hazy or uncertain directions or asks us to figure out what He wants us to do. He loves each one of us unconditionally and wants to give us His best. In order to accomplish His purposes in and through us, the Lord has given us very clear promises in Scripture that cover every aspect of our lives. When we cling to them, they anchor us through adversity.
- **God's promises come with clear guidance** (Ps. 32:8; Prov. 3:5-6). The Lord doesn't want us to walk in the dark, and that's why He has promised to instruct and guide us along the way. Each day, we make choices, but we don't have a full understanding of our situations. However, the Lord knows all the details and leads us the right way just as He led Abraham through the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:6).
- **We should seek the Lord's guidance in times of personal worship and meditation on His Word** (Gen. 12:7-8). After Abraham received an affirmation of the Lord's covenant, he responded by building altars. Over time, he returned to them to worship and remember God's goodness. Today, we have the privilege of seeking the Lord and His direction by praying and studying the Bible. Instead of altars, we can keep diaries to remind us how God has fulfilled His promises. And the more critical a decision is, the more time we should spend seeking His thoughts and guidance. Time spent in prayer is always time well spent.

■ **Changing course from God's path shows we doubt His word** (Gen. 12:9-11). The Lord led Abraham to Canaan, but when he saw there was a severe famine, he doubted God and decided to go to Egypt instead. He further complicated matters by lying and telling Sarah to claim she was his sister. We should always remember that following the Lord means He is the source for direction rather than our circumstances. Going our own way places us outside His will and only leads to trouble.

■ **The Lord renews His promises because He wants us to follow Him** (Gen. 15:1-7). Abraham felt uncertain because, despite God's promise of countless descendants, he remained childless. When he finally decided a servant named Eliezer would be his heir, the Lord again appeared and reassured Abraham he would have a son. Like him, when unexpected difficulties occur, we may wonder if we're on the right path. That's why, in our times of weakness, the Lord encourages us.

■ **Listening to ungodly or unwise counsel can cause us to ignore God's promises and veer from His will** (Gen. 16:4). As time passed, Sarah became impatient. She decided to take matters into her own hands and gave her servant Hagar to Abraham to produce a child. Instead of waiting for the Lord's timing, Abraham listened to her advice, and trouble soon followed. Likewise, when we ignore what God has promised and go our own way, we'll suffer the consequences.

■ **The fulfillment of the Lord's promises may seem impossible from our perspective** (Gen. 17:16-19). When God told Abraham that Sarah would bear a son when she was ninety, it seemed so impossible that he laughed. But that's precisely what happened. This is the reason why we shouldn't underestimate the Lord. If we are obedient when He challenges us with something that seems impossible, He will keep His word and pour out more amazing blessings than we can even imagine. Like the patriarch, we won't always understand God's

plan for our lives, but the more we obediently follow Him, the more our trust in Him grows.

■ **The fulfillment of His promises may require us to do something that appears contradictory** (Gen. 22:1-5). Although the Lord had clearly said the world would be blessed through Isaac, He tested Abraham's faith by telling him to sacrifice his beloved son. Abraham obeyed, and the Lord intervened and provided a ram instead. Whenever God tests us, we should follow Abraham's example and live by faith and obedience, not by emotions and human reasoning.

■ **The fulfillment of the Lord's promises may include the surrender of something very dear to us** (Gen. 22:2). Isaac was Abraham's treasured child, yet he was willing to surrender him to God. We must each ask ourselves if there's anything so dear to us that we're unwilling to give it to the Lord. At some point, He may bring us to a pivotal moment when His purpose rests on a single decision. Even if the choice is costly, we must do what God asks and let go of anything we value more than Him. He desires that we walk in the center of His will, and that requires our cooperation. He'll do His part by showing us the way, but we must choose to follow His path and let His Word guide us.

► RESPONSE

- Have you experienced the fulfillment of God's promises in any certain area of your life?
- What types of frustrations have you felt when waiting for God's timing in situations?
- Do you keep any type of diary or journal to record God's promises once they are fulfilled?

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