

2 Corinthians 7:1

Sunday 11/18/2012

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn over to 2 Corinthians chapter 7. Last week we talked about building relationships in the Word of God. One of the things that will always mess you up is the aspect of who you hang out with. We talked about some great concepts that not only will help you as a Christian, but if you are toying with the idea of getting into the people ministry, to learn how to really work on a third and fourth level with people, those are the kind of things that you are going to use and need to remember all of the time. We will go through many of those things in much more depth when we start meeting together after the first of the year.

Today we are going to start 2 Corinthians chapter 7. You should clearly understand that the book of 2 Corinthians is our handbook on ministry. As I have told you already, this is a key book to understand. I have been very careful coming through it and very mindful to explain all of it the best I could so that not only would you record the principles that I have been giving you, but also get an outline of the book as far as it goes verse by verse. To the best of our abilities, we have been able to do that.

You now know that each chapter is very important. The book itself, as I have said, is the handbook of ministry, but chapter by chapter he goes through a different aspect of ministry, sometimes several aspects. It all deals with our relationship to ministry.

- Chapter 1: Ministry and Suffering
- Chapter 2: The Forgiving Spirit
- Chapter 3: The Proof of Your Ministry
- Chapter 4: The Biblical Definition of Ministry
- Chapter 5: The Perspective of Your Ministry
- Chapter 6: The Fellowship of Our Ministry

I. Chapter 7: Promises to the Minister

Now today, and I think this is probably a great chapter for all of you younger Christians and you middle line Christians and you older Christians too, but I think it is something for you younger Christians that is really going to help you because chapter 7, and what a great chapter it is, it talks about the promises to the minister.

Now a promise, a promise is very special in the Bible, and this is going to be my introduction to chapter 7. I want to define the concept of a promise for you. I know some of you are already saying, "Well, I know what a promise is in the Bible," and I am sure you have a concept of it, but I want you to fully understand it because I do not think you understand the depth of the promises

in the Bible, and that is very important for you. I am going to show you some great verses today, and this will be a time where you can really get in and get some great key verses down.

One of the things that, and I give these out all the time, and we have them back in our bookstore, one of the greatest little books I have ever found is a little book called *The Bible Promise Book*. Most of you have them, but it is something that I think that, and I carry in my backpack when I go to the gym or wherever I go. I always have two or three of these in my car, wherever, because I always meet people. There have been people at the gym where I go who know I am a pastor, and they will come up and they will ask me that their boy was in a wreck or their daughter has got cancer or something like that, and I will immediately run down to the locker room and grab one of those out of my bag and bring it up, and I will explain it to them, and you thought that they just won the lottery. This is something that I use all the time, and it is a great little book.

What it is, it has in the front, you know most people that have trouble in their life, they know the answers are in the Bible, they do not always know how to find them, and it is true of us too many times. This little book here has a content, it is anger, belief, charity, children, children's duties (that is a good one, we got to mark that one), comfort, contentment, correction, God's correction, courage, death, enemy, eternal life, faith, faithfulness of God, fear, right on down the line. There are probably, oh let us see, there are probably maybe 100, 125 in here, and when you go to the page, it is going to list all the promises or the verses that go along with that. It is kind of like a poor man's ready reference to the promises in the Word of God, and it is a great little book to have that to give to somebody, and I give them out all the time because they will not take this when they necessarily will not take a Bible.

Now I am all for passing out Bibles, and I like to give Bibles away, but you know as well as I do. Give a Bible to somebody that is not saved that does not understand the things of God, and you might as well give them an Indian manual for a DC-3 jet. I mean, they do not understand it. Give them one of these, and they can find their way, and it contains the principles of the Word of God that they can get to, and then God can take it from there. So promises are very important, and promises in the Bible are something that is for you that you can claim, and I want to help you understand the whole concept today.

II. The Power of Promises: Hope, Trust, and Relationship

Promises give us hope when you really need it most. Promises hold us together in tough times. You know what is true in the world around you, how many times growing up when you have been dealing with your kids or even when you were a kid, you had a need in your life or something went wrong in your life or you needed somebody to help you in your life, and they said that they would, and you say, "Now promise me you will," and they say, "Okay, I promise you I am going to get that. I am promising I am going to do this. I promise you can have that." And they say, "Now promise me you are going to promise me that you are going to do that." You see, you got hope in what they are saying.

Promises and keeping them, well, most people do not understand this, the promises and keeping them are really the key to any real relationship. We have all had people that in our lives who we

always take the stance, "I will believe that when I see it." They always say they are going to do something, but they never do it. I have had people in the ministry like that over the years. I have had people that right up to the time that they leave and walk out the door for two or three years they are saying, "Well, I am going to do this next week," or "Next week, as soon as I get past this, I got this, I am going to do this, I am going to do this, and I am going to do this," and they never do.

We all promise things to people, and we never come through with it. Some of your husbands promise things to your wife. How many times your wife said, "Put the cap back on the toothpaste." "I promise I will." You do not, you do not, you do not. Wives sometimes to their husbands, I mean, a boyfriend to their girlfriend, "Promise me you will not do that anymore. Promise me you will not do this." "I promise, I promise, I promise." After a while, you know your promises do not mean much.

I have seen fathers and mothers to their children. I have seen fathers and mothers that got divorced from their kids, and that kid wanted to have a relationship with his dad or his mother, and that dad was all out there doing his own thing or the mother doing her own thing and never come around for the kid, and they would say, "I will pick you up on Tuesday, we will go have fun." That kid is waiting at the door with his coat on for you to come, and he never shows up, never shows up. Dad said, "Well, I promise we will do it next week." Never shows up. "Well, I promise you we are going to do it next month." Never happens. You know what happens in time? Kid does not believe it, does not believe it at all.

Promises and keeping them will be the key in building the main component of any relationship because it brings about trust. Now we have been studying in chapter 6 the aspect of our fellowship with God, and I have given you now five different aspects. The key factor in our fellowship, if you have not figured it out in these two chapters, 6 and 7 kind of go together, but the key factor in our fellowship is the promises in the Bible with God. When you build on the promises of a relationship with a human being, it builds the relationship. When you as a Christian take the promises of God and build them into your life, you build a trust with God because God will always come through. God keeps His promises when many times unfortunately we do not. The key factor in our fellowship is the promises found in the Bible, and it is absolutely vital.

Next week I am going to, as we go through chapter 7, I am going to show you how that really the theme of this from chapter 6 moves all the way through into the promises, but I wanted to define it first. I want to do this in two parts. I figured I could do one long sermon or two really long sermons and work it out that way. So I want to break this down in two parts, and today I just want to give you a basic introduction.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. We thank You for all the things that You do for us. We thank You, Father, for what You have given us today and those that have come today. We pray, Father, Your hand upon this time that as the Holy Spirit of God takes the Word of God and puts it into our hearts and gives us what we need. Help these young Christians. So many of them in the last three or four months have gotten saved or they have turned their life around or they have come here to learn the Bible and get what they need to get. I pray, Father, that You will give them what they need today. We love You. We thank You for all that You do for us now in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

You know the Bible is many things as a book. The Bible is a tremendous history book. The history of man's recorded seven thousand years is found all through the Word of God. You get into the book of Job and the book of Ecclesiastes and other places in the Bible. The Bible is a tremendous science book. We talked about it last week, the Bible being a book of life, and I told you that we always think of that as salvation, and that is true. The Bible contains the plan of salvation for you and for me, but the Bible also is a road map to life. It shows you how to go on life's journey and get everything that you need. The Bible in its overall concept is really a record of what God is doing and has done all down through history, but the real concept of the Bible for you and for me as Christians in our relationship and fellowship with Him is the Bible is the book of promises. In the Bible, promises are very important for you to understand.

You know for us as Christians, the promises will make up our hope in Christ based on what He said. Here is how it works. There is a certain process the way it goes, and this is also why people do not have a relationship with God. Many of God's people are saying they may have no relationship with God whatsoever, and on these principles we will build on the trust that God put in our life. We build our trust in God, and that never fails, and that leads to a relationship and then to our fellowship. Here are some great verses. If you do not have these down in your Bible, do not try to write them down, but certainly mark them down because they really will help you understand this concept.

- Psalm 77: The Question of God's Promises
- Promises and Eternal Security
- The Promise of Christ's Coming

III. General vs. Personal Promises

Now when it comes to promises, I need to tell you this, we have got a lot of things that you would tell you today. When it comes to promises, they come in two categories for you who love ice cream, they come in two flavors, and this is very important.

The first kind of promises you have are general promises. I just talked about Isaiah 42:9, that is a general promise. You see, we looked at 2 Peter 3:3-4, that is a general promise. One of my favorites in Isaiah 55:11, it says the Word of God never returns void. That is a promise, but that is a general promise. So some of the promises that you are going to have are in a general sense, in an overall concept.

But then there is the second type, and that is the personal promises. The personal promises are only to you, and only you can claim them. God gives them to you, and then you form where you are at, what you are going through, and that is what they are for, that God gives them to you because you are going through some tough times or you need something, so He gives you a promise.

I remember one time, this has been probably 30 years ago, maybe even longer than that. I was just a young guy in the ministry. I had not learned to keep my mouth shut about things that I probably should not preach to people I should not preach it to, and I had just been in the ministry a couple of years, so it had to be more than 30 years. But anyway, I was, you know, I had a bunch of families that were upset with me, and I was just a young guy back then. I had not learned to the point where my thin skin had not thickened up enough, I did not give a flip, but back then it bothered me because I did not know how it was all going to come down, and I was new kid on the block and all those things, and I, I was, I thought, "Boy, this is, I have been in Kansas City for a year now, and I am going to go home. They are going to fire me because I made all these people mad." And it was not what I thought I said anything wrong, it is that they did not want to hear what I had to say.

So I, I was really bummed about it, and I was worried about it, and I, and I was struggling, and I remember this was clear, it was in the summertime, had to be July or August, and I was sitting out in the front yard, and I got my Bible there, and I just wanted to get along, and I, and I was, it was all heavy on my heart, you know, what is going to happen there, you know, because the parents were going to have a meeting with the pastor, you know, all these things. And I read that, reading through the Bible, and out of nowhere, I do not even, I did not even know where to read. I wanted to do that thing where you just flip the thing and stick your finger down. I tried that once, but it was an "oaf is a type of a wafer," and it did not work for me. It did not help me any. So I, I was reading down through there, and lo and behold, without even knowing how I got there, I opened up 2 Samuel 1:1, which was David was going through some things in his life, and right there, just like God, you know how you highlight something in your Bible in yellow, and sometimes when you are reading your Bible, God will not use a yellow highlighter because He does not need that, but He will lift the verse right out and put it in your lamp. As I was coming down through there and reading that thing with my trouble where I was, boy, right there that thing just lifted up, and it said about David, "And David was strengthened in his kingdom." That is all I needed. God just kind of lifted that out and put it on my heart, and that was the promise to me that everything was going to be okay, and it was okay. It was okay, but I needed something. I needed something to get me through. I needed something, some light on this thing. I needed something that I knew that God understood it, and He was not like David, "Where are you at?" "I am in my night time." Boy, when I got that verse that David was strengthened in his kingdom, God just said, "Just like I strengthened him in his kingdom, I am going to take care of you here," and when you are in yours, that is all I needed.

There have been tough times in my life when people, you know, have been after you, and it is all true in the ministry, and like it will be with you when you do what God wants you to do. One time, many years ago, you know, I, it was a thing where I could not understand why people were

upset about this or upset about that, and God gave me that great promise, and it has been a promise of mine for years and years and years in Isaiah 50:20, where it says Joseph and his brethren, where Joseph gives a tremendous statement, which is a tremendous promise, that they meant it for my evil, but God meant it for my good. That is a great promise.

Hebrews 11:11 is another great example. This is Sarah. Here it says:

Hebrews 11:11

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Now I do not know if you know this, when she has Isaac, she is 90 years old. I do not know if too many 90-year-old women that have given birth to children. Abraham was 99. Now that is quite a, that is quite an impossible situation. In fact, the Bible when it talks about Abraham in other places talks about his body being dead. I mean, he is alive physically, but he cannot have kids. And here is a case where she is 90 years old, and when you look at this verse, you see that her faith in God, her trust in God that got her through and gave her the ability to believe what God said in an impossible situation, was the promise that God gave her to hold on to.

Now I will just throw this in, I will not charge you extra for this, but you know you go back in that story, that is not exactly true. You know that really did not happen. You know why they named Isaac, Isaac? Because Isaac means laughter. You know why God had, He made laughter? Because she laughed at God's promises. Now what do you got here? You know what you got here? This is one of the most beautiful pictures you ever see in your life. What you got here is the fact that once you get past the cross, all sin is forgiven, and God never brings it up again. When you go through Hebrews chapter 11, who you find there? Samson. Samson, the biggest screw up you ever saw in your life. He is in God's hall of fame. You find every man, it talks about Abraham trusting God. He did not trust God all of his life. Many things he did not trust God. Jacob, you kidding me? Jacob means schemer. All these guys are listed in a hall of fame. You know why? Because, and God never says one negative thing about them in anything He says. You know why? Because it is after the cross, and at the cross, everything they did was wrong was under the blood. He never brings it up again. That is a great principle. He never brought it up again. Why? She did not believe God anymore than some of God's people do today. She laughed when God said what He said, but when God recorded here, He said, "You know what, she believed My promises," because deep down inside God saw that she really wanted to and really did, but she was afraid. Tremendous concept.

Here is a great one. This is one I have claimed for most of my life, for 40 years. It is a great one. Deuteronomy 29:29:

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Now you see that? That is a promise that when God shows you something in the Bible, it is for you. It is for you. There are secret things in there that God will not show anybody else that He will show you. If you get into the ministry for any length of time, and you are around any length of time, you will learn one great truth, and it is a truth that you never teach all the Bible. You know, you ask me questions on Thursday night, I will answer your questions. I come up and teach you this, and I will give you a depth of things that maybe that you need to have and those things, and people say, "Wow, I never heard that before." But let me tell you something, I would never tell you all the things that God has given me. You know why? Because He did not give them to you. He gave them to me. And those are things that were God's secret that He did not give to anybody else, but He gave them to me. And then you ought to have those in your own life, and that is a, and that is a promise. A promise when God shows you something in the Bible, it is for you. If it is not only for you, look at the rest of the verse, it is for your children.

Now you parents, and you got, we got a host of parents here with young kids growing up. I want to give you an encouragement here. A good parent not only gets the promises for themselves, but they pass them on to their children. They pass them on to their children. Note the purpose, "that we might do all the words of this law." That is why you pass them on to your kids. God gives them to you. It is like a, it is like your, your, your dad has got a fine collection of antique firearms, and he passes away, and you are the eldest son. What are you going to do? Put them on eBay? No, you, they go down to the son. And there are many things, heirlooms have been passed down to generation to generation to generation in a worldly sense. Well, this is talking about the secret thing that God gives you. You need to pass on to your children and then on to their children, right on down the line.

I think most parents would want their children to grow up tall for God. I mean, I would. I have never met a parent that said, "I want my kid to grow up be a lousy for God." Many of the kids do, but I do not remember if I had a parent started out that way. I think most of God's people want their children to grow up tall for God, but I will tell you something, if they are going to grow up tall for God, it is because they are going to grow up straight with God, and that requires the promises, giving them and teaching them the promise of the God. They are never too young for that. They are never too young for that. They never are.

IV. Applying Promises: The Jewelry Box Analogy

Promises are a lot like money in the bank. Most people never figure out how this promise thing works, and I have told you this before, but we have got many, many new people here today since the last time I said it. It has been a couple of years ago now probably, and most of you probably forgot it anyhow. But, you know, promises are a lot like money in the bank, and people come to me all the time with problems, and I just, I write them a, I write them a spiritual promise check. That is, that is all I can do. I cannot solve your problem for you, but I can show you what the Bible says that if you will get the promises, and it will solve the problem you have got.

But promises like money in the bank. Okay, here I am. I am driving my car, and all of a sudden I get this, my red oil light comes on. Well, I do not know anything about a red oil light, so I just keep on driving it. Pretty soon I hear the engine start knocking. Well, I, I like the rhythm I am

going along with what I am singing. All of a sudden I hear this big "toang bang ding dong boom boom," and my head, my, my hood dents up, and I open the hood, and a rod went right up through the top of my engine. So I take it to my friendly garage guy, and he said, "Well," he said, "You should have shut it off when the red light came on." And, "Well, it was Christmas, you know, and I was waiting for the green one to come on, you know, and I just, I, I did not do it." And so he says, "Well, you know, you, the engine is gone." "Okay, so what do we do?" "We have to get a new engine." "How much is that?" "Well, it is going to be about twenty-two hundred dollars." "Twenty-two hundred dollars? Oh boy, that is great, man. That was expensive little rhythm band we had going there."

Anyway, okay, I go down to my bank where I bank. They all know me. I know them. They know me because I always wade through the suckers to get the red one. But hey, they know who I am, and I said, "Good morning," and I said, "Good morning to you. What can I do for you? Can I help you today?" "Yes, you can. Well, you know what, I, I got embarrassed about this, but I drove my car down the road, you know, and the red light came on with oil, and I did," and she does not need to know this, but confession is good for the soul, and so, and so I am telling her, you know, "And my engine blew up, and I took it to the mechanic, and he said it is going to be twenty-two hundred dollars. So, you know, I need to get twenty-two hundred dollars. Give me engine effect." She says, "Oh, no problem, Mr. Alexander. What is your account number?" I gave him a little account number. She gives it a little thing. I always get nervous when they, when they take your account number and they get into the computer. I am always afraid that somebody just hacked into that thing, and I ain't got nothing left in there, you know. She comes back up, and she says, "Well, Mr. Alexander, you only have twenty dollars and ninety-two cents on your in your bank account." And I said, "Yeah, I know, but this is the bank. You got all kinds of money." I said, "Behind that big old door there with a wheel on it, man, there is a million dollars. I need twenty-two hundred dollars to get my car fixed." And this is the bank, you have money. She says, "I know, but you do not have any money on your account." I said, "Well, what is that got to do with it? You just gave this guy was standing here, you gave him, I counted it out, I will record my eye, you gave him nineteen hundred dollars." And, "Well, if he got nineteen hundred, I only need twenty-two hundred, just, just a couple hundred dollars more." She said, "You do not understand. He had his money on the account. You do not."

Now I, "You have a job?" "Yes, I do." "You make good money?" "Probably pretty good money." "Well, I do not know what you do with your money, but you did not put it in the bank, so when you come to the bank and you need something, we can only give you what you put on the account. So I know you need twenty-two hundred dollars. I am sorry you need twenty-two hundred dollars, but we cannot give you the money." Now who cannot understand that?

Now Bible principles are the same way. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." You put biblical principles, and you put them on your heart. You put them on the account. You come over to me to talk about problems. I will give you biblical promises or principles, and you take them home, and you put them into your heart. You apply them to your heart, and then you, you do something with them, and you store them in there. And then what happens is, is that when you come a problem in your life, when something comes up, some

catastrophe befalls you like my car, only you are in a spiritual sense, when it all falls down and caves in, you know what? You have everything on the account that you just draw off the spiritual principles like if I had done and put my money in the bank, I could have drawn off what I had in the bank.

Problem with God's people every time, every time you have an issue that you cannot solve or will not solve or cannot get to the end of the road with it, you know what that is? You have, you are just like me standing in First Bank of Raytown. You have put nothing on the account spiritually, so when things go wrong, you have nothing to bank on, nothing at all. People just crazy. I mean, I love them, but they are crazy. They actually think, you know, you get into a problem, you know, and I, somebody said this just a couple of weeks ago, "I have had this terrible problem in my life, and I prayed and I prayed and I prayed and I prayed and I prayed." Having marital problems, and I just prayed for God to solve my marriage problem. Say, "Oh yes, pray that, pray, pray, pray, pray." And nothing happened. I asked him, I said, "How much time you spent in the Bible?" "Oh, I have not spent any time in the Bible. I do not even have a Bible." "Well, how do you think God is going to answer? Are you going to be driving down 350, and an F-14 is going to be flying over from Whiteman, and he is going to lose control, and God is going to put the little vapor trail on, and you are going to spell out your answer? You think that you are going to get in Billy Graham's little corner, 'My Answer,' and you are going to get what you need?" How do you think God gives you the answers to what your troubles are? He does through the book, through the principles and the promises that He has given you. Your job is to put them on account in your heart so when the tough times come, you have something to bank on. See, that is the problem. I mean, I would like to help you, so I all day long I just write spiritual checks. "Here, take your cash down here, take this and go, take this."

Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

I told you last week in Proverbs 4:20, the key of keeping your relationship with God and keeping everything in life straight is you putting the Word of God in your heart. Keep that Word in your heart, for out of the heart comes what? The issues of life. So you are going to put it on there.

2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Boy, there it is. There it is.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

All the promises are in Him. Now let me explain something to you here. You need to get this down. This might be a little confusing for some of you, but I am going to go slow. Promises in the Bible, going slow. Oh, I know, I know, all promises, Eve, like that. But then Eve is the kind of person who wears sunglasses you can see behind you, so watch it now.

All promises, listen to me, all promises are what we call Bible principles. A promise is a Bible principle. Okay, you got that now. But this is it, but you also want to remember all promises are principles, here it comes, but not all principles are promises. See how things work? There are some principles, promises that you can cut out and claim for yourself in a personal way, and they are, they are, they are for you, and they are promises, and they are absolute principles. But then there are other principles that in a general sense, you really do not claim them in any way of your life, but they are true in the Bible. For example, there are seven laws in the Bible. Those seven laws in the Bible are principles. They are absolutely true, but they are not necessarily promises. They are just principles. So you have promises, and all promises are principles. I do not want you to get confused under terminology. All promises are principles, but not all the principles in the Bible are promises. Principles are in their foundational concept. They hold things up. Sometimes they hold the earth up. Sometimes they hold the moon up. Sometimes they hold the stars up. Those are the general principles, and sometimes when they become principles that become promises, they hold you and me up when we go through a tough time, and you want to remember that. I do not want you going out of here saying, "Well, I am confused now. He is talking about principles and promises," and you think they are different. No, they are not. They are not. All promises are principles, but not all principles are promises. Some of them are just general truth by which the earth, moon, sun run by. Hey, you need to know the difference.

Now I always get this question, "How do you apply promises?" That sounds so easy when I get up here and say, "You need to hide the Word of God in your heart." What does that mean? Does that mean you cut out little verses and swallow them? What does that mean? I mean, you are laughing, but what does, what does that mean? Does that mean that what you, I mean, I know you know people, it is easy to say that. It is easy to get up and say, "You know what, you will hide the Word of God in your heart. Put the Word of God in your heart." It is easy for me to say, "You need to apply the principle to your heart and to your life." That sounds great. Apply it. Okay, like you do a coat of paint on the wall, like you do a bumper sticker on your bumper. What do I, and I know some of you, you know, I know I have been in your homes, you know, you get around your, your, your mirror in your house, around the house, you got those little three by five cards. They are all over the refrigerator. They are all over your mirror every time. That is a great thing to do, but there is, that is not exactly what I am talking about, though I am not discouraging that. I think you have got to do that, but I am asked all the time, you know, "How do you apply other promises?"

You women will understand this better than the men because men never get this. If they ever did, they would be better husbands. We do not have much hope of that, but I do not care, ladies, one thing about all of you, it may not be the same size, it may not be the same shape, you may not even look at it in the context that I am talking about it, but everybody, almost without exception, this is true, if you are a woman today, if we would go to your home today, probably in your bedroom, over by your dresser or on your veranda, whatever veranda is, is that your sister? Oh, your veranda. Okay, I am okay. You know what you would find? You would find a jewelry box. May I ask how many of you women, if you will be honest with me, how many have some form of jewelry box in your house? Okay, just about everybody. Dago, you do not have to put your

hand up. Thank you. 5:30, we are going to have dinner together. Okay, of course. All right, buddy.

You have a jewelry box, and, and you know, a jewelry box is where all through your life people have given you stuff. Maybe from when you were dating somebody years ago that you wound up marrying. I hope you do not have somebody that you did not marry. But your mother gave you things or your father. Maybe you have your mother's jewelry or your grandmother's jewelry. Maybe if you are, you, you know, you have something that belonged to your father, you know, and it is really special to you or somebody that really loves you and means a lot to you have given you something. And basically, you know, when you go to bed at night, you take your jewelry off, so you have got to have some place to put it, so you put it in a jewelry box. Not too many women just hanging up on a rack some place. You put it in a little box that, and it is very convenient because when a crook breaks into your house, that first place he goes, he gets everything you got. You see, but you got a little jewelry box, and everything that is special to you, everything that everybody has given you or you inherited or somebody has given you, you put in that jewelry box.

Now it is real simple, if you and I are the bride of Christ, and we are, and if Christ is my espoused husband, and He is, then my heart in application of what do we, how do we apply the principles and the promises, then my heart is my jewelry box. See how the thing works? In the Old Testament, they had the tabernacle with all the furniture and all those things, but you ever noticed back there where it talks about the holy things, the hallowed things, the things that were dedicated unto the Lord, that they kept sacred? God never really cared much about who did what with what, but when the kings came down from the other nations and they took the dedicated things, God got really interested in it because those were things that He had given to Israel that were special between Him and them. And there are things, you know, you, it is, you know, on television they got the Capital One commercial, "You know what is in your wallet?" And for the child of God, the real question is, "What is in your jewelry box today?" That is the question. My heart, your heart is the jewelry box, and that is where we should keep all the special things that the love of your life, the Lord Jesus Christ, has given you. The special promises, the special principles that He has given you in tough times that you keep in there. The things that you add to it, well yes, like a bank account with money on it, but this is more in an intimate way here that shows you how to apply it.

Somebody says, "Well, how do you apply to your principle?" The same way you take your special jewelry off and put them in a little box. That little box is your heart. Remember now, 2 Corinthians 6:20 says that all the promises are in Christ. When you start to build a relationship with God, it becomes personal. It is between you and Him. Not everybody should be involved in everything that goes on between you and the Lord.

You know one of the hardest things, and I have learned this over the years, and some of God's people, you know, I understand it, but you have not learned it yet. I have seen people try to explain to somebody else something real personal and special that God did for them. It does not mean something to nobody else, and it looks kind of, it is almost like there where you had to be, being there to see it, you know, to understand it. It falls flat. I have done that in my own life. I

tried to, I tried to explain to somebody what God gave me. They just look at me like, "Okay." You know why they do that? Because God did not give it to them, and you need to understand that there are some things that God gives you, you do not share with other people. They are in your jewelry box. I do not share all the things that God shows me. While God shows me probably 20, 40, 30, 50 things a day, and I just tuck them away in my jewelry box. I learned things from people watching them in circumstances in life that, that means something to me that if I would tell you about it, it would not mean anything to you, and it is the same way with you. When you start to build a relationship with God, it has to become personal, you and Him. Not everybody is involved in everything that, you know, and goes on between you and Him. To Him, you are special. You are not just a name or a number.

It is how I try to pattern my church. I do not want, you know, in many churches, one big church in Kansas City, and they, they look at the members of the church, and they do not call them by name. They call them by, uh, they are, they are, uh, they are giving numbers. Every family has an assignment, a number, and that is their number, and you know that most pastors do not know the people's name, do not get to talk to the people. I just think that is a terrible way. If, if the ministry really is to emulate Christ and what we want to have with Christ, then it will truly all one family, then, then, you know, you, you cannot do it that way. Everybody is important. Everybody is special. Everybody, everybody, uh, is a, is nobody is just a number or a name without a face, and it is, it is pastors do that all the time. And if you know, it is a thing where if the real relationship with God is the model for the church, then, you know, my attitude is that you can have as much of my time and means you can stand, see, which probably is not much, but I, I am, my mindset is built on along those lines.

You see, you and I are the number one thing in Christ's mind. A couple of New Year's Eves ago, I, I brought you through a Song of Solomon, and I showed you how that the Song of Solomon was the most intimate book in the Bible, and I told you some tremendous things about that. I think we got it in, I know we got it on tape. I think it is even a book back there now. But I showed you how that each chapter basically brings you through, and what it does is show two great things. It shows first of all how God looks at you, how Christ looks at you, but more importantly, it shows you and I how we look back at Him. And I, I taught it back then, I mean it today, I do not think anybody can have a real meaningful relationship with Christ until you understand that book and how it applies. I think most relationships with Christ are like most marriages today. They just do not work very well. Everybody just keeps them pumped up to keep going on, but at the end of the day, there is nothing really in a relationship going on, and that is the way we are in our relationship with Christ unfortunately most of the times.

Now you know what? You are number one in God's life. You are number one in God's mind. He wrote the Bible with you in mind. I do not even know if you know that. He wrote you 66 love letters to put in your jewelry box. He really did. He really did. I kid people all the time. I will, I will show you what I mean. "Is that a Bible, Zach? Why are you even carrying it? He did not write that to you. He wrote that to me. When He wrote that book, He, He cared nothing about you. He cared about me. When He wrote that, give me that. When He wrote that Bible, He gave it to me. He did not give it to you." Now Zach is sitting there shaking his head, but Zach is

thinking in his mind, "Yeah, up your nose with a rubber hose." He was not thinking of you when He wrote it. He was thinking of me. You see, until you develop the personal attitude of that book, I will tell you something else, and I do not want to make your man this morning, and I really feel bad about telling you this, but He did not die for you on the cross. He died for me. Sorry about you. I am glad you are saved. You got in the back door somehow, but He was not thinking of you on the cross when He died. He was thinking of me.

Now everybody here this morning had a, you had to be able to stand up and throw something at me, do not please, and, and say, "Bob, you are out of your mind. He did not die for you. He died for me." If you want to fight as Christians, let us fight over that. That is a good fight to have because He, but I can claim that. I cannot claim that book for Zach. I know what he believes about it, but I cannot claim that book for him. I can claim it for me. So I can say to Zach, "He did not write that to you, Zach. He wrote that to me." Zach can say, "Yeah, right. He did not write it, He wrote it to me." We can go back forth all day long about it. At the end of the day, I am right, and Zach is wrong. But you know, but you have got to understand how the thing works. You know what the difference between some of you are and some of the others are who are saved this morning? It is real simple. It is real simple. Many of you think the Bible was written to everybody. Some of you think the Bible was just written to you, and there lies the difference of what you put in your jewelry box. You build your relationship with Him on faith and trust, your service, your ministry, and they all sustain themselves on the promises of God.

V. Building Ministry on Promises, Not People

I remember years ago, years ago, I was a little 15-year-old girl, and she was giving a problem, all kind of parents, all kinds of fits. The parents brought her into me, and she had hooked up with this boyfriend at school that she was not supposed to have any boyfriends, and, and, and she, she was giving her mom and dad fits. And I will never forget it, I did not get anywhere with her. I did not really expect to, but you know, mom and dad wanted me to talk with her with the mom and dad being there, so that is fine. I, nothing else, I always give them, I give them the hard line down the line, "This is what is going to happen." But anyway, I was down there, and she was just beside herself, and I was trying to talk with her about giving up this guy because he was a bum. I mean, he was a bum. He was just a goofy bum. He was a bum, and later they got married, and they are married with a mess, and they are divorced, and you know, he was a bum anyway. But, and I am trying to tell this to her, but trying to tell that to a 15-year-old girl, trying to tell her to a 30-year-old woman, sometime it does not much work better. But anyway, but I was, I was telling her, and she broke right out of the thing. I mean, and she was, she was, she was watching me, never said a word, but her, her eyes were welling up with tears, and I think, "Oh, I am getting through." You know, here I am, she is going to just fall down to her knees, we are going to hear this, "Just As I Am," being sung from the loudspeakers of heaven, and we are going to get it done today, you know. Her eyes welled up, welled up with tears, and she burst out, and she says, "You do not understand. You do not understand. I cannot live without him. I am not going to live without him, and I cannot live without him." "Shut up." No, I did not say shut up. She shut up. I thought about that years later, and I thought to myself, "You know what? That is exactly what our attitude ought to be toward our relationship with Christ, that you cannot live without Him." But

you know what problem is with most of God's people today? That is the problem. God's people can live, get along without Him and do. Saved people, nothing in the jewelry box, nothing in the jewelry box. And you know what? You look at that book, and that book, is it yours or is it for everybody? See the difference between that is how you view your own personal relationship with Him. It is just that simple.

Now you have heard me say many times, and very old truth, and it is true, you have heard me say, and I got it from years ago from, from Mel Subaka, my father in the Lord, and who knows where he got it, but he used to say, "Never doubt in the darkness what God has given you in the light." Now what he is saying is that God gives what God gives you in the light or the promises of God that you put in your jewelry box, and then when you get into the dark times, those are the things that get you through. I use another one all the time that God always pays for what He orders, and that is so true. That is a promise. You see, God calls you to do something, He will take the, pick up the tab on it, and He will, He will get the people there to get the job done. That is what He does. That is a promise.

Now in, in looking at the ministry side of it, which so many of you are looking at getting into the people deal and all that, I, I encourage you with it. You know, many times, I am going to tell you that many times the promises of God are all that you have. And when you go back and you study the New Testament, hey, no doubt about it, in Paul's life, it was the promises that God gave him that got him through all the tough times he went through. It is the promises of God that got me through all the things that I have had to go through, which is nothing compared to what Paul went through, but it will be the promise of God that will only get you through what you have got to go through. Our text says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved," and that is the key, getting them, getting them into your heart, getting them into your jewelry box, and understanding that He wrote those things for you.

And I can safely say after 45 years in ministry that if you do not at some point in your life get the promises in your world and you make them in your life, and you are going to get a process that you do not get that jewelry box being filled up, you ain't going to make it. People used to ask Mel, my father in the Lord, ask him if he ever felt like quitting the ministry. He would say, "Well, this week it was 247 times I felt like quitting." Now I do not think he ever felt like quitting the ministry. I think he used that question to make his point. Maybe he did, I do not know. I do not think he did, but I will not tell you something, in the ministry, when you start working with people, it kind of separates you out. You are in the loneliest place in your life, Paul, and the only thing it is going to get you through is the principles that God gives you and the things that He put in that jewelry box.

I honestly, I can speak for my own heart, and God knows my heart this morning, in all the years I have been in the ministry, I have never felt like quitting. Never have. You know, and I, I think about that, I thought about that this week, and I think one of the reasons that, that in my life is, is God kind of buffered me. You know, I am not the smartest guy in the world. I just claim to be the fastest one in the slow class. I, you know, but, but God allowed me to have some things. I think He needed to know what I needed to have, and He kind of gave me those things. I think one of the reasons is how I, you know, God showed me how to build my ministry. Now I, I build

people. I told you that last week. Leaders trained here. My whole life is building people. I, that is what God has called me to do. I do not look at myself as though as a great pastor in the world. I, I have the pastor to do what I have to do with people, but I am a people person, and what God has given me any ability at all that I can talk about, recognize without, you know, it is honestly clear in my heart, it is, I know how to take a young man or a young lady and get them from point A to point B to be what God wants them to be. That is what He has called me to do. Yet I do not build my ministry on people, or I do not build my ministry with people. Now I build people, you see, but I learned very early in my life that I learned that you cannot build a ministry on people. That sounds like a contradiction because we are all going down to restart. I got a group going over to the motel, then I got another group going over to Kansas tonight, and a bunch of people are going to go. So you say, "Well, Bach, you are talking about, I hear, I hear what you are saying, I hear what you are saying, you, but yet people do the ministry."

Well, here is where I am coming from, and you will understand, and this has helped me, maybe it will help you, I do not know. See, I have learned that I do not, I do not get disappointed in people. I never have. I have had people come all the time that messed up their life, and they have said, "You know what, I really apologize to you. I feel like I have let you down." "You did not let me down." "I think I disappointed you." You could, there is not anybody in this room and anything you do that would disappoint me. I do not get disappointed in people, and I think part of the reason is, is because I, I understand that people will fail. I will go one step further, I expect people to fail. I expect when I am in the ministry, when I got in the ministry, God gave me an ability to accept the fact and understand the fact that when you get into ministry, there were people who will join a ministry with you, and at some point in time they will leave you and let you hang in by yourself. They will get mad at you. They will get out of fellowship with God, and they will quit the ministry. You know, I, I would have been out of the ministry a long time ago and discouraged and quit it if I had have let, I mean, if I had have let all that stuff get out of the context by which I keep it in.

Hey, I have had people that I have literally invested two or three or four or five, six years with. I mean, we are talking about two or three times a week, hours working through, working problems, putting people with them in their life, not necessarily here, but all through my ministry. I have had people that I have extended much time with and bring them along to try to get them because I, I saw where they were at. I saw, and they went along with it, and they did really well. And I have had those same people after you invest all of that time, you put everything into them, you do everything for them, you orchestrate all the circumstances and get people in their world to get them where they need to be, find one guy or one gal, and out the door they are gone, and never say jack, "Thank you," for anything, and bang, they are gone. Now you see, you can let that bother you, and some of you would let that bother you. You know why? Because you take it personal. I do not take it personal. I, I expect people to do that. I really do.

I have had people that have been with me in, in ministry for years and years and years and years that I love very dearly, and they will get their nose bent out of joint about something or get out of fellowship with the God, whatever the case may be, and, and be gone, and, and, and be angry at you and talk about you and all those things, and you, you sit there wondering, shaking your head,

saying, "What in the world happened?" But you know what? I will tell you what happened. I expect those things to happen. I will take it personal. I really do not. I really do not take those kind of things personal. Can I be honest with you this morning? I love you all. I do. I, I in the Lord, I love you all very, very, very much. There is not anything that I would not do for you if you had a need. I would be there to try to do whatever I could do, and I, I would, I would work through whatever problem. We sit down with the Bible, I would help you any way I can. I, I love you all. I do anything for any of you. You know me, I generally love you in the Lord, but I have got to be honest, at the end of the day, at the end of the day, I expect to be in this all by myself. That is where I am at. I have people all my life hang out and do the work, get their nose bent out of joint about something and gone. I have had them tell me, "Oh, I love you so much. You are the greatest thing I have ever had in my life." And two weeks later or a year later or six months later, they got their nose bent out of joint, and they are gone.

Now maybe that is an over exaggeration, and that really will not happen, and maybe some of you will hang out to this thing until the end. Will you realize that I cannot put any stock in that? People never disappoint me. They never do. I expect people to give up and quit, and see some of God's people when they get into a relationship and they have had a long relationship that, and, and it goes sour, the people leave or they get out of the ministry, they go back to the world, they upset, they, they lament over the fact that, that, "Well, they were my friends for 30 years." I never go there. I, I never get that way. You know why? Because I have learned that. I have learned that because I have learned a great lesson. I build people. I build people. I build people, but I do not build my ministry on people, nor do I build my ministry with people. I build my ministry on the promises because when the people leave, the promises stay, and that is the only way you will survive. That is the only way you will survive. You will never go wrong hanging all you have got on the promises of God instead of relationships. They cause relationships change, emotions get flared, people get their nose bent out of joint, people get upset, they get out of fellowship, and they leave, and they get mad, and they do stupid things, but the promises never change. And when you try to build a ministry on the people, with the people instead of the promises, you are going to fail every time.

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,

When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,

By the living Word of God I shall prevail,

Standing on the promises of God.

Now I, I must confess this to you, and this is really the key for me not taking things personal. I have learned that lesson. I have learned it the hard way over the years with many tears and many regrets, but I learned the lesson over the years. You invest with people, you invest with their kids, they, you marry them, you have part of their life, you have part of everything that goes on, you get into ministry with them, and for a long time you serve God together, and then, and then it, it happens, and I have seen this happen in my 40 years over and over again. Somewhere along the line they decide to quit growing. They get cynical. They become negative. They begin to

complain. Many times their kids turn from God, and it all turns out bad, and, and, and that is a, and that is a tough thing, and it is a very embarrassing thing or very ashamed thing.

I am going to tell you something, you young, you young couples here today, I am going to tell you something, it takes, it takes about 20 years, 20 years for our kids to show us and show the world how phony we really are as Christians. But they do. Then it is true of all of our lives. That is hard to take for some people. Some people they, they want to walk around like everything is okay, but their kids are the red flag in their life.

I remember years ago, this is a funny story, and it is a true story. We had this couple at our church years ago that were very pious, and they always gave the impression of being so spiritual, and they always sat in the front row, and it was a big church, and the auditorium aisle to get to the front row from the back row was probably 100 yards. It was huge. And this, this lady was so pious, and she and her husband too, and they always wanted to pretend that they were more spiritual than anybody else, and their life was a big joke, but you know what, in their brain, in their mind, they were all, "Look at us, look at me." And I will never forget this lady one time in the middle of a service, I was not preaching, but she got up and went to the restroom, and when she got into the restroom and did what you do in the restroom, she tried to straighten herself back up, and when she put her thing, she got the back of her skirt stuck in the back of her pantyhose. Now have you ever seen those things in the yard where they kind of look like that? Well, this is what we are talking about. Now this lady had no clue that the whole back of her dress was hiked into the back of her pantyhose. Remember, remember? Okay. Now it was not just a bad thing that she sat in the back. No, no, no. During Sunday morning service, she walks the whole green mile down to the second row, and it was like everybody did a ball game with a wave. That is what it was. The moment every, as she passed every aisle, you can see it, and she is walking down there, and every time she rode by, the row goes, "Ah!" And the people, it is just, it looks, it is just, "Whoop, whoop!" She walked up to the front, and she sat down, and I do not think she ever figured it out. She thought she was just fine walking down there, Miss Spiritual. She was not fine. And boy, I will tell you what, many times in our lives we think we are just fine, but boy, those not everything is always tucked in the way it should be in some cases in our life spiritually.

And I, but it happens, and you know, and then, and then they get, they get, they get bitter, they get backslidden, they get prideful, and they are always negative about everything and everybody, and then they are gone, and it is always the same, it is always our fault, it is always my fault, it is always your fault. You know, I love people and want people as my friends, and I love friends, and I have great friends, and I love all of you, and I do anything in the world, but I have learned this lesson, at the end of the day, it is not people who do the ministry, it is the promises in the people who do the ministry, and if you do not get that down, and you do not see that, you have got to have in your jewelry box how many times over the years that, that will happen to a pastor if he is faithful to that book? 10,000 times, man, 10,000 times.

The last book I am ever going to write before I die, I am going to be with the Lord, is going to be a, a complete list of all of the people that I can remember that had their nose bent out of joint, and I tell that book is going to be, "Where are they now?" They are all miserable. They are all bitter. They are all angry. They have no joy. They are all negative. They have no church. They

have no fellowship. I laugh at times. People leave, and it happens all the time. People leave a church, you know, say, "Well, it is the church, you know, it is the pastor, well, it is the people, it is the church. I am going to find another church." You know what happens? They leave the church they left, but they never find another church. They do not go anywhere. Now if you are paying attention, that would tell me and tell you, if it should, that it was not the church. That is just an excuse. You see, the real answer is not that they are not going another church. The real answer is nothing in the jewelry box, nothing in the jewelry box. It is just that simple.

Now you folks who are going to be part of the people ministry, and all of you really, they are just are going to do the work of the Lord here, you need to get yourself some promises. If you are a young Christian today, you need to take what I said. I tried to make it very easy to understand about a jewelry box, who can relate to that? The principles in your heart, going to the bank to try to get money out of the account, some principles to, to live, uh, some principles to live by in your life because when you start to work with people or you start to get into the ministry or you just get to a certain level in your Christian life, you know what is going to happen? You are going to need them. Remember now, the ministry in chapter 1 is suffering, and promises are all that sometimes will get you through and hold you together.

You know people who wear their feelings on their shirts leave. People who take things personal get emotionally involved. You know people who get, uh, you know, their feelings hurt or get defensive easily or get, you know, you know, upset about this and that or always blaming somebody else for their problems. I mean, it will never work in our lives being that way in this life. Many times, most of the time, dealing with people, it is a very thankless job, very thankless job. The results you see will never be what the accolade that somebody throws at your feet. The result that you see is when somebody actually takes the principles of the Word of God and does something in their life and then lines up with you to try to do the ministry together. But even in that, I have got to be honest with you, for my own protection, because I am vulnerable just like anybody. I love you to death, and I do anything in the world for you, and this is probably not a true statement, but in my mind it has to be, at the end of the day, I will stand by myself if I have to, and that is just where it is at. It is where it is at because I do not want to be, I love you all, and I need you all, and we all got a great thing going here, and God doing some great things, but let us not forget at the end of the day, it is not me or it is not you, it is that book and the promises that get us through, and the only thing that make you valuable to God and valuable to this church is not your abilities, not your, your wit, not your great sense of humor or not your depth in the Bible. It will be the promises that you have got in your heart that when every tough time comes, that will all be get us through. All it gets us through.

My favorite verse in ministry has been for many, many years in life, Romans 8:18:

Romans 8:18

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

In that day. See, that is a great promise to me. It does not really matter what I go through down here. That is the difference between me and some of you. It matters to some of you what happens

in this life. It matters to you whether you suffer or not in this present time. I am fully convinced and persuaded by the promises of God that whatever I am going through right now is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is going to be in that day. That is a promise to me. That is a promise. So I will put up with it. I am like the Old Testament saints, many, you know, they are the great faithful men of God who span the Old Testament pages that I love to read about, and I, I see a lot in their life what we ought to have in our life today.

VI. Not All Promises Are for This Life

And I want to leave you with this last thing about promises. I have given you some good things today. It has not been a hard message, but it has been a real message. It has been one to encourage everybody, but especially you younger Christians. Not all the promises will come in this life. I think that is the last thing you need to go home with today. Some promises are not for now.

Hebrews 11:13 says, talking about the great saints through the God's hall of fame, it says:

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

You see, not all the promises we have right now will be fulfilled now. Sometimes we can only see them afar off. You have all got ways you want your kid to grow up. You do not see that right now, but you can see it afar off what you want him to be, and the promises that God gives you. Some of you in your own life, you want to be the man or the woman God wants you to be. You want to know the Bible. You want to get in ministry. You want to do what God wants you to do, but maybe you just got saved. Okay, you cannot claim all those promises right now, but you can see them afar off, and you can be persuaded and strengthened and embrace them in life, and certainly the ministry. You get through life by the promises of God that He gives you, and sometimes you do not see them fulfilled in this life as we wander for God, but that is why you put them in your jewelry box. That is why you put them on the bank account because there will be coming a day when they will, if not this life, certainly the next one, when we will be confronted with them, and what those promises will come true. There are promises that God has given me, and there are promises God has given you that in this life probably will never be realized, but they will, and they will at the next life when we meet the Lord in the air and we are with Him, and that is why you have got to put them in your jewelry box. That jewelry box needs to be full of special things, the secret things, the holy things, the dedicated things that God promises you to get you and me through.

Standing on the promises I cannot fall,

Listening every moment to the Spirit's call,

Resting in my Savior as my all in all,

Standing on the promises of God.

Now next week we will look at yet another aspect of verse 1, and I will show you again how to apply the promises of God that He has given you in a, in even another angle or another way. But now today you have everything that where you are at as a young Christian, you need. You now have an understanding of how to apply it. You have an understanding of what they are, principles and promises. You have an understanding of how God wants to do and put it into your life. And I will say this, no matter where you are at in life today, no matter where you are at in life, no matter what mistakes you have made, whether it is your children, in your marriage, or whatever the case may be, no matter what it is, I never want to leave without saying this, no matter what mistakes we all, and we all have made them, no matter what mistakes we have made in life, there is always a point in time when we can begin to open up that jewelry box and put those promises in and start right there. But there has to be a place in your life. I tell people all the time, "I do not care where you have been. I do not care what you have done. I do not care whatever your situation has been, it is none of my business, nor do I care. All I care about is where you are at today and where you want to go from here with that book in the Lord, and the only way to go is through the promises."

Standing on the promises. Every head bowed, every eye closed. Now Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You.