God's Plan
GOD'S PROMISES
& GOD'S PEOPLE
SMALL GROUP STUDY

Session 2: Promises Aren't Passive

Many of God's promises require our intentional, purposeful involvement in order to see them play out in our lives. The opportunity for salvation, for instance, is promised for everyone—but we have to take the steps of believing and confessing to receive it. Other promises, like the gift of the Holy Spirit, also require action on our behalf. Living in God's promises isn't passive, nor is it always easy. We will face hardship and opposition as we strive to walk in God's will, but Jesus has promised that His Church will be built, and even Hell will not overcome it.

Scriptures

Acts 1:4–5, 8 (NIV®)
On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Luke 10:2–4 (NIV®)
He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road."

Luke 22:36–38 (NIV®)
He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That's enough!" he replied.

Matthew 16:18–19 (NIV®)
"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Discussion Questions

1. Sometimes we assume all of God's promises are optional, but that's not the case. Some of His promises are commands. When you encounter a promise in Scripture, how would you treat it differently if you considered it may be a command from God? How do we determine whether something is optional or a command?

2. We have to make a choice to respond to God's promises in order to receive His blessings for our lives. When have you or someone you know missed a blessing because you didn't respond? Which promises are you choosing to respond to now?

3. God invites us to share in His promises, but we must choose them and actively cooperate with God to receive them. What are some ways people are too casual about the promises of God, expecting to

receive the benefits without any effort? What are some of the day-to-day things you do to live with an intentional, active faith?

4. What does it mean to you to be on assignment for God? What are your current God-assignments, and what are you learning from them?

5. Jesus was amazed at the faith of the Roman centurion and his understanding of Jesus' authority. As His followers, we have access to that authority to live out our faith. How does knowing this affect your daily life?

6. How does the power of the Holy Spirit help you live out your faith and share Jesus with others?

Going Deeper

1. What are the biggest challenges you face in living out your Christian life today? What promises made by God or Jesus can help you overcome those challenges?

2. Which of God's promises (other than salvation and forgiveness, which are essential to us all) is the most meaningful to you personally?

Prayer

Almighty God, thank You for making a way for us to inherit the promises You've made in Your Word. Thank You for the way the power and authority that comes to us through these promises can transform our lives in time and in eternity. Help us choose to accept these promises despite the challenges they bring, and strengthen us to live them out despite any hardship. In Jesus' name, amen.