

PROMISES

assembling a "to do" list
Nehemiah 9:38; 10:28-29, 35



memorize
this:

For all the promises of God find their "Yes" in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our "Amen" to God for His glory (2 Corinthians 1:20 ESV).

Do you keep or break promises? If you break them, you are certainly not alone. We have all broken promises before - to our family, our friends and to God. Broken promises have a disastrous effect on our relationships with others and within ourselves.

points to ponder

1) How do you feel when someone breaks a promise to you? What does it do to the relationship that you have with the person?

2) Sometimes promises are broken for legitimate reasons. When this happens, how do you explain that you will do your best to not let it happen again? How can you best ask for forgiveness?

words to wrangle

The people of God are called out to be a people who are different than the world. The idea of the covenant was a written affirmation of the verbal agreement. The signatures of both parties made the agreement legally binding. Have you entered into such a covenant with God? Have you thought about writing down what you agree to keep as a part of your covenant?

conclusions to consider

A primary truth in this lesson is we keep our promises because of the certainty of God's promises to us.

1) Make a list of promises that God had made and kept. Do you recognize that He kept them?

2) We can trust God, no matter the circumstance, because God always keeps His promises. Would you agree or disagree? Do we act as if we believe it?

So why do we continue to break promises? First, most people begin with good intentions. We want to please the people that we know and love. We want to do a good job at work or school. While there are some people who intentionally mislead others, most just aren't able to follow through.

Second, we make our promises based on what our "best self" would do in the circumstance. But our "best self" is rarely at work in keeping the promise. Begin today to work toward keeping your word. If remembering is a problem, find some high tech ways to be reminded of the actions that are needed. Explore the reasons behind why you have difficulties keeping your word.

For Nehemiah, the people of faith signed a covenant to live their lives with God. First they agreed to **walk** with God. Henry Ford once said, "Those who walk with God always reach their destination."

Next the promised to **observe** all the commandments of the Lord. Don't you love how Nehemiah writes the phrase "the commandments of the Lord our Lord?" We see things all the time, but there are times when we pay attention and times that we don't.

Finally, the people pledged to obey. It takes more than observation of God's ways, it takes actually doing what He asks. The word implies being compelled by a legal or moral duty, but it is actually a term used in biology. It describes something that is restricted to a particular function because of its purpose and design. The lungs are made to breathe air, not water. We are obligated to be faithful and obedient to God by design.

The declaration is made by the entire company of people, filling in the blanks that are implied in

Nehemiah 9:38. Everyone, from the oldest down to the youngest who could understand, was standing before God and sharing in this oath. They reinforced the oath with a curse, in essence calling down disaster if they should go back on their word.