



JANUARY STEWARDSHIP SERIES

WEEK FIVE: Receive God's Blessings

Overview

Bible Study

Daily Devotions

What would happen if every member of your congregation opened his or her heart in expectation to receive the abundant blessings of God?

OVERVIEW

Have you ever looked back at a situation that took place weeks, months, or even years earlier and realized that God was at work in your life? You might say something like this: "At that time, we were unable to do what we wanted to do. But now we are not only able to do it, but we are able to do it better, easier, and or cheaper than we would have back then. God really knew what He was doing to make us have to wait." Anyone who has worked or volunteered in a church or for that matter anyone who puts trust in the Lord, understands that type of a scenario and has probably said something like that several times before. God is active in our lives, making things happen for the good of His dearly loved people. But here is the deal breaker. This is the paradigm-shifter. At the time when your plans were going awry and you were unable to do what you hoped to do, were you praising His name? Were you thanking God for making the economy so bad that your plans fell through? Did you appreciate having to wait for what you had prayed for so diligently? Honestly, we'd probably find a very small percentage of people who could say they maintained an attitude of total trust in God during times of trouble. As Christians, we know the promises of God will always be kept and that His Word will never be voided. So why not live every day in that knowledge and celebrate the fullness of the life that God has given us? Why wait until God's blessing is a year old to celebrate it? Why look back six months to see God's goodness when we can live with an expectation of the goodness God has for us today and in our future? To live in expectation, we begin by building our faith and by working to align our lives in order to follow God's commands. In this, we are able to focus our hearts and minds upon God, relying on Him to keep His Word. Even in bad times, when we are at our lowest point or totally confused about what to do next, we maintain a certain knowledge that God is in control and that He will answer the prayers of those people who love Him and follow His commands. There are several Bible verses that show us the things we can expect because God has promised them to us. Deuteronomy 28:1–15 particularly provides a clear and detailed picture of God's plan to bless those who follow His commands. On one thing we must be clear: Only God, not us, controls these blessings. It is God who brings these things to fruition. God's provision is designed to sustain our personal needs as well as provide us with a portion to give back in service. This biblical premise is found most clearly in Isaiah 55, which refers to God providing bread for the eater and seed for the sower. An effective analogy for this would be to show it is possible to eat seeds in addition to bread. However, doing so doesn't satisfy your cravings (you have to eat a lot of seeds to eliminate your hunger), plus it leaves you without the provision needed to produce the next harvest of bread and seed. This also connects back to the Israelites in the desert who didn't trust God and harvested extra manna only to have the additional portions rot overnight. Expectation involves trust in God to be who He says He is and to live boldly in that knowledge. When we surrender our lives to God, believing in Christ and trusting Him completely, God will keep His promises to us and fill us with blessings and life eternal.

WEEK FIVE: RECEIVE GOD'S BLESSINGS

Open your heart to receive the abundant blessings of God.



BIBLE STUDY

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come before Your throne today thanking and praising You for the many great gifts You have provided for us. We thank You for giving us all that we need to live and to grow in our faith. As we prepare to study Your Word, we ask that You would open up our minds to Your Word. We ask this so that we can hear and understand what You are saying and so we may take these words and apply them to our lives so Your name may be glorified. Help us to set our expectations on You to guide and deliver us in all things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever looked back at a situation that took place weeks or even months earlier and realized that God was at work in your life? You might have thought, "At that time, we were unable to do what we wanted to do. But now we are not only able to do it, we are able to do it better, easier, and or cheaper than we would have back then. God really knew what He was doing to make us have to wait." Anyone who has worked or volunteered in a church, or for that matter anyone who puts their trust in the Lord, understands that type of a scenario and has probably said something like that several times before. It is good to know that God is active in our lives, making things happen for the good of His dearly loved people.

But here is the paradigm shifter. At the time when your plans were going awry and you were unable to do what you hoped to do then, were you praising His name? Were you thanking God for making the economy so bad that your plans fell through? Did you appreciate having to wait for what you had prayed

for so diligently? We would probably find a very small percentage of people who could say that their minds never ventured that way or that their words maintained an attitude of total trust in God.

Why wait until God's blessing is a year old to celebrate it? Why look back six months to see God's goodness when we can live with an expectation of the goodness God has for us today and for what He still plans to do in our lives? Instead of looking back, shouldn't we look forward, knowing that we can count on the promises of God today, tomorrow, and forever? As Christians, we know the promises of God will always be kept and that His Word will always be true. So why not live every day in that knowledge and celebrate the fullness of the life that God has given us?

1. When it comes to living in expectation, where do we as Christians begin?

- Faith

Hebrews 11:6:

Proverbs 10:6:

- Follow God's commands

Deuteronomy 30:16:

2. How does Christ demonstrate the power of living in expectation through faith and following in Luke 5:167 and John 21:3611?

3. When we trust God, what can we expect to receive from Him?

Psalms 29:11:

Psalms 86:5:

Numbers 14:17618:

Psalms 84:10612:

Proverbs 10:22:

4. Read Deuteronomy 28:1-15. How does God promise to bless us if we obey God's Word?

Verse 3:

Verse 4:

Verse 5:

Verse 6:

Verse 7:

Verse 8:

Verse 9:

5. It is easy to think that blessings will occur because of our words or the power of positive thinking. That is clearly not the case. What do the following Scripture passages tell us about the source of these blessings?

Lamentations 3:37:

1 John 3:21-24:

Mark 11:22-24:

6. As we expect gifts from God, what are we supposed to do with the gifts we receive? Read Isaiah 55:8-11 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 for insight and direction.

7. Finally, when we live in expectation, fully submitted to His Word and abounding in His grace, what can we expect? Read Psalm 112:1-8 and Matthew 16:17-19.

CONCLUSION

There is never a time when we should feel that we couldn't go to God with our thoughts, our needs, or our concerns. Our heavenly Father tells us to come to Him, to cast our burdens on Him. In Jeremiah 29:11 He tells us that He has plans for us—plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. If God loves us this much, knows us this well, and created us for a unique purpose within His plan, how then can we doubt for a moment that He will be there for us, giving us what we need, and delivering us from what would threaten to do us harm?

Living with our expectation in God is critically important. How do we do it? Start each day in the Word and in prayer to build knowledge and faith in the promises of God. Speak positively, sharing words of encouragement and staying focused upon the blessings God has provided. Finally, seek the face of God first and in all things, shifting focus away from the natural inclination to solve problems on your own. When the Spirit of the Lord opens our hearts to living in this manner, our paradigms will shift, our expectations will align with God's will for our lives, and we will know His grace, mercy, and peace in all things.

WEEK FIVE: RECEIVE GOD'S BLESSINGS



DAILY DEVOTIONS

February 3

ōThe Lord will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. (Deuteronomy 28:9; portion of Old Testament reading for Feb 6)

We are about to kick off our 30 days of *New Every Morning*. Week 5 is about opening our heart to receive the promises of God.

Which of us don't believe God keeps His Word? Which of us doesn't believe that God is bigger than any economy, government, disease, family strife?

Of course, we would say, none of us! We would *say* it but often times our lives are not reflecting the confession of our lips.

The fact is we are the Lord's people, established by Him, not by us to be a people holy to Himself. Notice He *swore*! A solemn promise made!

Beginning the day with the Word and in prayer; seeking to speak positively in all situations; seeking God's face first in all things ó how can that not lead to the attitude of expectation? How can that not lead us to be so thankful that His blessings are ever-flowing, His mercies new each morning?

Prayer: O Lord, great is Thy faithfulness! Your promise of blessings upon us gives us cause to be faithfully expectant. Thank You! In Your Name, we pray Amen.

Pastor Pase
Romans 1:16

February 4

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (Romans 5:15; portion of Epistle for Feb 6)

The blessings of God begin and stay centered on the blessing of having our sins forgiven, our lives saved because what one man started, Adam, the God-Man, finished. His perfect life, death, and resurrection has brought us redemption. Condemnation removed. Saved!

The question pastors often ask is: If the Lord cares that much for us, how can we question His care in any other aspect of our lives? The answer is: We can't. We shouldn't.

I want to take it one more step: We won't! We have been talking these weeks of *New Every Morning* of a paradigm shift, knowing that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning we can expect that as we align our will with His will that the blessings will flow to us. No matter what we face, no matter what is happening to us or around us we indeed can expect His blessings to continue to flow directly to us.

The Lord who loves us enough to send His own Son to be our Substitute and Savior, will more assuredly take care of us. And so our faithful response is: I know Lord! Thank You for Your unending grace.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your unending grace in all areas of my life. In Your gracious Name we pray. Amen.

Pastor Pase
Romans 1:16

February 5

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." (John 10:7; portion of Gospel on Feb 6)

Tomorrow is Commitment Sunday. The door is unlocked. The question is do we have the faith to walk through?

We are the Lord's sheep. By faithfully walking through the door that is Jesus the blessings of the Father become ours.

Monday we begin the 30 days of *New Every Morning*. What we have been studying for the past 5 weeks begins in earnest Monday. The disciplines we have learned are a blessing to us because by living by them what we are doing is walking through the door that is Jesus, straight into the presence of the Father and His blessings are there.

It is my prayer that we all walk through that door Sunday/Monday. It is my prayer that we all live the lives given us in our Baptism, the lives that seek God's kingdom first. Why? Walking through the door, all things will be given to us as well.

Prayer: O Lord, in faith we walk through the door. We seek first Your kingdom because Your mercies are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

Pastor Pase
Romans 1:1

The next 30 days of Devotions will be available as a separate document.