How Does It Work?

Because a Christian's overall purpose is to glorify God, I as a Christian should want to give to advance his kingdom throughout the world. A faith promise for missions is an expression of my obedience to Christ's command to "make disciples of all people."

Committing to a faith promise gives me a new perspective on my assets and priorities. I begin to see that everything I have belongs to God. I look for ways he provides, so I can give more for his cause. When I commit to give in faith, I do not rely on my limited resources, but on God's UNLIMITED resources.

Is Faith Promise Scriptural?

The principle of faith promise giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8—9. Verse 3 of chapter 8 uses the expressions "to their power" and "beyond their power" (KJV). "To their power" refers to tithes and offerings—or, known sources of income. "Beyond their power" relates in a special way to faith promise giving: beyond known sources of income, looking to the Lord in faith for the way he will enable them to give.

I take into account what I foresee I can give to missions over the next year. Then I pray in faith, "Lord, over and above my ability, how much more shall I trust you to enable me to give?" It is not necessarily what God gives me, but what he enables me to give. (See also 1 Chron. 29:14; Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38.)

How Is a Faith Promise Supplied?

Does a faith promise always come in a dramatic, unexpected way? Do I make a faith promise and then just wait to see what happens? Once in a while God does surprise us with a miracle. But usually a faith promise does not come in a dramatic way. God's miracle may enable me to give more as I cut back in some area, or as I look for a creative way to generate income.

The experiences of many individuals and churches illustrate three ways God supplies a faith promise.

1. Unexpected Ways

From time to time, God does provide for a faith promise in miraculous, dramatic ways.

- A check arrives to replace a window broken by a boy many years before.
- The IRS sends a refund to settle the estate of a father who died 11 years before.
- An overlooked pay raise is made retroactive, covering a faith promise made the previous month.
- A contractor has a job bid accepted – with the condition the bid be increased by an amount equal to a faith promise made just three days before.

2. Reordering Priorities

By applying better stewardship principles, adjusting priorities to reflect my desire to see the world evangelized, I can generate extra money. I evaluate my lifestyle and find ways to decrease unnecessary expenses, thus freeing funds for missions.

- A young man cuts up his credit cards and resists shopping urges. As a result, he not only has money to tithe, but also creates a surplus enabling him to make a faith promise.
- A woman determines she doesn't need a new car. Money she would have used for payments is now available for a faith promise.
- A teenager decides to purchase half as many video games as usual, channeling money to his faith promise.

3. Creative Ways

- A young mom trusts God to bring in orders for a special French pastry she bakes.
- A retired couple plants berries to grow and sell, trusting God to help sell enough.
- A family has a garage sale to eliminate unneeded items from around the house, generating extra money.

What Does It Mean?

A faith promise requires a commitment. I commit myself to an amount of money and by faith, based on God's promises, expect him to enable me to do it. As I commit myself to this step of faith, it helps me reprogram my whole life priority system so that I begin looking for God's provision. It gives me new eyes to see my stewardship in a totally different way. Instead of sitting back and waiting, I begin to actively look for ways God will provide for me to fulfill my faith promise.

What If?

The key word in a faith promise is ***enable***. In faith I make a promise to God, and as he ***enables*** me I will be faithful and obedient to give. If some catastrophic event occurs during the year (loss of income, unexpected health expenses, etc.), I understand that God is not going to hold me responsible for not being able to meet my faith promise commitment. My faith promise is, "As God enables me, I will be faithful to give."

FAITH:

My trusting God to enable me to give more than I thought I could give and at the same time to meet all my personal needs.

PROMISE:

My trusting God because he promised to supply all my needs.

How Do You Make a Faith Promise?

1. **Pray**
   for what the Lord would have you do, and know that what he commands he also enables.
2. **Commit**
   yourself to make a faith promise, realizing your faith will grow as you stay committed to that promise.
3. **Look**
   for the different ways God will use you to supply your faith promise.
4. **Be faithful**
   to give as God enables you.

Keith Brown and his wife, Charlotte, became OC International missionaries in 1958. The Browns began their overseas ministry in the Philippines, and they later ministered in Singapore and Hong Kong.

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Unlocking God's Resources

Faith Promise Explained

by Keith Brown