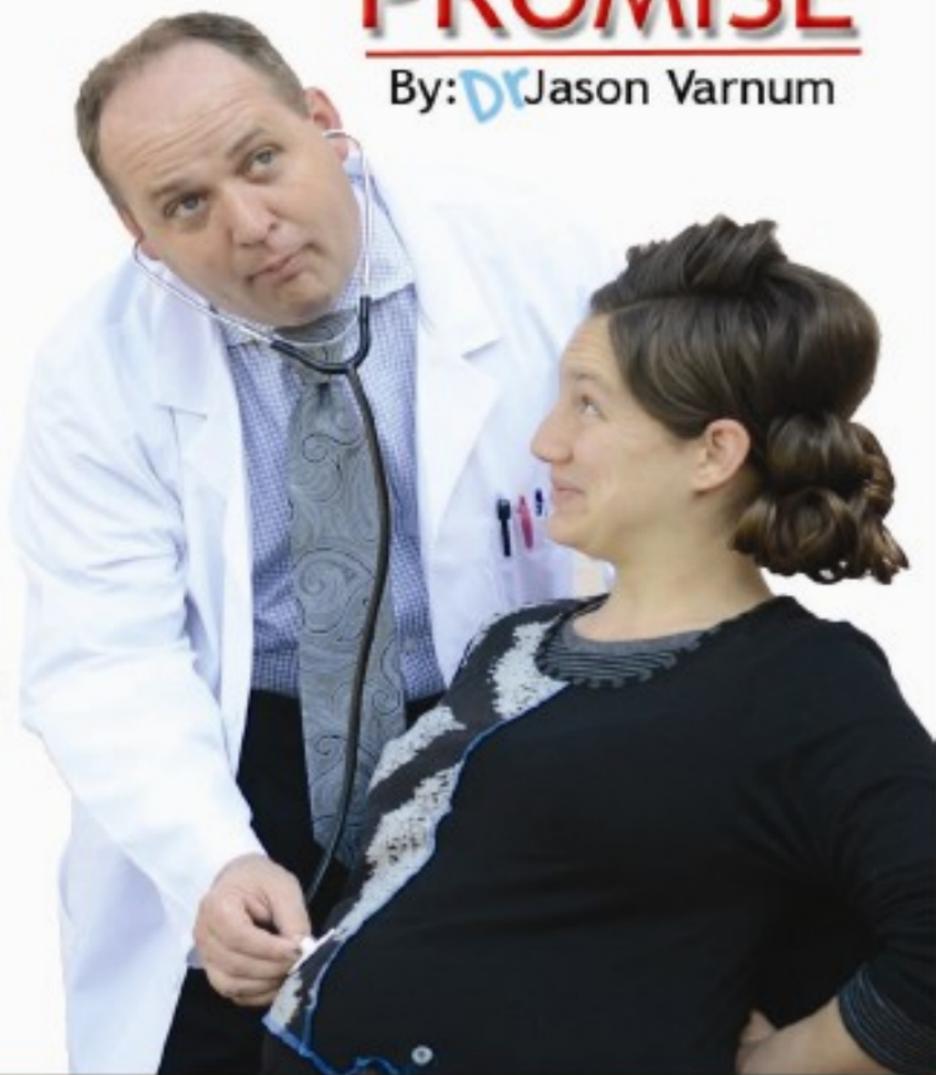


GIVING BIRTH TO

PROMISE

By:  Jason Varnum



5 PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

**GIVING BIRTH
TO
PROMISE**

Jason Varnum

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Giving Birth to Promise

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Foreword

As you read, you will soon discover that my son, Jason, is a preacher. I'm his father, and I am a preacher too. In fact, Jason is a fourth generation "Varnum" preacher.

The book that you hold in your hand is the embodiment of the principles found herein. James Jason "The Promise" Varnum is a promise fulfilled.

My wife, Naomi, and I welcomed our first child, a daughter, Denee', "The Wonder" Varnum, nine months and twenty-two days after we were married. We welcomed our second daughter, Gina, two years and thirty-nine days later. Spinal meningitis cut her earthly bonds just seven months after her birth. We missed her so much; at times, we could hardly breathe. As days turned into months, we trusted God.

Foreword

We were ministering at a large gathering of ministers several months later, when a preacher, I vaguely knew, came and stood by me at the altar at the end of the service. He spoke a prophetic word to me saying, “I am your Lord. The grievous thing you are going through is not my displeasure toward you. I am very pleased with you. I promise to restore to you seven fold what was taken away.”

My heart flooded with many emotions, from comfort to anger. My mind filled with many thoughts. I shared this promise with my wife and we did what we always do; we prayed and trusted God.

Nearly two years later, our only son was born, James Jason “The Promise” Varnum.

The first of a seven-fold promise was fulfilled at his birth. My wife had no birth pains. That’s right; his mother did not even have one hard contraction. Our son would have been born with his mother in a comfortable chair, playing games, if the

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mid-wife had not forcibly instructed her to the birthing bed. You could never convince his mother this was not the beginning of a seven fold miraculous promise.

Every principle in this book came to pass the day Jason was born.

Well, since that time I am certain that “seven fold” (for us) means “unending.” Seven years later, Lacey Mae “Delight” Varnum was born.

Everything the author conveys in this book, he certainly ought to know. Not only is it embodied in him, but also, it exudes from him. Apply these principles. They work!

James E. Varnum

The Varnum Family



Jason, Lydia, Andrew, Hollina
and baby Joshua on the way!

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Introduction

Never Give In

Never give in, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in. . .” These words, spoken by Winston Churchill, are from one of the most famous speeches of all time. Since 1941, many have quoted it and talked about it. Even though it has been talked about many times, I believe it’s a speech that needs to be given time and time again to each and every one of us. We need to say it at the foot of our bed when we go to sleep or wake up in the morning. Why? Because there are promises from God that we have in our lives that we truly believed in—yet over time, it seems like the promise drains right out of us like water from a tub and we simply give in, and except less than our promise.

Introduction - Never Give In

This book is written for and to those that have a desire to see the promises of God fulfilled in their life. You have dreams and visions that you want to see come into reality. It could be a higher education, that dream job or perhaps stepping into the ministry God has called you to. Whatever it is that you're reaching for, this book can help you obtain those promises.

This book is also written to those that have faced some type of hardship and through their struggle allowed promises to slip through their fingers and fall by the wayside. There is a variety of reasons for this, too many to count; nevertheless, the hope and the promises of God too quickly diminish in our life.

There are strong families, who feel like life has jerked the promise right out from under them and they have lost all hope. When hope is gone, dreams diminish and visions vanish, however, we can regain lost promises if we will stay focused on God.

Giving Birth to Promise

I believe the promises of God can be fulfilled, no matter what comes against us - no matter what is going on.

Abraham had a promise. God spoke to him and said, I want you to leave your father's house, your kindred. I want you to go to a land that I will show you. I'm going to make a great nation of you. (Gen. 12:1,2).

God said, I'm going to make your seed, (your children) like the sands of the sea, like the stars of the heavens. I'm going to make all this happen. It's going to be great. It's going to be wonderful.(Gen. 12:3).

Although Abraham had a promise from God, he began to doubt the promise. Why? Because there was a lot of time between the promise given, and the promise received. He was now 86 years old and his wife Sarah was 76. He began to think, "Well, maybe it's not going to happen. Maybe I'm just holding on to false hope and false promises."

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So he and his wife decided to take matters in their own hands. Sarah brought her handmaiden, Hagar, to Abraham and Abraham, by Sarah's request, had a child with Hagar. This of course created huge problems. The result of which is a boy named Ishmael who later became the father of the Arab nation. Fourteen years later, when they got back on track, God's promise child was finally born to Abraham and Sarah. They named him Isaac and he became the father of the Jewish nation. As we all know, the Arab nation has been a thorn in the side of Israel to this day.

We must exercise our faith so that the promises of God are fulfilled. What happens when our faith begins to diminish? We allow our fleshly desires to take over. When faith fails, flesh fabricates, and what we fabricate turns out nothing like the promises of God.

Don't settle for less than God has put in your heart. I believe that this book can give you the necessary principles to see the promises of God manifest in your life.

Giving Birth to Promise

In this book, I will share five practical principles to giving birth to promise in your life.

1. The first principle is *prayer*. People that give birth to their promises put prayer before, during, and after, everything they do. – Don't let your promises sit on the shelf. Unlock them through prayer.

2. The second principle is *perspective*. If you are going to give birth to the promises of God in your life, you must be willing to change your perspective. His ways are not our ways.

3. The third principle is *people*. It is imperative to have the right people in your life if you're going to be effective and see the desired results. My grandpa used to say, "If you hang with dogs you'll get fleas."

4. The fourth principle is *position*. You must get in the right position to give birth to the promises of God in your life.

5. The final and fifth principle is *pivotal points*. There are certain pivotal points in

Introduction - Never Give In

your life that will transpire and you have to act upon them in order to realize the promises. Pivotal points are the catalysts that cause the promises of God to become a reality in your life.

Get ready to revive your dreams, restore your vision and reclaim the lost promises that are stored up in heaven, and are waiting on you. Follow these five principals in order to give birth to your promises and live the life God wants you to experience!

1

The Story of Lydia's Birth

The story that I'm about to tell you, still freaks me out a little every time I think about it or talk about it. If you are a guy, you would have freaked out too and I'm warning you, you're probably going to get a little squeamish as you read our story. If you are a woman, when you read it, you will probably feel all warm and fuzzy.

Now, for me, it was an experience that I would never want to live without, but also

The Story of Lydia's Birth

one that, I never intend to repeat. My wife, on the other hand, wouldn't mind doing it again, simply because it was an amazing experience and everything went so smooth. After you read the story, you will discover that God was with us in an amazing way. Even though all went well, my prayer remains, "Lord, let's not do that again, once is enough!"

Breakfast at Cracker Barrel

It started on Wednesday about 8:00 in the morning, and it was a beautiful day. We had no idea all that was about to transpire that day, but in God's eyes, it was a good day for our promise to be born.

As the morning began, Holly was experiencing minor labor pains, but as time passed, they grew stronger. Holly called the birthing center in Gainesville, Florida, where previously our son, Andrew, was born, and where we were planning to have our second child, Lydia, delivered. They told her to wait until the contractions were about four

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minutes apart before going to the birthing center. My wife decided she wanted something to eat before we left for Gainesville, so we went to Cracker Barrel to eat breakfast.

Can you believe this? This woman is about to give birth, and she wants to go to Cracker Barrel to get something to eat. (Most women, reading this right now, are probably thinking, of course, she wanted something to eat, she's about to give birth and needs the energy. Most men are thinking, right now - get me to the hospital as quick as you possibly can.)

Gotta Get Going

Before we even ordered our food, the contractions got to where they were only five minutes apart. It did not take long to realize we needed to pay the bill and get going!

We drove to my mother's house and dropped off our son Andrew. As we got to our house to take care of a few things before we headed to the birth center, the

The Story of Lydia's Birth

contractions began to intensify quickly. We then drove to my mother-in-law's to pick her up and leave. We headed for the Gainesville-Williston exit, at this point the contractions were only about a minute apart. Lord, help us all!

We were cruising down the road, I won't say how fast I was going, but I was doing everything I could to get there as fast as I could. Holly was in the passenger seat and my mother-in-law was in the back seat. The contractions started coming quick and were getting stronger. My mother-in-law and I were praying up a storm, just trying to get to the birth center before this baby was born. I was just thinking, *hold on honey, we're almost there.*

We were about two miles from the Gainesville-Williston exit when my wife's water broke. When Holly's water broke, I knew we were in trouble, because with my son, right after the water broke, he was born. So, when her water broke, I thought, *Oh, no, we're about to have this baby!* I had no

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choice but to pull over on the side of the road.

Chinese Fire Drill

We were on I-75, when I pulled over. My mother-in-law jumped in the driver's seat as I rushed around the front of the car, and somehow I positioned myself in the passenger's floorboard. Now, that was a miracle all in itself.

As I was sandwiched between the dash and the passenger's seat in the floorboard, I told my mother-in-law, "Go . . . drive! We need to get as close as we possibly can to the birth center." Believe it or not, we were all very calm at this moment. But the race was on to get to the birth center before it was too late.

Cruising down the road, about a mile from the exit, I was telling my wife not to push. She reassured me she wasn't trying to push. When it comes to giving birth, some things are out of your control.

The Story of Lydia's Birth

All of a sudden, Lydia's head crowned. (For all the men that means I saw the top of my babies head). When we got off the exit, the traffic lights were red. Under the circumstances, we carefully ran two red lights and were back up to 70 MPH, flying down the road.

While we were driving, my mother-in-law was on the phone with the midwives, giving them a play-by-play, telling them, "It's happening now . . . this is happening!"

While she was giving the play-by-play, we were flying down the road as if we were in a NASCAR race. Right there in the car, traveling at high speed, our promise was born.

Theresa, my mother-in-law was telling them on the phone, "She's here, the baby is here!" The midwife was telling us to rub the baby's back and make sure she was breathing. The baby started crying and then, we all started crying right along with her.

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We drove another two or three miles, and the midwives asked, “Okay, where are you at now? We need to get to you.”

My mother-in-law told them where we were. They said, “Okay, we’re coming to where you are right now, stay calm.” (Yeah, right, that was easy for them to say.) They also ran a red light, which drew the attention of a police officer. The cop was chasing them with sirens blaring and lights flashing. But they didn’t stop, because they were desperately trying to get to us.

Just Like in the Movies

When they pulled over, it was just like in a movie. They quickly jumped out, with stethoscopes bouncing around their necks, as they were running to the car. The police officer got out of the car, trying to figure out what was going on as he watched everyone run over to our car.

The cop walked up, took one look into the car, saw my wife and the baby, and said, “Okay.” He then turned, walked back to his

The Story of Lydia's Birth

car and left. He saw the midwives and figured they had it under control. After all, delivering babies on the side of the road probably wasn't his thing.

The midwives immediately assessed the situation and got right to work. I had wrapped Lydia up in my shirt. They cut the cord and cleaned Lydia up the best they could. They made sure Holly was all right, and then, we drove to the birth center.

Everything happened so quickly! I noticed a couple things right after all the action calmed down a bit. First, Holly's hair wasn't messed up at all. Her hair had been in a nice up do the night before, because we have mid-week church services on Tuesdays. Second, the baby came so fast Holly wasn't able to put the passenger seat all the way back. After all, when it's time to give birth—it's time!

Holly walked in the birth center carrying our baby as if nothing had happened. No one could believe that she

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had just had a baby. They examined her and our daughter, and both of them were doing just fine. After a couple of hours at the birth center, we went to the pediatrician and they checked the baby as well. Our pediatrician was just a few miles away. Again, while at the doctor's office, people could not believe she just had a baby.

That evening, we were at my dad's house eating a steak dinner. Now, if that doesn't describe a tough girl, I don't know what does. She went into labor that morning, gave birth IN A CAR, at 1:55pm, a few hours later she was checked out and released from the pediatrician and by 8:00 that evening, she was sitting upright, eating a steak dinner. Wow! She was amazing.

If it were me, I would have been admitted to the hospital, moaning and groaning like a child, asking someone to give me painkillers, lying in a hospital bed and probably eating Jell-O afterwards, and not a steak dinner.

The Story of Lydia's Birth

The birth of Lydia was such an amazing moment and an amazing story. Although nothing can take the place of our first-born child, Andrew, in our mind and heart, this event, however, was so exciting that the story made our local newspaper. I will never forget it. Like I stated earlier, as great as it was, I would not want to do it again—not like that—but I definitely would not trade the experience for anything in the world.

Without a doubt, God was in control of the entire process. And when Lydia was born, another one of God's promises was delivered into our family.

Using this story, I would like to introduce the principles of giving birth to your promise. These five principles can change your life and get you closer to your promise.

2

Prayer

Now, as we were flying down the road on I-75, I realized that my plans for a perfect delivery at the birth center were quickly fading. As I started to realize that odds were likely that we were not going to get there in time, I knew exactly what to do first—pray! Now, I am a Pentecostal preacher, and I can pray loud.

In my crisis, I was calling on the Lord. How typical—when something doesn't go the way we think it should, we start to pray. Even non-Christians call on the Lord when

Prayer

faced with a crisis. Have you ever been on a plane, and hit turbulence? In that moment, it is common to hear people start calling on Jesus. When things start happening and things get out of control, you start praying. And like in my case, you start praying good and hard.

As I stated already, I am a Pentecostal preacher, and accustomed to raising my voice when I pray. As we were racing down the highway, naturally, I went to praying. Now, my wife is a person of prayer too, but at that moment, she was trying to focus and my loud prayers weren't helping her concentrate.

In my defense, I wasn't the only one praying. My mother-in-law was in the back seat and she was praying right along with me. After a few minutes of intense intercession, beseeching the One true and living God to intervene, Holly reached over, grabbed my arm and said to me, "Baby, I need you to pray quietly right now. I'm trying to focus."

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I was so focused on getting to the birth center, I only had one thing on my mind—pray, church, pray, saying, “God, I don’t want this baby to come just yet, help us get there right now!” Now, Holly wasn’t asking me to stop praying, just not out loud. Immediately, for the sake of my wife, I started praying under my breath.

With this in mind, let me share three prayer principles that will help you in your time of need.

1. Pray First. Giving birth to a promise begins with prayer. When things are going according to plan or when things aren’t going in the direction that you intended - either way, the first thing we need to do is pray. That’s the first step.

The Bible says that we should first offer up to God prayers, supplications and give thanks. So, our first response should always be prayer. Prayer is not a last ditch effort to make something happen, it should be the first thing we turn to every day. One old

Prayer

preacher asked, “When is the best time to tune your violin, before the concert or after?” Every day would be a better day if it started with prayer.

If you want to see the promises of God birthed in your life, get a consistent prayer life. Let prayer be the first thing that you turn to.

2. Pray Specifically. When we pray, we need to be very specific. From the day we found out Holly was pregnant, nearly every night when we prayed, my prayer was the same thing and it was, “Lord, let my wife have a great pregnancy.” Then I prayed this, “Lord, let the labor, and delivery be as quick and as painless as possible.” I prayed that every night.

However, one thing I forgot to pray about was the location. I should have said, “At the right place,” or “at the birth center.” I just prayed for it to be as quick and as painless as possible, and God answered

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prayer. So, you need to be very specific whenever you are praying about things.

A friend of mine was praying for a car, and he just prayed, “God, I want a car,” and he got this jalopy. He got what he prayed for—a car. Sometime later, while he was driving it, he said, “Lord, this is a horrible car.” He told me the Lord said to him, “You didn’t ask me for any particular car. You just said a car, so you got a car.” After that, he learned to pray prayers that were more specific.

In the Word of God, you’ll find men and women praying very specific prayers. For instance, Hannah who could not have children, prayed for a “man child.” At the appointed time what did God give her? Not just any child, but a man child. The Bible says, “ask and ye shall receive.” Receive what? What you asked for. Don’t be afraid to speak exactly the things that are needed in your life.

Prayer

One of the most powerful things you can do is to read the Scriptures and begin to pray the promises that you see written in the Word of God. There, you can find a promise for every situation in life. So, pray those promises very specifically and watch what God will do.

3. Never Stop Praying. My wife was not asking me to stop praying, she was asking me to pray quietly so she could focus. Whenever you're giving birth to a promise, pray first, pray specifically, but don't stop praying. Whatever you do, don't quit. It is the lifeline to your promise.

You may not always be able to pray exactly the way you want to pray. Sometimes you can't get in your closet, there are times when you are sick in bed, or some other circumstance that prevents you. Regardless, whether your prayer is verbal or silent, don't push prayer to the back burner.

The Bible says to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). It also says to "pray always

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with all prayer and supplication” (Phil. 4:6). Prayer should not just be first on the agenda - it should be with every item on the agenda.

In the introduction, we read about Winston Churchill’s famous speech when he stated, “Never give in.” A short time before that speech, the Nazis trapped British troops and there was no way out. Winston Churchill, along with the king of England, called the nation of England to a national Day of Prayer. As they prayed, God began to work.

Miraculously, the Nazi army was stopped in their tracks, which gave Britain an opportunity to escape and eventually help win the war. So when he said, “Never give in,” he could’ve also said, “Never give up on prayer.” He could’ve said, “When your back is against the wall and there is no way out, never give in and never stop praying.”

There are prayers we have prayed that we have forgotten about, but God has never forgotten them. An angel appeared unto

Prayer

Zachariah, John the Baptist's father, and said, "Your prayers have been heard."

He responded with surprise, seeming to say, "What prayers?" The angel said, "Your wife, Elisabeth, she's going to conceive and bear a child." His response was odd—total disbelief, even though he had prayed the prayer. It had been so long, he did not even know which prayer he was talking about and did not believe it was possible any longer. But God did not forget. God never laid it down. Elisabeth was old and so much time had passed, but at the right time, God came in and answered that forgotten prayer.

The Bible says that Daniel prayed, and prayed, and prayed . . . for 21 days. When the angel finally showed up, he said, "Your prayer was heard the first time. The very first time you prayed, the answer was on its way, but there were things happening in the spirit realm that had to be dealt with first."

What would have happened if Daniel had given up on prayer? Would the angel

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have responded at all or if he did, what would've happened if Daniel was not in a spiritual mindset to hear the answer? Because Daniel persisted, he received an answer and a word of revelation. But, had he given up on prayer, he would have missed out.

Prayers don't die. God must think a lot of them because he keeps our prayers in golden vials. (Rev. 5:8). Don't give up on prayer. Don't give in and think, "Well, I tried prayer, but nothing's happened." Prayer is not something you try. Prayer is something you do, and God will answer prayer.

So pray first, pray specifically, but whatever you do never, never, never, stop praying. It is a promise from God. If you pray, God is going to answer and you will give birth to God's promises.

ACTION POINTS

PRAYER:

1. Set a certain time and place.
2. Have your Bible and something to write with when you start praying.
3. Start small and build up.

3

Perspective

Giving birth to a promise entails several factors. The story of Lydia's birth serves as an illustration to how you can receive your promise and realize that in the midst of unpredictable circumstances, God is still in control. The next thing you need to know about the promises of God is you might need to change your *perspective*.

My perspective as to *how* Lydia was to be born and where we would be when it

Perspective

happened was completely different from how it turned out. I anticipated it to be a nice, clean, sterile place with sanitary sheets, a clean bed and a germ-free building. From my perspective, I did not foresee the birthing room as the front seat of a vehicle, driving down the road at 70 MPH. I saw a prepared room, with midwives, wearing rubber gloves and a mask, everything neatly placed on a white linen cloth.

What a Mess

But perspective, is just that—your perspective—it is how you see things. We all have our own colored lens in which we see life. However, in order to give birth to the promises of God, we will probably have to change our perspective. How we look at it, and how we expect it to happen can really mess us up, because it does not always come the way we think it will.

So often, we focus so much on the idea of the promise, we fail to see that God is the One who orchestrates its delivery place.

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Also, the method He chooses may be unusual, unconventional and sometimes uncomfortable. Many times, the delivery of our promise is messy, unusual and irregular.

For instance, let's look at the promise in the book of Genesis. Here's the setting: Adam and Eve are living in the Garden of Eden in perfect harmony until the serpent tempted Eve. She ate of the forbidden fruit, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and then she gave it to Adam, and he ate, as well, and the curse of sin came into their life. And with sin, there always comes consequences. Nevertheless, in the midst of chaos and the curse, God gave a promise!

It is a wonderful thing to understand that even if you feel like everything around you is collapsing, because of the decisions you made and actions you have taken—you do not have to lose hope because God is looking for an opportunity to give you a promise for your future. No matter how difficult the situation, if you can change

Perspective

your perspective you can see beyond the circumstances you face.

In the midst of their temptation and fall, a promise was given to Adam and Eve, and the promise was that the seed of the woman was going to bruise the serpent's head, and that serpent was going to bruise his heel. That was a promise of what would happen when Jesus came. Without any details, it sounds like an easy, clean, sterile thing—if you may. There was going to be a heel that would come down, and crush the serpent's head. It just sounds like a nice, neat, little package—not so.

In reality, the fulfillment of that promise was anything but a clean, sterile environment. There was nothing sterile about Jesus being grabbed in the middle of the night, and yanked around from one kangaroo court to another, people lying about Him, His own men denying Him and others despising Him.

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There was nothing clean or sterile about when Herod mocked Him and wanted a miracle performed, as if He was some kind of circus act. When He went to Pilate's hall again, and they said, "Give us Barabbas, and crucify Jesus."

There was nothing clean and sterile about the stripes that went on His back and His flesh being torn from His rib cage and the blood that streamed down His back. There was nothing clean and sterile about the crown of thorns thrust with great force on His head or the nails that pierced His hands and feet, nor the spear in His side or a cross beam against His back that ate into the raw skin.

There was nothing clean, nothing sterile about the sufferings of Christ. Nevertheless, the perspective you get at first glance, in the Garden of Eden, that promise simply said, "The heel is going to bruise his head." It sounded so nice, but in order for it to unfold and be fulfilled, it was going to be messy.

Perspective

Jesus had to go through the necessary process in order to deliver the promise of Genesis 3:15. So, I believe one of the most important things we've got to understand is that if God says it, it's going to happen. But it's not necessarily going to happen the way we think it will.

Don't give up or let go of the promises. Hold on to them, but be willing to change your perspective. If you are waiting for your promise to come in a certain way, and you have worked it all out in your mind, do not be shocked if God chooses a different method. I think one of the biggest things we wrestle with is trying to figure out everything before it happens. God has called us to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

So, get a grip on God and say, "Lord, however you want to do it, that's how I want it done. Lord, whatever steps you want me to take, that's what I want to do."

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That is what walking by faith is all about. The promises of God are given to us, but we must walk it out with faith. His ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. So, we've got to change our perspective and get a higher viewpoint.

When uncertainty enters the picture, many of us get scared, and rightly so, but what will help us, is to get a heavenly view, God's view on it.

Here are three principles for changing your perspective:

1. Prayer. I know I covered the topic of prayer in the last chapter, but it is very important to understand - sometimes prayer changes the situation, other times prayer changes your perspective on the situation. Both are God-given.

Dealing with natural disasters, FEMA has learned a lot about how to help people deal with their fear and anxiety. Using technology, satellite images increase the

Perspective

accuracy of weather reports and predictions. Tracking the storms from satellites, towering above the earth, allowed meteorologists the opportunity to view the storm from a higher perspective. From that perspective, it gave them greater understanding and knowledge. With that knowledge, the safety and opportunity for escaping the path of a storm increased greatly.

As soon as people get a higher perspective on the situation, all of a sudden, they are able to take action according to that new perspective. The perspective of a hurricane is constantly updated to determine how it will manifest. The same is true with the storms that come against our promises. We have to get a heavenly perspective of the promises of God. We have to look through the eyes of faith. We cannot look through our own eyes and our own desires. We have to get our eyes off of our way and get it on God's way.

2. Stick Around. Stick around a little while if you want to get the right

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perspective. You see many people jump in and out of so many different situations that they never give God enough time to change their perspective or the situation. Don't jump ship too early.

When the apostle Paul was shipwrecked as a prisoner, he was cast upon an island. They were gathering sticks and when he threw sticks on the fire, a viper came out of the fire and latched onto his hand. Paul merely shook the serpent off into the fire, but all the natives watched and waited for him to fall dead. All the people began to say he must be an evil man or cursed by God. Even though he escaped the sea, he was served vengeance by a viper. But when they saw that no harm came to him, the Bible says they changed their mind concerning Paul.

At first, it appeared Paul was being judged by God or even under a hex, but when the snakebite did not kill him, their perspective on God's servant changed.

Perspective

You can be dead set on how a situation is going to pan out. You can have every step calculated in your mind, what is going to happen next, but one move by God can change everything. You have to stick around and not jump from one promise to another.

3. People. The third thing that can help you change your perspective is people. It is very important who you associate with. Either people will push you toward your promises, or they will hinder you. We will discuss this further in the next chapter.

Remember your promise may not come the way you want it, but God does all things well.

ACTION POINTS

PERSPECTIVE:

1. Ask yourself how someone else sees it, someone that you respect.
2. Find a similar situation in the Word of God.
3. Be willing to look at it differently.

4

People

When Holly's water broke, driving down I-75, we pulled over on the side of the road. When I jumped out of the car to run around to the passenger seat, I said something repeatedly to myself. I said, "If dad can do it, you can do it. . . If dad can do it, you can do it." You see, my dad delivered my younger sister, Lacey. My mom had three of her four children at home with a midwife, but when Lacey was born, the midwife did not make it in time, so my dad had to deliver my little

People

sister. So, that was my thought all the way around that car. . . “If Dad can do it, you can do it.”

It is so important for us to get a hold of this understanding, that the people we are around affect how we are going to react. This understanding directly affects giving birth to the promises of God in our life.

What if I were never exposed to the fact, that childbirth is a natural God-given thing? What if all I heard was, the only way to give birth to a child was in the hospital? If my wife or I had that concept, it would have been a completely different experience. The exposure to the people around you affects the way you think and the decisions you make in life.

Who's Your Friend?

In most cases, the people who have the greatest influence in our lives are individuals that we have spent a considerable amount of time with. Unfortunately, some of the behavioral traits and ideas people take on are

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not always positive ones. Colin Powell says, “The less you associate with some people, the more your life will improve.”

Friends that don't help you climb will want you to crawl. Your friends will enlarge your vision or strangle your dream. Those that don't cause you to increase will eventually cause you to decrease. Never receive counsel from unproductive people. Never discuss your problems with someone incompetent of contributing to the solution. Those who never succeed themselves are always first to tell you how.

Although I have no desire to deliver another child in our car, I can truly say that it was an unbelievable God-given experience. It went incredibly smooth and I give credit in two areas: (1) God (2) the people we associate with.

The people that you are affiliated with will affect how you are going to be able to give birth to the promises of God. We have to make a decision that if we are going to

People

give birth to the promises and the right things are going to happen, there has to be a separation with those who hinder us and a connection with those who help.

John Donne, a Jacobean poet and preacher said, “No man is an island unto himself.” How right he was. We all affect each other for good or for bad.

In Second Samuel 13, you find one of the saddest stories in the Bible. There was a young man named Amnon, one of David’s sons. He loved a girl named Tamar, one of David’s daughters, but from a different mother. Although Amnon wanted to be with her, he refrained himself. In verse three of that chapter, there is a simple statement, “but Amnon had a friend.”

His friend was, Jonadab, and he convinced Amnon that because he was the king’s son he could have anything he wanted, and he gave him a plan how to do it. When he had taken advantage of her,

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Amnon despised her. It all took place because of the influences in his life.

It matters who we are around and what they are speaking into our lives. Not everyone has a right to speak into your life. You are certain to get the worst of the bargain when you exchange ideas with the wrong person. Don't follow anyone who's not going anywhere.

We have to be around the right people and have the right people speaking into our lives. You cannot fly with the eagles, if you are hanging out with chickens. You have to make that right decision and begin to examine your life. We need to be asking ourselves, "Who are we hanging around? Who is it that is influencing our lives? Who are we allowing to speak into our lives?"

We say we want the promises of God, and then so often we hang around people that don't believe in the promises, people who don't believe it can happen, that don't believe in us, that don't believe God can do

People

anything for us. Again, you will never see a chicken flying with an eagle. It is important to surround yourself with people that are going to lift you up and not put you down. Your friends affect you and often the decisions you make in life.

Let me share two principles on having the right people in your life.

1. Eliminate the Bad. Let's take the toughest one first. Eliminating certain people from your life appears cruel and it seems wrong. But the truth of the matter is, if you do not eliminate certain people - not only will you never achieve and give birth to the promises of God in your life - but you won't be able to help those people. Many of us don't want to leave certain people out of our lives, but sometimes it has to be done, maybe just for a season, there's a chance you can help them in the future.

When on a plane, before takeoff, an attendant goes through routine instructions, just in case you don't know how to put a

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seatbelt on. But in the middle of the instructions they always have this to say, “In case of a change in cabin pressure, an oxygen mask will drop from the ceiling. Assist yourself first - then assist your child.” Now my first thought is, as a parent I’m going to make sure my child is taken care of first.

But the truth of the matter is, if you don’t get oxygen on yourself, you’re not going to be able to assist your child. The same is true with the friends in our lives. Sometimes, we have to do what is necessary for ourselves, before we can help someone else. That means we eliminate them for a while, so that we can get the oxygen and the promises of God flowing in our lives. Then we can go back to them and help them through the same process.

If we are around people, and entertain relationships with friends that are speaking negative or harmful things in our life, it can affect everything that we say and do. Don’t be mean, don’t be rude, but don’t stay around them, either. We have to make sure

People

we are around people that are speaking and doing the right things.

2. Embrace the Good. You must put yourself in an environment where people that believe in the promises of God can speak into your life. For some that may mean beginning to attend church regularly again or start for the first time. Sadly, sometimes you must change churches. Simply put, you have to position yourself to be around the right people.

In addition, it is important to understand that if you are going to be around good, positive people, you have to have a different mindset yourself. Of course, if your perspective has begun to change in life, and you are praying, and you have these things happening in your life—that will cause you to want to be around people that are more positive—people that are accomplishing things and going somewhere with their life.

If it is in business, and you are trying to fulfill some promises in business, you need

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to find successful people that are in that business and ask them to lunch. Have a pad of paper and a pen, and write down everything that you are hearing. Let them know you are serious. You have to make them feel good about wanting to be around you. You have to be a friendly person. The Bible says, “*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.*” (Prov. 18:24). If you are going to be around the right people, you have to work on it. You have to strive to be the kind of person that people who are accomplishing things want to be around.

Also, if you are negative, and you are always talking about how things cannot be done, there's no way it's going to happen. People will not respect you, nor want you to be around them. Your attitude affects your altitude. So, be positive. That will help you be around positive people. The people you hang around will affect how you give birth to the promises of God in your life.

ACTION POINTS

PEOPLE:

1. Think about how you and your friends affect each other.
2. Take time and search out people that are now where you want to be.
3. Think about what draws you to other people. Make a list of those things. Strive to become a person that draws others to you.

5

Position

As I was driving slightly above the speed limit and suddenly realized we were about to give birth in our car, I began to pray—pray hard. Something happened and my perspective began to change. All of a sudden, it hit me, I'm out of position! Now, I consider myself a fairly good driver. However, there was no way I could help deliver this baby if I continued driving. I needed to change my position. Changing position is sometimes a humbling

*P*osition

experience, but it is often necessary to do if you want to see your promise.

What's Your Position?

Whether you are looking for the blessings of God, a promotion at work, trying to get a rebound in basketball or deliver a baby in a car, you will find that positioning is extremely crucial.

The truth of the matter is if we do not position ourselves correctly, we are not going to be effective at anything and most certainly, you will not be able to give birth to the promises of God in your life. You have to get in the right position.

You have to position yourself to be helped by God. Jesus said, "*Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*" (Matt. 11:28). We have to come forward and position ourselves correctly. But if we position ourselves in the wrong place, the consequences can be devastating. For example, Eve positioned herself by the Tree of the Knowledge of

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Good and Evil. That is the very tree that God forbade Adam and his wife from eating. What a coincidence.

Every time I read this story, I ask myself, “What was she doing by the tree”? I cannot tell you how important it is to be in the right place at the right time. That doesn’t happen by happenstance, it’s a choice. Obedience or disobedience; are both choices. The one you choose will determine the outcome. Position is important.

Position can bring you closer to God or move you farther away from Him. You must position yourself properly if you are going to be used by God. Understand that God is looking for people that position themselves for His use. He looked for a man that would stand in the gap and make up the hedge. (Ezek. 22:30). He was looking for someone who would position themselves in a certain way, so that He could pour out blessings instead of His wrath.

Position

Let me share three principles necessary to get in the right position.

1. Get Out of the Driver's Seat. To be in the right position and obtain the promises of God, the first thing you have to do is get out of the driver's seat. Letting go of the steering wheel of life is difficult. It goes totally against our nature. We always want to be in control.

Until we learn to get out of the driver's seat, we are not going to be able to give birth to the promises God. You cannot control it. You cannot just grab it and make everything work the way you want it to work. This is exactly what happened to Abraham. As I mentioned in the introduction, he wanted to be in control. "I'm going to work this thing out by myself," we say, and what a mess we make.

When you are walking by faith, the Lord is not to ride shotgun, He is to be in the driver's seat. Only when you are in the

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right position and you let God do the driving will you obtain the promises.

2. Uncomfortable Places. You have to get out of the driver's seat and then position yourself in such a way that you can be effective. Many times, getting into position means you will end up in uncomfortable places. Whether that is a place of prayer, whether it is a certain mindset, whether it is a lifestyle change, what kind of books you read, a change of jobs, or in my case, the floorboard of the passenger seat. Whatever it may be, you have to position yourself if you are going to be effective.

God is looking for people that will position themselves so they can receive the promise. Naaman the leper was not going to get a miracle until he went into the River Jordan and dipped seven times (2 Kings 5). Joshua could never see the walls come down until he positioned himself for battle (Joshua 6:20; Hebrews 11:30).

Position

Right before Jesus began His ministry; the Bible says He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. This was a very uncomfortable place for Jesus to be. However, when He came out of the wilderness He came with power and anointing and His ministry was launched.

3. Make Preparation. When you position yourself, you are preparing yourself for what is to come. That is what position is all about—it is *preparation*. It is getting you in the right place. The story of the five wise and the five foolish virgins was not just about oil (Matthew 25:1-13). They had oil. They knew where to get oil. They were not, however, in the right position when the oil was needed. They knew the right place to be, but they were out of position, because of this, when the bridegroom came, they could not go in.

This is what God did when He created the world.

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Day one, He said, "Let there be light." He divided the light from the darkness.

Day two, He began to separate the waters beneath from the waters above. So, God began to create the water and divide the waters.

Day three, He made the dry land appear with the mountains and valleys and trees.

The first three days were days of preparation. So, what did He do the next three days?

The first day, He said, "Let there be light," but there was no sun, moon, and stars. Day four, He created the sun, moon, and stars, and gave the light a source that it could work through.

Day two, He created the water. On day five, He created all the sea creatures and the fowl of the air, the water beneath and the water above. So, it was preparation, and then He filled what He prepared.

Position

Day three, the dry land appeared. If you go to day six, that is when He made all the cattle, creeping things and He created man that lives on the earth.

So, the first three days were days of preparation, and then God filled what He prepared.

That is what happens when we position ourselves. We are preparing ourselves to be filled with the promises of God.

Getting out of the driver's seat and being cramped in the passenger floorboard is not an ideal situation, but if you're willing to go the distance there's a promise waiting to be delivered.

ACTION POINTS

POSITION:

1. Ask yourself honestly, how hard is it for you to get out of the driver's seat?
2. How could you position yourself in the right place to obtain what God has for you?
3. How does preparation help you position yourself?

6

Pivotal Points

After my mother-in-law and I had switched places, we got off the exit, and went through two red lights. God was watching over us, keeping traffic away. Right after the second red light, Lydia was born.

Now on that day, as we sped down the road my back was turned the opposite direction so I did not see the name of the last road we passed.

Pivotal Points

Rocky Point Road

When Holly and I went back for a baby appointment, I noticed the name of that road, the road with the second red light. And the name of the road was Rocky Point Road. It was prophetic. It came to me that, so many times we give birth to the promises of God in our lives right after a rocky point in the road.

Once you change your position, the road you travel on will get bumpy. It may be one of the roughest things that you have ever gone through, and just on the other side of it, you will give birth to the promises of God in your life.

There are pivotal points in our lives, high points, low points, smooth points and rocky points that will either *make us* or *break us*. Truthfully, we rarely recognize these points at the time, just as I didn't recognize the Rocky Point Road until I looked back later. We can look back over our lives, and now that we're on this side, we can say,

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“That right there, at that point, I could’ve gone this way or that way.” When the path gets rocky, we often stop or go back. This is when it is imperative to press on.

Moments matter. It is very important that we realize that our life is not a series of random events, but each moment matters and it is crucial how we handle them. We have to continue to walk with God, stay on course during the rocky points in our lives.

There is no greater example of a rocky point than Job himself. Job lost everything. He lost his family. He lost all of his wealth. He even lost his health, but he refused to allow himself to leave the path that God had him on.

You want to talk about a rocky point, Job was going through all kinds of things, but he stayed the course, stayed focused and moved forward. Just on the other side of that rocky point, God gave him double of everything he had lost. He got double of

Pivotal Points

everything, when he was willing just to stay with it and keep moving forward.

Moments matter. The pivotal points in your life will determine whether you are going to give birth to promise, or you are going to end up off course. If, somehow, you have gotten off point you can get back.

Focus

They say that an airplane, 90% of the time, is pointed in the wrong direction, because winds push it this way and that, and they have to keep adjusting to go to the right destination. Don't allow winds and storms to push you off course. Just stay focused. If you will stay focused, pursuing after God, you will see the promises in your life.

Sometimes you will be tempted to stop right where you are, but if it is a rocky point in your life, it is not a good place to set up camp. David said, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;*" (Ps. 23:4).

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There are times we will feel like we are in the shadow of death, at a pivotal point, but the instruction is to keep on walking. The bumps in the road are a sign that you are almost there. Just don't quit. You can make it. Your promise is waiting.

A few years ago in "Leadership Journal," Lynn Anderson described what happens when a people lose their vision and passion to go forward. A group of pilgrims landed on the shores of America about 350 years ago. With great vision and courage, they had come to settle in the new land. In the first year, they established a town.

In the second, they elected a town council.

In the third, the government proposed building a road five miles westward into the wilderness. But in the fourth year, the people tried to impeach the town council because they thought such a road into the forest was a waste of public funds. Somehow, these forward-looking people had lost

Pivotal Points

their vision and their passion for their promise land. The crazy thing is, these are people once able to see across oceans, they now could not look five miles into the wilderness. They went through storms, weathered all kinds of difficulties, and they made it to their “promised land.” This was what they wanted. This was what they looked for. This was their destination - their promise. But when they got there, they settled just on the edge of it and decided this was good enough. Why stop short of possessing all there is for you? Press on. Press through. Press for your promise.

You have come this far by faith. Keep moving all the way into the promises of God. It’s not too good to be true, and it’s not so hard that you can’t make it. The pivotal points will come but just on the other side, you can give birth to the promises of God.

ACTION POINTS

PIVOTAL POINTS:

1. Can you name a few pivotal points in your life that sent you in one direction or another?
2. Are you at a pivotal point in your life right now?
3. Find some Bible stories as well as true life stories where people obtained what they were looking for right after a rocky point in their life.

7

The Ultimate Promise

God is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19). If God promised something, it's going to happen. When God made the promise to Eve that the seed of the woman was going to bruise the head of the serpent, that promise was absolutely fulfilled. It happened when Jesus Christ came to earth.

There are many promises of God that are beyond anything we could ever imagine:

The Ultimate Promise

promises of healing, promises of deliverance, financial promises, promises of peace, and promises of a strong family unit.

No Profit

All these promises are put in perspective with one statement. The Word of God says, “*What would it profit a man if he gained the whole world,*” he received every promise there was, he had all these promises active in his life, everything was going his way. “*What would it profit a man if he gained the world, but lost his soul? What would a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Mark 8:36).

All the promises that we could receive in this life, everything that God has for us - we should get a hold of all of them. But if we lose our soul, they would all be worthless!

There is an ultimate promise of God. It is the promise of salvation, and that *promise* came together when the heel came down on the serpent’s head.

Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That promise

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was in the mind of God from the very beginning, when it came to fruition that was the greatest thing that could ever happen to us.

Jesus told us, "*For this purpose have I come.*" (John 18:37). There was a promise that He was going to take out a heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh. He was going to write these laws, not on tables of stone, but on our heart (Jer. 31:31).

How is this promise fulfilled? It was fulfilled by what is known as the Gospel. Paul said, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. For it,*" referring to the Gospel, "*is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*" (Rom. 1:16).

The Gospel fulfills that promise of salvation for our soul. Since the Gospel fulfills that promise, we should make sure we understand what the Gospel is.

Paul said, "*I declare unto you the Gospel, which I have preached unto you, wherein you*

The Ultimate Promise

stand.” It also says, once again, “*by which ye are saved.*” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Both in Romans 1:16 and in First Corinthians, it lets us know that we are saved by the Gospel. Paul goes on here to explain what the Gospel is. He said, “*Unless you have believed in vain,*” (1 Cor. 15:2). I’m going to share it with you:

1. How that Christ died according to the Scriptures,
2. How that He was buried according to the Scriptures,
3. And that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures.

The Gospel (good news) is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The good news is not only that we can be saved, but actually how to be saved. In Second Thessalonians 1:6-9, it talks about a flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Well, how do you obey the good news? The Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection. So, how do you obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Keep in mind, the Scripture proclaims that we must obey it. Those are certain actions. If you are going to tell your child or anyone they must obey a certain thing, there are certain actions they need to take.

Death

How do we obey His *death*? Does that mean that we kill ourselves or go be a martyr or something? No, it's not talking about a physical death, but we obey His death spiritually. Romans 6:1-2 says, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?*"

So, we die out to ourselves when we are dead to sin, and that is called *repentance*. When we repent of our sins, we are dead to sin. That means a turning away from sin. Repentance means a change of direction.

The Ultimate Promise

For example, if I were going south on 75, I would be going the wrong direction, if I intended to get to the birth center. The only way I would arrive at my desired destination would be a complete change of direction. I had to go north. In the same way, if we are living by our own fleshly desires and for ourselves we are going in the wrong direction. Repentance is turning from our desires to God's desires. If true repentance is what we want, we must decide to turn from our own ways and seek to do the things that please the Lord.

Burial

How do we obey *His burial*? Romans 6:3 declares, "*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.*"

How do we obey His burial? It's by baptism. We are buried with Him by baptism. Who was it that was buried? It was Jesus. That's why you find every time in the Word of God, where people were actually

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baptized, they always used the name of Jesus, because Jesus is the one that was buried. Acts 4:12 says that salvation is in that name.

We obey His death by repentance and His burial by baptism. Many Scriptures talk about His resurrection. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, *“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”*

Resurrection

The resurrection is speaking of the infilling of the Spirit of God which is the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the Gospel, which brings the ultimate promise of salvation, is the death, burial, and resurrection, and that is repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

Now, you would think that with something so important for our salvation, it would all be in one place. If the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection—and it

The Ultimate Promise

is—Jesus told them to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father.

He said that it's coming, and so they went to Jerusalem. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost Acts 2:1-4, Peter got up, began to preach to them, and conviction fell, as the Holy Ghost was being poured out.

And they asked, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent...*" That's the death. "*...and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*" That's the burial. "*And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" (Acts 2:37-39). That's the resurrection. "*For the promise,*" this ultimate promise that God has for you, "the promise is unto you," and it's not just to you. The promise of God is "*Unto your children and to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*"

If you miss every other promise, don't miss *this* "promise," this great salvation, and it's through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Giving Birth to Promise

Your future awaits you. It's time to realize your dreams, reach your goals and live in your potential. Go give birth to your promises!

ACTION POINTS

THE ULTIMATE PROMISE:

1. True repentance is not just saying you're sorry, but it's a change outwardly and inwardly. Only God can truly help you repent. Ask Him and He will help you.
2. Baptism is an important part of salvation. Learn how they actually did it in the Bible. You will find it throughout the book of Acts.
3. The Holy Ghost is for everyone. In the Word of God, a sign always accompanied it. Read the book of Acts and ask God to give you the same experience they had in the Word of God.

GIVING BIRTH TO PROMISE

Do you have dreams, goals, aspirations, or promises that you are waiting to see come to pass? Whether it is higher education, to obtain that dream job, or maybe you feel a call into ministry - don't settle for less than God has placed in your heart. . . Don't give in!

Everyday, people just like you face hardships and struggles, feeling like the promises of God are slipping right through their fingertips. This book can help you reach your potential, discover your destiny and learn how to press on to receive your promise.

In his latest book, *Giving Birth to Promise*, Jason shares five practical principles to help you achieve your promises. Get ready to revive your dreams, restore your vision and reclaim the lost promises of God in your life!



Jason Varnum is an anointed preacher, pastor, evangelist, teacher and an author, who ministers at conferences, revivals and special meetings, proclaiming the Apostolic message. He is the Lead Pastor of Souls Harbor First Pentecostal Church of Belleview, FL. Jason and his wife, Hollina have two children, Andrew and Lydia and little Joshua on the way. They reside near Ocala, FL.

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