

STAND STRONG: BUILDING YOUR LIFE ON GOD'S PROMISES



Life is tough. *You can stand strong.*

None of us is immune to the trials and tribulations of life. Even followers of Christ face difficult days. Wouldn't it be great to know we have a constant source of strength and encouragement to depend on, no matter how difficult life may become?

I have good news: we do!

A constant source of comfort, encouragement, strength, and promise is available to all people. God has given us His Word to help us navigate this exciting—and sometimes challenging—journey called life. The Bible is filled with promises that come directly from the heart of God to encourage us no matter what we might be facing. Through those promises, we can see how God truly wants to establish deep connections with His children.

In other words, God's promises reveal just how much He loves us.

God never promised this life would be free from trouble, but He did promise to walk with us every step of the way. With God on our side, we can stand strong.



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BUILDING YOUR LIFE ON GOD'S PROMISES



Session 1 **God's Promise of Faithfulness** Psalm 89:1-2,5-8,15-18



Session 2 **God's Promise of Eternal Life** 1 John 5:6-13



Session 3 **God's Promise of Provision** Psalm 34:4-14



Session 4 **God's Promise of Answered Prayer** Luke 11:5-13



Session 5 **God's Promise of Victory** Romans 8:28-39



Session 6 **God's Promise of a New Home** Revelation 21:1-8

SESSION 1

GOD'S PROMISE OF FAITHFULNESS



What are some common promises people make?

QUESTION #1
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#BSFLstandstrong

God is faithful in every circumstance.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We've all been left hanging by failed promises:

- ▶ "I'll pay you back."
- ▶ "It won't hurt a bit."
- ▶ "The doctor will see you shortly."

Some broken promises can't be avoided. We can't do anything about traffic snarls or sudden illness. Others are much more painful.

In either case, when we experience enough broken promises—from slight irritants to devastating blows—we may begin to question the ability of anyone to remain faithful to their word.

The good news is God never forgets or neglects His promises. He is always faithful! No matter how difficult life becomes, God is always by our side. Psalm 89 is a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness—a reminder that gives us hope in the most hopeless of situations.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Psalm 89:1-2,5-8,15-18 (NIV)

1 I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through
all generations.

2 I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

5 The heavens praise your wonders, LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

6 For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?

7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.

8 Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?
You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

15 Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.

16 They rejoice in your name all day long;
they celebrate your righteousness.

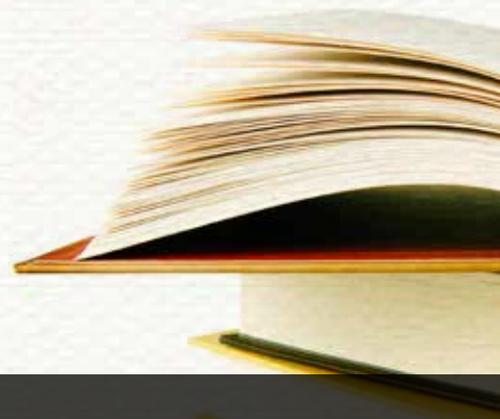
17 For you are their glory and strength,
and by your favor you exalt our horn.

18 Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Holy ones (v. 7)—In the Old Testament, “holy ones” is a reference to angelic beings. In the New Testament, it refers to believers, who are called “saints” (literally, “holy ones”).

Almighty (v. 8)—“Almighty” is a term describing the Lord as all powerful. He alone commands the armies of heaven.

Horn (v. 17)—“Horn” is a symbol of power taken from the animal kingdom. In biblical poetry and apocalyptic language, horns are used to symbolize persons of power, usually kings.



Psalm 89:1-2

Psalm 89 is a fresh reminder of the greatness of our God. It also highlights His closeness. Knowing God is mighty, great, and powerful should cause us to shout for joy—not to mention knowing that He’s ready to put every one of those attributes to work for us. God is there for us because of His love. His *faithful* love. Even in the midst of our worst pain, we can find joy in God’s power and closeness to us.

When I was in middle school, a friend told me a girl in my class actually liked me. As you can imagine, this was a pretty big deal for an awkward middle-school kid, and it caused me to crow a bit. I was pretty happy about the situation, and I wanted everybody else to know about it. Why? Because I wanted to make sure everyone knew somebody out there valued me.

Psalm 89:1-2 leads us to recognize that God’s love is something to shout about. And His love isn’t just some middle-school type of love. Nor is God’s love the self-centered kind we see through movies and television. Instead, it’s a love that never fails. The God of the universe sees value in you! His love for you goes to the end of the universe and back.

In our culture, we are relentlessly bombarded with superficial relationships that are readily tossed away over seemingly insignificant conflicts and misunderstandings. But God’s love for us will never end, no matter what we do.

The psalmist wrote in verse 1 that he would forever tell the world of God’s faithfulness. The Hebrew word for “faithfulness” used in this verse is *emwnah*, which means “firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, and steadiness.” In other words, God’s love will always remain strong, will always remain steady, and most importantly, will always remain!

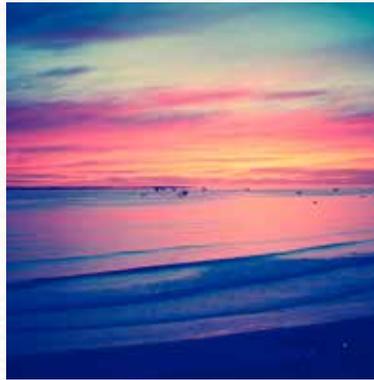
We see God’s faithfulness in His rule over heaven. In verse 2, the writer penned, “You have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.” Since God’s sovereign rule over the universe is consistent and steadfast, we certainly can count on Him in our own lives. God’s faithful rule over all creation means He can be trusted with whatever we’re facing.

When have you experienced the blessing of faithfulness?

QUESTION #2

IN THE HEAVENS

*What words or concepts do you associate with the sky?
Record your answers below each of the following three images.*



A large, empty rectangular area with a light yellow background, intended for writing answers related to the first image.

A large, empty rectangular area with a light yellow background, intended for writing answers related to the second image.

A large, empty rectangular area with a light yellow background, intended for writing answers related to the third image.

In what ways does the sky reflect God's faithfulness?

A large, empty rectangular area with a light yellow background, intended for writing answers to the question about God's faithfulness.

Psalm 89:5-8

One evening as I was driving home with my family, one of my children yelled from the back seat, “Look at that moon!” The moon that night was larger—and significantly brighter—than I had ever noticed before. I found out later this was a phenomenon called the “super moon.” This occurs when a full moon happens to coincide with a perigee moon; that is, when the moon makes its closest approach to earth, causing the moon to appear as much as 14 percent larger and 30 percent brighter.¹ I couldn’t help thinking that we live in such an amazing universe. It’s mind-boggling to realize God spoke it all into existence with just a word. That’s powerful!

The God who created this breathtaking universe is the same God who loves you. Even as the heavens call His people to celebrate God’s glory and power, His faithful love should also be the cause of great celebration. Psalm 89:5-8 shows us the universe declares God’s faithfulness even as it declares His awesome power.

“The heavens praise Your wonders” (v. 5). Nothing and no one is more deserving of praise than the One who created everything. As Psalm 19:1 states: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Everything we see in this world and beyond is a testament to the power of Almighty God. Simply by gazing into the world around us, we are reminded again and again of God’s matchless ability.

Read that again: “The heavens praise Your wonders.” Even the majesty and beauty of the universe pale in comparison with God. Nothing can compare with the majesty of God. The heavens declare His faithfulness and praise Him. The angels have witnessed it and sing of Him. The world was shaped by His very hand and gives witness to His greatness. Be encouraged in knowing that the same God who created it all is the One whose strength and faithfulness we can count on when we need it most.

When have you felt a strong sense of God’s majesty and power?

QUESTION #3

What’s the connection between God’s majesty and God’s faithfulness?

QUESTION #4

Psalm 89:15-18

Up to this point, the psalmist had declared the importance of celebrating God's love and faithfulness. But what good is talking about the love and faithfulness of God if you've never *experienced* the love and faithfulness of God?

Every couple of years in the United States, we go through election cycles to decide who will lead our government. During the campaign season, we inevitably hear myriad promises from the candidates about what they will do to make our city, state, or country—and our lives—better. But too often those campaign promises fade away after the election is over. And when the next election rolls around, we find ourselves wondering: *Did anything get better?*

In verses 15-18, we see that when we trust God's faithfulness and choose to live in His presence, we will experience great comfort and joy. When we live in His presence, He exalts us and imparts His righteousness to us. God did all this for us through Jesus Christ. In His faithful love, God sent Christ to forgive us, redeem us, and bring us back to Him.

As a result, happiness and joy are sure to follow. We find encouragement, comfort, strength, and joy by walking in the presence of God. We can experience the faithfulness of God when we are fully connected to Him and His will for our lives. As followers of Christ, we are given the great privilege of knowing His joy, walking in His presence, and being exalted by His righteousness—just as He promised.

How can we actively increase our trust in God?

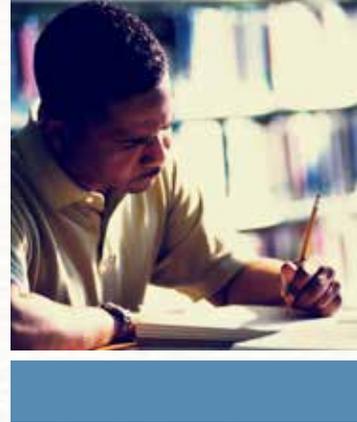
QUESTION #5

TRUST

LIVE IT OUT

We all need reminders of how much God values us and love us. What will you do this week to reflect on God's faithfulness? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Choose forgiveness.** God will never break His promise or let us down, but we can't say the same for people. When someone breaks his or her word in the coming days, choose to forgive that person rather than marinating in bitterness and disappointment.
- ▶ **Note God's faithfulness.** Make a daily habit of writing down how God has blessed you each day. Keep a journal of God's faithfulness as a constant reminder that God will never let you down.
- ▶ **Share God's faithfulness.** Do you know someone who is struggling with faith because of the trials in his or her life? Use the principles found in Psalm 89 to help you serve as a witness and testimony of God's faithfulness and love. Find those individuals who need to be encouraged and tell them what a mighty God we serve. Let your story be a reminder of God's faithfulness.



"I promise." You can be sure that people will let you down—even those you love and trust. But not God. His promises are a trusted foundation on which you can stand every day of your life.

1. http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2011/16mar_supermoon/ (Accessed 02/18/2015).