

A PROMISE TO CLAIM

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After opening about 2.5 gifts (out of about 250) last Christmas, Cruz decided he was over it. While the gargantuan pile of goodies wrapped in ribbon and cocooned in Christmas paper all but jumped out at him, he contentedly played with the original squeal inducing gift of a tricycle (and the box that it came in) without any sign of interest in anything else. So they sat there. While the rest of us tore into our beautiful boxes, the unopened promises of fun sat idly by until Cruz finally decided to appease us with an obligatory glance as we opened them for him.

I believe it behooves us to beg the question: "What promise have I left unclaimed?"

"So Joshua said to the Israelites: "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?" — Joshua 18:3

God swore to the Israelites that he would give them the land of Canaan. "No one will

be able to stand against you..." were the words he spoke to Joshua who led the military campaign. And 5 years into the 7 year conquest of overtaking the land, there were still 7 tribes of Israel who had not claimed their territory yet. I cannot even imagine why — this was no regular war. They already knew they were going to win — because God promised it. *All they had to do was take it.*

Can you even imagine the goodbye's?! As the military men kissed their wives and headed out to conquer enemies and take over territory, they had the knowledge of *certain victory*. Talk about lessened anxiety! I have to be honest, I actually read this and felt kind of jealous... *what would it be like to know what was coming?! To realize that all you had to do was claim the promise of life?!* And then it hit me (don't judge me, I was kind of slow on this one); *we have exactly the same promise to claim.* God didn't offer forever life with him as an option we could just try really hard and hope for. He was overwhelmingly clear about what happens next and how to make your RSVP.

When this promise is claimed, we can head out to life's battles and rest in the assurance of certain victory. The eternal kind. And that is just the start.

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these **he has given us his very great and precious promises...**" — 2 Peter 1:3-4a*

When my sweet friends recently lost their baby girl shortly after her birth, they desperately needed to claim his promise of peace that surpasses understanding, and grieve with hope.

When we had a new baby and a new business and we were running on fumes something extraordinary happened when I took hold of his promise to supply all my needs. "I will sustain you..." is what I consistently gleaned from my time with him.

When we are weak we can ask for power. When we are weary and burdened he will give us the rest that we need. When we need strength, he can offer it. When we need wisdom, he delights in saying yes. When we feel unloved, we get to claim without doubt that he has offered his perfect love and that nothing in all creation could separate us from him.

Cruz wasn't so crazy — he went for the big gift. The gift that really mattered. Our big looming promise and gift is life. The forever kind. And there are more... so many more. **What promise might you need desperately to take hold of that is still**

unwrapped before you?

Claiming promises typically compels an exchange of some sort. It generally requires interaction with the one offering the promise. To receive is to acknowledge the giver.

When we acknowledge the actual promises our giver is offering, we pray better.

And good praying is powerful... So, how do we pray with power? How do we move mountains? How do we dissect our heart's motives? With two little words...