



## When God's Promises Hurt!

"What!" you may be exclaiming: "That is absurd, when can God's promises hurt?" May I offer a response – when they do not seem to be coming to pass.

Think for a moment of the excitement you experience when the Lord gave you a promise. Maybe it is about your job, finances, loved ones or a particular ministry. Daily you anticipate its fulfillment. Yet as time passes and the promise does not seem to materialize, there is a change in our attitude. Excitement now becomes frustration, maybe even anger as time continues to pass.

This promise forever alters our paradigm of life: it is always there, sometimes in the forefront of our thoughts, sometimes just below our consciousness. It places us in a position that we cannot go back to how we used to think, yet it seems we cannot go forward either. There are days you wonder if you really heard Him right? Has He forgotten you? Did you miss it? Did you do something wrong? Questions and emotions can run rampant causing such mental anguish.

So yes the promises of God can hurt. But there is a reason.

Joseph experienced the same pain, yet God was using it as a process of development. As a young man, Joseph received a promise from God. In a dream his family was bowing to him and Joseph proceeds to tell them of this wonderful promise. Obviously, the family was not too thrilled. This starts a process of development in Joseph's life: he is cast into a pit, sold to a slave caravan and transported to Egypt, re-sold to Potiphar, then cast into prison. Some promise huh! Some pain! Yet there was a reason for this besides getting him to Egypt.

***Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. Ps 105:19***

Joseph's promise required a process of preparation. The text above tells us that until the promise came to pass, Joseph was tried. According to BDB Hebrew Lexicon, "tried" means "to smelt, to refine, to test." According to TWOT this word "is primarily used for gold and silversmiths and for the process of refining metals before they were worked into fine vessels." The time between receiving the promise and its fulfillment was a refining time for Joseph. Ok, that makes sense and we can grasp that. So.....

Now this is what strikes me about this process: it was the "word of the LORD" that tried him. The **very promise given him became his refiner!** Think about that. How many times do we really associate a promise from God as purifying us? Usually we get excited: we claim His promises, we declare them and we look for them to come to pass. Yet have we ever stopped to think that His promise could also become the instrument of our purification?

All those years as a slave or in prison, Joseph must have been asking God about the promise. He probably questioned what he heard: wondered if he missed something or did something wrong. I can imagine there were many nights lying awake staring into the darkness of despair, wondering: "where is this promise?" Yet through this, there was a refining going on **IN** Joseph.

It was the purification process of the promise that equipped Joseph to fulfill the promise. Joseph was an immature seventeen-year-old when he received the dream, what did he know about leadership. Yet it was the pain of the years of servanthood in Potiphar's house and the prison that equipped him as a leader and administrator. When It was God's time, Joseph was ready to step into his promise.

Today, you may be wondering when will God bring his promise to pass. You are tired, frustrated and maybe angry. Don't lose hope, if you are here, you are right where God wants you! You are in a process.

For a more detailed understanding of the process, see our book: ***But God, You Said: What's Happening When Nothing's Happening***

Adapted from:

*But God, You Promised  
What's Happening  
When Nothing's Happening*

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