



How Reliable Are Your Promises?

2 Peter 3:13: (NASB) *But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*



We all have had the experience of making or receiving a promise that was not kept. When you think about it, the experience is a sad one, for with a broken promise comes some level of a damaged trust towards the one who did not deliver. Over time this can lead to all kinds of deep and permanent damage to our relationships. What makes a promise? How do we better keep our promises? What about God? What had He promised us, and is He keeping His promises?

Are some promises more breakable than others?

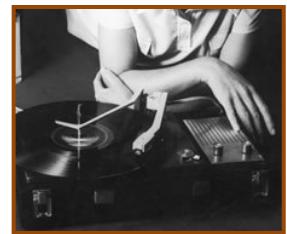
In some ways, promises seem kind of old fashioned and out of style...



"Promises Are for Keeping," oldies song, source unknown

*Promises are for keeping,
Broken hearts for weeping,
Please tell me, Darlin'
which will it be.*

*Having you means happiness
Losing you just loneliness
Please keep your promise
Oh promise me!*



The Scriptures present three basic groups of promises. First, there is a self-committal without ceremony. This is the most common:

Promise: Strongs #1862 epaggelma (ep-ang'-el-mah); a self-committal (by assurance of conferring some good): KJV - promise.

2 Peter 1:4: *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious **promises <1862>**: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

God is saying it, so we expect it will be fulfilled. This is the type of promise where one would say, "My word is my bond."

 Introduction, *How to Keep a Promise*, www.howcast.com

- *Keeping a promise offers many rewards. Highlight your impressive moral character by following through on a promise you made to yourself or to someone else. You will need a pen and paper, organization, and commitment.*

Second, a self-committal or agreement *with* ceremony:

Covenant: (*Old Testament*) Strongs #1285 beriyyth (ber-eeth'); from 1262 (in the sense of cutting [like 1254]); a compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh):

Properly, of a covenant between man and man; i.e. a solemn compact or agreement, either between tribes or nations, or between individuals, by which each party bound himself to fulfill certain conditions, and was assured of receiving certain advantages. In making such a



covenant, God was solemnly invoked as witness, whence the expression "a covenant of Jehovah." Accordingly a breach of covenant was regarded as a very heinous sin.

Malachi 2:14: (NASB) ¹⁴Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

A marriage ceremony is a good example of this. Asking God to bless the promise is invoking another level.

 Introduction, *A Promise Kept, Locke High School's Turnaround*, www.UsEd.org

- *Before the transition, Locke was a pretty chaotic place. There wasn't much learning going on, kids ran the school, gangs ran the school, it was just an uncomfortable place to be for an adult, let alone a kid.*
- *(Student) Teachers were really lazy. They would just sit down, read a book or something and just tell people, "Oh, copy the board."*
- *(Student) Or you could just walk out of school and they wouldn't say anything. They would ignore you.*
- *Kids were feeding off the negativity, dissension, and aimless wandering.*

The third and final type is a self-committal to God:

Vow: (Old Testament) Strongs #5087 nadar (naw-dar'); to promise (to do or give something to God):

Deuteronomy 23:21-22: (NKJV) ²¹When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. ²²But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.

We don't want to be disappointing the Lord God Almighty!

How do we react when we break our promises?

Here are a couple of great biblical promises:

Ruth 1:16: And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;

John 15:13-14: (NKJV) ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.

Notice this command is conditional - if you do....

 Step 1, *How to Keep a Promise*, www.howcast.com

- *Step 1: Write down promises you have made to yourself and others on a piece of paper. Break down big promises into smaller steps.*

Peter's denial was predicted:

Matthew 26:31-35: (ASV) ³¹Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. ³²But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. ³³But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. ³⁴Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ³⁵Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.



Peter's promise is emphatic - perhaps partly as a gut reaction to the shocking prophecy that Jesus just gave, and partly because he actually, in that moment, believed what he said.



Student and teacher reaction, *A Promise Kept, Locke High School's Turnaround*, www.UsEd.org



- *A sweeping change was needed to change what was going on at Locke.*
- *(Student) ...everybody knows everybody. Every eighth grade has their own counselors and teachers. It's very nice to be here in school.*
- *(Student) We actually have class now, and that's something I like and never saw since we've been here at Locke. It's a beautiful environment.*
- *(Student) The teachers do care what we are doing overall. They want to see us succeed, and we want to succeed for them and for us.*
- *I think the main difference that Green Dot has brought to Locke is the small learning community. The cornerstone of our success is in the fact that we are able to make relationships with students and have the students actually buy into themselves.*

So this means someone made a promise and kept it. It brought about huge change for this Los Angeles school.

Sometimes promises are just words used to pacify a circumstance...

"Hypocrisy can afford to be magnificent in its promises, for never intending to go beyond promise, it costs nothing." -Edmund Burke



Peter's denial - a bit later that night:

Luke 22:54-58: (ASV) ⁵⁴And they seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed afar off. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them. ⁵⁶And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. ⁵⁷But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not. ⁵⁸And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou also art one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not.



Here we have two denials within a very short time. Lying is often the result of the breaking of a promise, which ends up requiring backup - in this case a second lie...



Promises build basic trust, Anne Corwin (author of children's books), www.youtube.com

- *New Year's resolutions are not just for adults. This is actually the perfect opportunity for teaching your kids the value of making and keeping promises. What promises do is they build what is called basic trust. As human beings, one of the highest priorities we have for survival is being able to trust others. It builds intimate, connective relationships with others, and of course that's what you want to establish with your child.*
- *So you want to model what a promise is. So for example, if your child says, "I'm going to take my new ball out to the cul-de-sac, and I'm going to share it with everyone and play with everybody out in the cul-de-sac," what you want to do is get down to their level, make that eye to eye contact with them and say, "I think you just promised me something. You said you were going to take that new ball out, and you were going to play with the kids in the neighborhood. That's great! I love that promise."*

It is good to teach integrity at an early age. We want to get them excited about keeping their word.

Soon Peter denied Jesus yet a third time:

Luke 22:59-62: (ASV)⁵⁹And after the space of about one hour another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilaeen. ⁶⁰But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Obviously Jesus was close enough to both see and hear what had happened! It was heartbreaking. Peter realized how foolish and weak he was. Don't we feel that way when we break our promises? Yes, if our consciences are functioning correctly.

Does God keep His promises?

Let's take a closer look at a few of the many promises of God. These particular promises serve as a template for the types of promises that we have an opportunity to make and to keep.

Genesis 1:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

God's act of creation and His word were promises to the human race of their dominion over the earth. This promise was given and kept. He did not remove the dominion, even after Adam sinned.



Steps 2 and 3, [How to Keep a Promise, www.howcast.com](http://www.howcast.com)

- *Step 2: Organize your schedule in order to keep promises.*



- *Step 3: Track the progress of your promises in a journal.*

Some of God's promises have conditions attached. This can be seen as a "two-edged promise," one that produces good on the side of conditions being met and one with consequences on the side of conditions being violated.

Here is an example:

Genesis 2:16-17: (NKJV) ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

God promised life everlasting to human beings! Eating of the garden's trees would allow man to live forever. But this was conditional that Adam *not* eat of the one tree. Adam, of course, defied the condition and as a result was subject to the *other* half of this two-edged promise.



Some of God's promises are emphatic and multi-faceted!

Hebrews 6:13-18: (NKJV) ¹³For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴saying, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. ¹⁵And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. ¹⁷Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, ¹⁸that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Because God could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. If God has the integrity that we say God has, then we can be certain that this promise will come true.

This was a detailed promise that would take a long time to completely fulfill, but notice that only one particular facet was fulfilled - that Abraham's seed would multiply greatly. This can only mean that the other facets are yet to come! It is a guarantee.

 **Follow the lesson through, Anne Corwin (author of children's books)**

- *And when they come in and they've actually fulfilled that promise, you want to say to them, "You know what? You said you were going to take your ball out and share it with all of your friends. You promised me that you were going to do that, and that's exactly what you did. That's great! That's what we do in our family!"*
- *So when you think about resolutions and you think about promises with kids, don't just ask them to promise, or don't just promise them - especially if you*



don't think you will be able to keep your promise - but think to yourself, I want to teach my kids the concept of resolutions and promises. The only way to do that is to be concrete and show them when they did it and then congratulate them when they do and say, "Hey, you should be so proud of yourself because you promised and your promise came true!"

Some of God's promises are hard and fearsome!

Amos 3:1-2: (NKJV) ¹Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: ²You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

How do we become better promise keepers?

A promise keeper is **HUMBLE**.

An accurate assessment of one's self is an important starting place:

Psalms 24:1-6: (NRSV) ¹The earth is the LORD'S and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; ²for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. ³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. ⁵They will receive blessing from the LORD, and vindication from the God of their salvation. ⁶Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob Selah

The earth is the Lord's. Man was given dominion over the earth, but it still belongs to God. Humility brings us to genuine appreciation of God, which makes us want to be people of integrity and will bring us vindication and salvation.

We have to be honest about our limitations, because that will influence the kind of promises we can make.

 **Step 4, How to Keep a Promise, www.howcast.com**

- *Step 4: Examine the consequences you will encounter if you break a promise.*

A promise keeper is NOT focused on how things look; rather they are **FOCUSED ON WHAT IS REAL**.

Matthew 23:27-28: (NRSV) ²⁷Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. ²⁸So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

If we aren't keeping our promises, we can look very nice on the outside but not be right on the inside.

 **Results, A Promise Kept, Locke High School's Turnaround, www.UsEd.org**

- *(Student) I feel like I'm being pushed, even if I don't want to, to do something.*
- *(Student) ...My hopes of going to a four-year university have changed tremendously.*
- *...they are here not because their friends are here, but because they want to do something with themselves. They are here because they*



finally believe. I think that you feel that culture at every single Green Dot school, including Locke.

A promise keeper is **CONVICTED** in their direction.

James 5:12: (NASB) *But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.*

 **Do what you say, Danielle LaPorte, positivelypositive.com**

- *I'm going to give you the secret of success. Are you ready for it? Lean in. Do what you say you are going to do. No "rounding up," saying I'll get it to you tomorrow when you really mean maybe I'll get it to you tomorrow, maybe I'll get it to you the next day. No more leaving the room after you've made a commitment to someone and then think to yourself, well, they didn't really hear me, and she's not going to take me seriously, so I don't really have to do it.*
- *Just do what you say you're going to do. It is one of the most creative, empowering, godly acts.*

A promise keeper is **MATURE**.

Ephesians 4:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;* ¹⁵*but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

Promises are like crying babies in a theater – they should be carried out at once.

– Norman Vincent Peale

A promise keeper is **WILLING TO MEND HIS WAYS** swiftly and generously.

Luke 19:2-9: (NRSV) ²*A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.* ³*He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.* ⁴*So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.* ⁵*When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.* ⁶*So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.* ⁷*All who saw it began to grumble and said, He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.* ⁸*Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.* ⁹*Then Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.*

What should we promise to others?

Shouldn't we promise God what is reasonable? What is reasonable?

Psalms 116:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?* ¹³*I shall lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD.* ¹⁴*I shall pay my vows to the LORD, oh may it be in the presence of all His people.*

The benefits God gives to us **far outweigh** anything we can give back to Him. We owe Him everything. Pay your vows to God.

Deuteronomy 23:21-22: (NKJV) ²¹*When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.* ²²*But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.*

As a follower of Christ, we have promised God everything. No compromising!



Steps 5 and 6, *How to Keep a Promise*, www.howcast.com

- *Step 5: Make promises that you can keep.*
- *Step 6: Do not make up excuses that will deter you from fulfilling your promises.*

We should promise our spouse the complete fulfillment of our covenant:

Genesis 2:21-24: (KJV) ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Promise kept, *Locke High School's Turnaround*, www.UsEd.org

- *(Student) You feel that the school is nicer for you to walk around and be a part of your school, and tell kids that you come here. Before I was embarrassed...*
- *(Student) ...The promise that Green Dot said they were going to make school better for us, a safe environment, and just overall a place that we can come and actually learn. And so far they are keeping a promise that LAUSD (Los Angeles Unified School District) couldn't keep, which is to let us succeed.*

We should promise our family the care they deserve:

1 Timothy 5:8: (NASB) *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

This promise is based on taking responsibility. We aren't to slack off. We need to give our effort and integrity.

Become divinely predictable, *Danielle LaPorte*, positivelypositive.com

- *You begin to value your word. You become more discerning, more selective with what you commit to. Your promises really become promises. Your love really does get delivered. You build trust for yourself; you build respect for yourself and from others.*
- *You become predictable in the most divine sense of the word. Of course, at times life intervenes and you can't do what you said you were going to do. In those cases, you tell the truth and you tell it fast. You show up with sincerity and you alter the plan and you get back to the place where you can do what you say you are going to do.*

We should promise the brotherhood our support:

Galatians 6:2: (NASB) *Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*

Note we are supposed to help them to bear the weight of their responsibility, not remove it and take it on ourselves.

We should promise the brotherhood our prayerful devotion:

James 5:13-16: (NASB) ¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him



up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. ¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

This shows mutual accountability and prayer. This is a promise we ought to make and keep.

We should promise all men our respect and love:

Galatians 6:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

We should promise ourselves a decisive devotion:

Joshua 24:15: (NASB) ...choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; **but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

So, we promise God, our spouse, our family, our brethren, the world around us, and finally we promise ourselves that we will live a devoted life.

What are God's promises to the world?

 **Step 7, How to Keep a Promise, www.howcast.com**

- *Step 7: Recommit yourself if you break a promise. Apologize to others if you've let them down and then get back on track.*

If you break a promise, face it and move forward. Don't let it discourage you or freeze your actions.

God has promised his unwavering word and will, given for our ultimate benefit:

Isaiah 55:8-11: (NRSV) ⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

This is a like a giant security blanket from God!

God has promised an ending to this society of sin and death on earth:

2 Peter 3:10-13: (NKJV) ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The word “new” here actually means “renewed.” Fire can both destroy and purify. Symbolically, fire destroys the old and purifies it so that it can become renewed with a system of righteousness. God has promised this destiny to all mankind on earth. God promised heaven to the followers of Christ, but there is an additional level of promises in the Bible from God for the “everybody else.”



God had promised and prepared a heavenly reward for Jesus' true followers:

John 14:1-3: (NASB) ¹Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.



A caller suggests: The cause of many broken promises is pride. We make promises casually, to please others or force ourselves to do something.

Psalms 132:4-5: *I will give my eyes no sleep, my eyelids no rest, until I find a home for the Lord.*



"Promises Are for Keeping," oldies song, source unknown



*Having you means happiness
Losing you just loneliness
Please keep your promise
Oh promise me! Promise me!*

God has promised a destiny for the rest of men, who are not yet followers of Christ - it is a good destiny and it is an earthly destiny:

Micah 4:1-4: (NKJV) ¹Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. ²Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁴But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Zion represents the true followers of Christ, through which God's word will go out to the nations. The nations will no longer be at war. Along with shelter and sustenance, the nations will need to care for themselves. Man will keep his dominion, but can now create a kingdom on earth under the rule of God through Christ and the true followers of Christ. *God promised the kingdom to everybody.* This is one of many similar promises God made to mankind. Refer to Isaiah 35, for example. This is a future reality guaranteed to be.

Promises are made to be kept. God promised and will deliver - what about you?

1 Thessalonians 5:24: (NASB) *Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*

**So how reliable are our promises?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**



**And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**



Here is a BOLD promise of action that Nehemiah makes, based upon the promises of God to Israel - are we bold enough to make such bold promises?

Nehemiah 1:5-11: (NKJV) ⁵And I said: I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, ⁶please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. ⁷We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. ⁸Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; ⁹but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' ¹⁰Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. ¹¹O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.

God's bold promise of impartiality - such a breath of fresh air in a world that doesn't know how to apply it!

James 2:1-5: (NKJV) ¹My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. ²For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, You sit here in a good place, and say to the poor man, You stand there, or, Sit here at my footstool, ⁴have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

The concept of a "vow" was much more of an Old Testament subject - here is the use of the New Testament word:

Vow: Strongs #2171 euche (yoo-khay'); properly, a wish, expressed as a petition to God, or in votive obligation: KJV-prayer, vow.

Acts 18:18: And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a **vow <2171>**.

James 5:15: And the **prayer <2171>** of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

A bit of background on the Locke High School transformation:

In 2006, Locke Senior High School was among the lowest performing schools in Los Angeles. Plagued by gang activities and low expectations for students, Locke was sending just 5% of its graduating students to 4-year colleges and universities.

That's where the California-based nonprofit Green Dot came in. With the support of the community, Green Dot has implemented a school turnaround model focused on making sure students achieve academically and are ready for



college and careers when they graduate from high school.

The change is visible throughout the school. Now, students are showing up for school on time. Class attendance has risen above 90 percent. Test scores have increased.

As a result of the model -- and lots of hard work by teachers, students, and the community -- the school is a far cry from what it used to be.

As Secretary Duncan has said, "Our communities need to be courageous in their desire to implement change. Only then will we be able to turnaround our nation's failing schools."

Schools similar to Locke that are looking for ways to turn themselves around can find out more information on School Improvement Grants here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>