

(10) **Severity** (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:20). Severity is the opposite of God's kindness: "Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness" (Rom 11:22a–b). God's severity is implied in promises of vengeance and judgment: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord" (Rom 12:19b). Or "If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment" (Heb. 10:26–27a). We need an attitude of severity to rebuke and separate from fools. Share God's severity by claiming an implied promise such as "Like one who binds a stone in a sling, So is he who gives honor to a fool" (Prov 26:8).

(11) **Goodness** (Rom 15:14; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9). For God, goodness is dealing kindly with all of his creatures (Neh 9:25). For us, goodness is a desire to do good works for others. Claiming a promise of provision such as "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19) immediately frees you to be generous, express your goodness (a fruit of the Spirit), and give grace to the needy.

(12) **Faithfulness** (Num 12:7; Neh 7:2; Luke 16:10; 1 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:22; 1 Tim 3:11; Rev 2:13). God is faithful (Lam 3:23; 1 Cor 10:13). He keeps his promises. And we can be faithful too, immediately, by claiming promises of present and future rewards in time of temptation: "And the LORD will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness" (1 Sam 26:23a). Or "The LORD preserves the faithful" (Psa 31:23b). Or "A faithful man will abound with blessings" (Prov 28:20a). Or "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things" (Matt 25:21). Or "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10).

(13) **Grace, graciousness, and generosity** (2 Cor 8:1–2; 9:13–14; Acts 2:33–35). God is gracious (Exod 22:27; Psa 116:5), generous (James 1:5), and gives grace (Psa 84:11; James 4:6). We share God's grace attitude and generosity immediately when we claim promises of replenishment such as "he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6b). Or "God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (9:8). Claiming promises of blessing also produce graciousness and generosity: "The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself

be watered" (Prov 11:25). And "He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor" (22:9).

(14) **Compassion** (Matt 12:7; Col 3:12) and mercy (Matt. 5:7). God is compassionate (Neh 9:31; Psa 111:4) and merciful (Psa 86:15; Eph 2:4; James 5:11). And we can share his compassion immediately by claiming "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt 5:7). Additional benefits are happiness and a spiritual insurance plan against future tragedies; that is, a promise of receiving mercy from God.

(15) **Forgiveness** (Matt 6:12b; 2 Cor 2:7; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). God forgives (Num 14:8; Neh 9:17b; Psa 86:5; Acts 5:31; 1 John 1:9). And so can we. To share God's attitude of forgiveness, claim "If you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt 6:14–15). Or "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions" (Mark 11:25). Or "pardon, and you will be pardoned" (Luke 6:37c).

(16) **Courage** (Deut 31:6; Josh 1:9; 2 Chron 15:8; 2 Cor 5:6, 8; Phil 1:14). God is never afraid because he knows everything and is all powerful. He has perfect courage. And we can have courage as well. Claiming a spiritual warfare promise provides immediate courage in battle. Replace fear with courage by using "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b). Or the implied promise in "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom 8:37). Promises of protection also produce courage: "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thess 3:3). And promises of present and future rewards generate courage: "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work" (2 Chron 15:7).



Glendale Baptist Church
12338 Coulson
Houston, Texas 77015
Robert C. Lewis, Pastor

How to Claim Promises & Share God's Nature



He has given to us the valuable and very great promises, in order that by them you may become sharers of (the) divine nature (2 Peter 1:4 RCL).

Principle

Claiming promises has a reciprocal effect: Faith is immediately rewarded with attitudes like joy and peace of mind.

The Divine Nature

God's nature is the sum total of his communicable and incommunicable attributes. Some attributes he shares with his creatures, such as love, justice, and eternal life; other attributes he does not share, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Only his communicable attributes are communicated to men. To share his nature is to be godly, to be like him, to be imitators of God. You may ask, "What aspects of God's nature can I experience?" Here is a partial list:

(1) **Eternal life** (Matt 25:46; John 5:24; 6:40; 17:3; Rom 6:23; 1 John 2:25; 5:11). God is eternal; he has no beginning or end (Rom 16:26; 1 Tim 1:17). And his eternity is incommunicable, since all creatures have a beginning. But we can share his eternal life and live with him forever. How? Put your faith in a salvation promise and immediately receive back about forty grace gifts from God (such as justification, sanctification, and adoption). Included among them is eternal life. Some good salvation promises are: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Or “He who believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36a). Or “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life” (John 6:47).

(2) **Holiness** (Eph 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 1:15–16). God is holy (Exod 15:11; Isa 6:3b; John 17:11). He is unique, different, one of a kind—distinct from everyone and everything. Majestic holiness is one of his incommunicable attributes: “There is no one holy like the LORD” (1 Sam 2:2). “FOR THOU ALONE ART HOLY” (Rev 15:4). His ethical holiness, however, is communicable. He is separated from sin, and we can be too. “Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Lev 19:2). How can we share God’s holiness? Two ways. First, we share his holiness immediately when we claim a salvation promise. God declares us to be holy. This is positional holiness or positional sanctification. And, second, we share his holiness immediately when we claim promises of forgiveness such as “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). When we confess known sins, we immediately receive three things: (1) forgiveness, (2) cleansing from all unrighteousness, and (3) fellowship with God. We’re walking in the light as he is in the light. We’re totally separated from sin, both known and unknown. We become holy as he is holy. This is experiential holiness (experiential sanctification).

(3) **Knowledge** (John 4:25; 11:24). God is omniscient: he knows all things past, present, and future, possible as well as real (John 21:17b; Heb 4:13). And, if we wish, we can share some but not all of God’s knowledge. We acquire such knowledge by faith; for example, a knowledge of what happened at creation or what will happen in the future. In believing the divine account of creation, we unthinkingly claim an implied promise such as “God, who cannot lie” (Titus 1:2) and, as a result, we immediately share God’s knowledge of how things

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were created. Prophecies, on the other hand, are promises with respect to the future, and, if we believe them, we will immediately share God’s knowledge of the future.

(4) **Wisdom** (Prov 2:6; 4:7; 8:11; 14:33; 16:16; Luke 2:52; James 1:5; 3:17). Wisdom is the ability to gather, compare, and apply knowledge and understanding to experience—to problems of daily living. Wisdom makes the best of all possible choices. God alone has perfect wisdom (Psa 104:24; Prov 3:19; Dan 2:20; Rom 11:33). But we can have a measure of wisdom with common sense, Bible knowledge, meditation, prayer, and guidance from the Holy Spirit. In times of persecution, for instance, we share God’s wisdom soon after claiming a promise such as “I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute” (Luke 21:15).

(5) **Love** (Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 16:14; Gal 5:22). God is love (Eph 2:4; 1 John 4:8b, 16). We share God’s love immediately when we claim a promise such as “Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men” (Luke 6:35).

(6) **Joy** (Rom 15:13; 2 Cor 7:4; 8:2; Gal 5:22; 1 Thess 1:6). God has joy (Psa 104:31; Zeph 3:17). And we can share it with him. Many, many promises provide joy when claimed. Beatitudes, for instance, are conditional promises of happiness: “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!” (Psa 32:1). Or “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt 5:5). Claim them and you immediately receive back joy—the joy of receiving present or future blessings from God. Claiming promises that offer rewards in this life also produces immediate joy: “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age” (Mark 10:29–30). And claiming promises of future rewards likewise creates instant happiness: “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:13–14). Or “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

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(7) **Peace of mind** (Rom 14:17; 15:13; Gal 5:22; 2 Peter 1:2). God has peace of mind all of the time (Rom 16:20; Phil 4:7). Even in his anger (Deut 6:15; Rev 14:10) or grief (Gen 6:6; Eph 4:30), He has inner peace because he has the knowledge and power to make all things work out to his liking. His anger, grief, and peace are present at the same time. And we too can be angry, grieved, disappointed, and have inner peace all at the same time—but only if we believe “that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God” (Rom 8:28). We too can share his inner peace by claiming promises. Many promises provide mental peace immediately when we claim them. In tragedy, claim Romans 8:28. Worried? Claim 1 Peter 5:7. Or “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16). Frustrated? Try “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:6).

(8) **Patience** (Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; Heb 6:12) and endurance (Heb 10:36; James 1:3–4). God is patient (Rom 2:4; 1 Peter 3:20), slow to anger (Exod 34:6; 14:18), and has endurance (Rom 9:22). *In times of testing* we can share God’s patience and endurance immediately by claiming the implicit and explicit promises of 1 Corinthians 10:13: (1) “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man,” (2) “and God is faithful,” (3) “who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,” (4) “but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also,” (5) “that you may be able to endure it.” We can share God’s patience and endurance immediately *in times of persecution* by claiming “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:11–12).

(9) **Kindness** (Acts 9:36; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Col 3:12). God is kind (Rom 2:4; 11:22; Eph 2:7). And we can share his kindness by claiming “With the kind Thou dost show Thyself kind” (Psa 18:25a). Or “whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” (Gal 6:7b). Or “And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal 6:9). Or “Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men” (Luke 6:35). Remember, “love is kind” (1 Cor 13:4b).

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