



THE MESSAGE
PROMISEBOOK

EUGENE H. PETERSON

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There are times in our lives
when we want to know what God's message is for us.

The Bible gives us God's perspective.

The Message Promise Book contains passages from the Bible on 80 different topics, covering a broad range of areas in which all of us struggle to know what to think, what to say, what to do, what to *be*. Taken from *The Message*, these passages are written in the kind of contemporary language we use every day.

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AMBITION

Watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

— *Ephesians 5:15-16*

Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. — *Philippians 2:3*

Stay calm; mind your own business; do your own job. — *1 Thessalonians 4:11*

Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. — *James 3:14*

And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today—at the latest, tomorrow—we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that." As it is, you are full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. — *James 4:13-16*

ANGER

Slowness to anger makes for deep understanding; a quick-tempered person stockpiles stupidity.

— *Proverbs 14:29*

A gentle response defuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles a temper-fire. — *Proverbs 15:1*

Let angry people endure the backlash of their own anger; if you try to make it better, you'll only make it worse. — *Proverbs 19:19*

Don't hang out with angry people; don't keep company with hotheads. Bad temper is contagious—don't get infected. — *Proverbs 22:24-25*

A gang of cynics can upset a whole city; a group of sages can calm everyone down. A sage trying to work things out with a fool gets only scorn and sarcasm for his trouble. — *Proverbs 29:8-9*

Jesus said, "You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. . . . The simple moral fact is that words kill." — *Matthew 5:21-22*

Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it." — *Romans 12:19*

When someone gets to the end of his rope, I feel the desperation in my bones. When someone is duped into sin, an angry fire burns in my gut. — *2 Corinthians 11:29*

Since prayer is at the bottom of all this, what I want mostly is for men to pray—not shaking angry fists at enemies but raising holy hands to God. — *1 Timothy 2:8*

BELIEF

“Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light.” — *Matthew 6:22*

“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.” — *John 3:16*

Jesus stated, “I am Light that has come into the world so that all who believe in me won’t have to stay any longer in the dark.” — *John 12:46*

Jesus said, “So, you believe because you’ve seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing.” — *John 20:29*

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God’s action in them find that God’s Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! — *Romans 8:5*

Before you trust, you have to listen. But unless Christ’s Word is preached, there’s nothing to listen to.

— *Romans 10:17*

Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you've got, be resolute. — *1 Corinthians 16:13*

It's what we trust in but don't yet see that keeps us going. — *2 Corinthians 5:7*

I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. — *Galatians 2:20*

Saving is all God's idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! — *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—*everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment.

— *Colossians 1:15-17*

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. — *Hebrews 11:1*

By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see.

— *Hebrews 11:3*

It's impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists *and* that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him. — *Hebrews 11:6*

You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. — *James 1:3*

Do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

— *James 2:14-17*

Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it *proved* pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out *proved* genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory. — *1 Peter 1:7*

So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and

generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others. — *2 Peter 1:5-7*

Anyone who gets so progressive in his thinking that he walks out on the teaching of Christ, walks out on God. — *2 John 1:9*

CHANGE

Jesus said, “I’ve come to change everything, turn everything rightside up.” — *Luke 12:50*

“You know how to tell a change in the weather, so don’t tell me you can’t tell a change in the season, the God-season we’re in right now.” — *Luke 12:56*

It’s time to change your ways! Turn to face God so he can wipe away your sins, pour out showers of blessing to refresh you. — *Acts 3:19*

Did you think that because he’s such a nice God, he’d let you off the hook? Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he’s not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a radical life-change. — *Romans 2:4*

If God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won’t know what we’re talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still

experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. — *Romans 8:9-10*

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. — *Romans 12:1-2*

Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges!
— *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Earlier, before you knew God personally, you were enslaved to so-called gods that had nothing of the divine about them. But now that you know the real God—or rather since God knows you—how can you possibly subject yourselves again to those tin gods?
— *Galatians 4:8-9*

God's readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation's available for everyone! We're being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now. — *Titus 2:11-12*

Jesus doesn't change—yesterday, today, tomorrow, he's always totally himself. — *Hebrews 13:8*