

Read: Joshua 24:1,2,14-18

I Will, I Promise

Joshua 24:15-16

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"I will, I promise." Monique was very confident when she told her parents that she was going to follow all their rules. They were about to go out on a date together, and they were going to leave her alone for a few hours by herself for the first time. They reviewed some of the important rules they had, "Don't answer the door for anyone. Please don't cook anything by yourself. No YouTube videos, and please, do something besides watching TV. Will you follow these rules?"

"I will, I promise," Monique said again. She really and truly wanted to show her parents that she was trustworthy and able to handle being alone and making good choices.

The night started off pretty well. She was going to watch just one show, and then she planned to do something else. But when Monique got bored after *two hours* of TV, she remembered that her friend at school had told her about a really cool video she saw on YouTube. Well, just one video, right? How would her parents even know? Monique ended up watching a pile of YouTube videos. Not all of them were very appropriate either. But some of them were about cooking, and that made her want to try. How would they know if she cooked something quickly and cleaned up? Unfortunately for Monique, her parents' date night ended early and they walked in the door right as she was following the video instructions to put something in the oven! Monique meant to obey, but she failed to keep her promise.

The Israelites did the same thing. When they were about to enter the Promised Land of Canaan, Joshua encouraged the people to leave behind sinful ways and other gods and to follow the Lord instead. Joshua said he and his family would serve the Lord only. All the people agreed and said they would too. "We will, we promise!" But that didn't last very long. The Israelites fell into sin and failed over and over again.

Thank God for his grace! Despite all the times the Israelites failed to keep their promise to serve the Lord, God still sent his Son Jesus to be the Savior of all people. That includes you and me. We fail to serve God with all our hearts when we sin, too. But Jesus took away those sins when

he died on the cross. Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God now looks at us as his dearly beloved children.

May that love of Jesus fill us with thanks and give us the strength to say, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord!"

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What promise did Joshua and then Israelites make before they entered the Promised Land?
- Did they keep their promises? How do you know?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What makes it so difficult to keep our promises?
- How can we work on staying committed to serving the Lord?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- If we break promises often, how do we know that God will keep his promises to us?
- Describe what it means and what it looks like when a family is committed to serving the Lord.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, give me the strength to serve you all my days with all my heart. Amen.

Hymn: CW 506:1,3 – Oh, Bless the House, Whate'er Befall

Oh, blest the house, whate'er befall,
Where Jesus Christ is all in all!
A home that is not wholly his—
How sad and poor and dark it is!

Oh, blest the parents who give heed
Unto their children's foremost need
And weary not of care or cost.
May none to them and heav'n be lost!