

Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls

Office of Adult Discipleship & Evangelization

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Words of Wisdom Reading Guide: July 2020

A Father Who Keeps His Promises

God's Covenant Love in Scripture

By Scott Hahn

Overview

Thank you for downloading the Reading Guide for the *Words of Wisdom Retreat* on Scott Hahn's book *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*. It's my hope that this guide will help you to more deeply apply the wisdom of Hahn's book to your life, and in doing so, help you to more fully conform your life to Christ's.

It is my prayer that you find this book readable, engaging, and life-changing, even if in small ways. Through the book, the guide, and the retreat, may the God of Truth and Love draw you and those you love ever closer to Him.

What to Expect

In the pages that follow, you will find a proposed reading schedule that will allow you to read the book at a relaxed yet engaging pace as well as resources intended to help deepen your understanding of the text and how to live it out on a daily basis. The questions from the book are formatted in a way that allows you to answer the questions within this guide. I have also included some additional questions for the last two days of reading which are not in the book.

But before you dive in, I'd like to offer two things for you to keep in mind.

First, make sure to begin and end your reading time with prayer. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Heaven rejoices whenever anyone of us seeks to grow in our faith, in our relationship with God, and you can rest assured that He will answer your prayer. When He does, remember to thank Him for what He has given you, and ask for the clarity and courage to live it out.

Second, some of the content may challenge you, and that's ok. Hahn has written a book which is very readable, but you may find that some of the concepts will challenge your understanding of our Catholic faith, its relationship to truth, and how to better share that faith with others. If any of those challenges arise, pause your reading and pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon you. Ask that He give you greater clarity and understanding. He may give you those gifts, or He may invite you to trust Him even though you don't understand the concept as clearly as you would like. Both are good. Both are gifts. Continue to pray with these things. Write them down, and ultimately bring them to the retreat. This is part of a journey, one that the Holy Spirit is leading, and you aren't in it alone.

Let's begin!

Reading Schedule

The recommended reading schedule is four days per week for four weeks. This pace allows for flexibility and enables you to absorb what you read. I have found that reading a book too quickly results in little of it “sticking”, while reading too slowly can make it difficult to connect the concepts. Of course you are free to read the book at a pace that better fits you if so desired.

Week One

- **Day 1 & 2:** Chapter 1 - Kinship by Covenant
- **Day 3:** Chapter 2 - Creation Covenant and Cosmic Temple
- **Day 4:** Chapter 3 - Splitting the Adam

Week Two

- **Day 1:** Chapter 4 - Shape Up or Ship Out
- **Day 2:** Chapter 5 - How Do You Spell Belief?
- **Day 3:** Chapter 6 - “The Elder Shall Serve the Younger!”
- **Day 4:** Chapter 7 - “Let My People Go!”

Week Three

- **Day 1 & 2:** Chapter 8 - Israel's Calf-Hearted Response
- **Day 3:** Chapter 9 - Beloved Backsliders
- **Day 4:** Chapter 10 - "Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve!"

Week Four

- **Day 1:** Chapter 11 - "Thou Art the Man!"
- **Day 2:** Chapter 12 - "It Is Finished!"
- **Day 3:** Chapter 13 - Here Comes the Bride

Week 1, Day 1: Kinship by Covenant

Questions to Ponder

1. For Father's Who Aren't in Heaven: What does Hahn say is God's goal? What does that mean to you?
2. Scripture, the First Love Story: Have you ever heard the ancient lyric from the Christmas Eve Mass read or sung? What does it mean to you after reading Hahn's comments on it?

Week 1, Day 2: Chapter 1 - Kinship by Covenant

Questions to Ponder

1. Peering into the Eyes of the Father: Hahn summarizes the basic message that God wants to convey by a covenant. Have you ever thought of our faith in those terms? Either way, what does that mean to you personally?

2. God's Family Tree at a Glance: What strikes you about the promises made & fulfilled for each of the individuals named?

3. A Broadening Focus: What strikes you about how in each covenant, the “family unit” grows in size?

4. The Trinity is the Eternal Covenant Family: Reflect on the quote from John Paul II in this section. What does that reveal about God that’s new to you?

Week 1, Day 3: Chapter 2 - Creation Covenant and Cosmic Temple

Questions to Ponder

1. From Chaos to Cosmos: In your own words, what does the first verse of the Bible make clear, and why is that important?

2. How to Build a House in Six Days: Had you ever considered the structure of the days of creation as Hahn explains it here? What is your reaction to it?

3. Image is Everything: Hahn gives a number of answers to the question, "What does it mean to be made, male and female, in God's 'image and likeness'?" Which of them is most important to you personally, and why?
4. The Sabbath: Saving the Blest to Last: What is the importance of Adam being both king & priest?
5. What's in a Name: From Elohim to Yahweh: Explain in your own words the significance of the shift in referring to God as Elohim in Genesis 1 to Yahweh in Genesis 2.

3. Enter the Subtle Serpent: In your own words, what is important about the meaning of the Hebrew words used to describe the serpent?
4. Not to Decide Is to Decide: What strikes you about Hahn's explanation of Adam's sin?
5. A Curse-Bearing Death to Undo Adam's Deed: Hahn explains how Jesus undid Adam's deed by doing what Adam should have done. What strikes you most about this?

3. Deviled Ham: How does understanding the meaning of Ham “looking upon Noah’s nakedness” change the meaning of Genesis 9?

4. Covenant Karma: According to Hahn, why did Ham commit this horrible act?

5. The Hall of Shame: Why was God opposed to the building of the Tower of Babel?

Week 2, Day 2: Chapter 5 - How Do You Spell Belief?

Questions to Ponder

1. Introduction: At the beginning of the chapter Hahn makes clear what it must've been like for Abram when God asked him to leave Ur. How did that strike you?
2. Faith up to the Facts: What was your response to Hahn's explanation of the covenant ritual of Gen 15?

3. Homecoming: What lessons do you draw from Jacob's return to the Holy Land?

4. From Prisoner to Prime Minister in a Day: What does Joseph's experience tell you about God's insistence in the accomplishment of His plans?

3. Israel Must Be Sworn Again? What's the importance of the blood of the bulls being sprinkled on both the altar and the people?

4. Moses' Fast Action: What is the deeper meaning of the golden calf episode?

5. Blest Be the Bind That Ties: What's the importance of the signal that God destroying His people would send to Egypt?

3. A Sworded Affair: Why did the Levites become the sole priests in Israel?

4. Idol Time for Sacrifice: Why does daily animal sacrifice now become mandatory?

3. A Father Who Keeps His (Com)Promises: How is Deuteronomic law different from the law given at Sinai about divorce & remarriage?

4. The Curse That Cures: What's the importance of the image of God circumcising the heart?

5. Moses: A Mirror of Christ: How, according to Hahn, was Moses a mirror of Jesus?

3. Sanctuary Granted: What does “rest” have to do with the building of the sanctuary?
4. The Rise and Fall of a Ruler: How did Saul sin in the episode of the Amalekites?
5. A New King in the Making: What most impresses you about David’s character?

Week 4, Day 1: Chapter 11 - "Thou Art the Man!"

Questions to Ponder

1. The Gates of Jerusalem Shall Not Prevail: What's the significance of David acting like a priest?
2. Time for a Temple: What's the significance of God telling David that He will give him a house?

3. David's Undoing: What's your "takeaway" from David's fall?
4. Solomon's Legacy: Similarly, what's your "takeaway" from Solomon's fall?
5. Prophets and Loses: What were some of the spiritual fruits that came from the Jews' time of waiting? What lessons are there for you in their waiting?

3. Worship as Warfare: How will this section impact how you pray the Mass?

4. The New Jerusalem: How does this section change your view of the Church?

5. A Crisis of Saints: What do you think God is asking you to do differently as a result of this book?

Retreat

Now that you have read the book and wrestled with the concepts, let's talk about it! At the retreat I will do some teaching and lead a time of discussion. There will also be an opportunity to spend time in prayer about the things that struck you during your reading and the discussion. What sets this retreat apart is an emphasis on wisdom, not just knowledge or understanding. Wisdom is taking knowledge and understanding and applying them to your life. My desire is that you will recognize how the things that stirred your heart can transform your own life bringing you closer to Jesus Christ.

Details

1. **Location:** The Abbey of the Hills
2. **Date & Time:** July 25th, 2020 - 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
3. **Register:** Make sure you are registered! www.sfcatholic.org/wow
4. **Lunch:** Lunch is provided. If you have dietary needs, please note that in your registration.
5. **What to Bring:** the book, the guide, a notebook and pen, and a Bible
6. **Dress Code:** Casual and Modest. Remember to dress in layers.
7. **COVID-19:** We will be following recommended health guidelines. An email will be sent the week before the retreat with special instructions.

Bonus

If you would like to skip the early morning commute to the retreat center, you are welcome to come the evening before. I will be there to host an informal time of fellowship. Please contact Abbey of the Hills to reserve your room. 605-398-9200