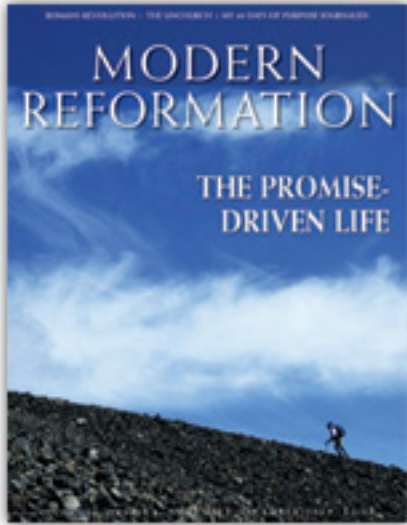


# "Believing God" by Beth Moore

Reviewed by Susan Disston



In *Believing God*, popular Bible teacher and author Beth Moore explains her personal journey toward obedience in the area of faith. Not content with the unbelief and defeatism of Christians around her, she decides to buck the trend and find a Christianity that works. Her premise in the book is that the "primary reason God left us on earth after our salvation was for our Christianity to 'succeed' right here on this turf." The turf she's referring to is an earthly Promised Land where God's "personalized promises over your life become a living reality rather than a theological theory." The ticket to the Promised Land is pleasing God by exercising faith and having faith credited to you as righteousness. According to Moore, all Christians could experience their own Promised Land during their lifetime if only they would make faith an "action verb" and kick it up a notch. With Christianity like that, no one can say that it doesn't work.

Moore offers her readers the ticket to the Promised Land that will turn passive faith into "action verb" faith. It is five-point pledge of faith that is memorized and spoken out loud daily: God is who he says he is; God can do what he says he can do; I am who God says I am; I can do all things through Christ; God's Word is alive and active in me. The pledge is designed to overcome doubts about God's power and goodness, to bolster faith in miracles, to claim one's adoption into God's family through Christ, and to

open the Christian to receiving personalized messages from God both through the Bible and through daily interventions.

In the ensuing chapters, she discusses the five points, drawing out a few strands of theological truth in relationship to each one. In addition, she takes on topics such as emotional wounds, satanic strongholds, psychological problems, feelings of failure, and generational sin to show how the five-point pledge of faith can tackle each one. Her personal stories are in every chapter, demonstrating her determination and efforts to combat the spiritual malaise that she says characterizes the church. She energetically admonishes defeated Christians to lay claim to faith like Joshua's and prove for themselves that God is who he says he is (and the other four points of her system). In fact, Moore's teaching ministry is called "Living Proof Ministries." She holds herself out as a woman who was once beset by failure and who is now living proof that "action-verb" faith brings victory and success to the Christian's life.

Moore has written other books, including character study books on Jesus, King David, and the disciple John. Her Bible study book, *Breaking Free: Making Liberty in Christ a Reality in Life*, continues to be a best seller. The fill-in-the-blank format allows readers to examine the ways they are captive to sin and the enemy's lies. Then Moore takes them through a study of Bible verses and passages where she explains how Christ can set them free. She teaches that Christians can be burdened again by a yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1). The way out of slavery is for Christians to grasp their God-given purpose, which is expressed in another five points: to know and believe God, to glorify him, to find satisfaction in him, to experience his peace, and to enjoy his presence.

Moore is a pragmatist. When she reads the Bible she expects it to speak to her about her life in practical ways. She uses the people and stories in the Bible as allegories of the Christian life to explain how Christians can be defeated or victorious. Their destiny depends on how they respond to God. The equation is simple, according to Moore; the more faith they exercise, the better their reward in this life. Her books, Bible studies, videos, and speaking ministry follow a similar pattern of self-disclosure, plucky faith that is determined to overcome, and confirmation from the Bible that Christians can and do experience victory over sin, deliverance from bondage, and successful Christianity.

In addition to Bible study, she encourages readers to join her in recording what she calls God's daily interventions. In *Believing God* they are given a name: "Godstops," an acronym for "Savoring the Observable Presence." She teaches that God reveals himself and his purposes in many ways, including signs, miracles, emotions, and mystical experiences. According to Moore, Christians who aren't attuned to this exhilarating experience of God are missing a normal and powerful way that God relates to his people and blesses them with his presence.

Although she wants to be theological and Christ-centered, too much of Moore's material is about her take on her experience with God. Her writing tends to be undisciplined and shallow. She is far too willing to gloss over uncomfortable theological implications in favor of feel-good stories and quick explanations. Knowing God comes through experience; most sin is the result of failing to believe and be delivered; repentance is rarely mentioned. Her bent toward mysticism permits her to circumvent traditional theological interpretations and indulge in explanations of her own design that are more reasonable and satisfying to her sensibilities.

Basically she says, don't let theology and doctrine confuse you when you can figure it out with God for yourself in a way that works for you. Unfortunately, people who use her materials can't help but absorb some of that reasoning. Even more troubling is that they think they're doing Bible study when they are really getting a heavy dose of mysticism, storytelling, psychology, and prosperity gospel. In the introduction to *Believing God*, Moore shows her true, but mistaken, agenda when she says, "I know I'm going to make it to heaven because I've trusted Christ as my Savior, but I want to make it to my Canaan on the way. I want to finish my race in the Promised Land, not in the wilderness. You too? Then we have to cash in our fear and complacency and spend all we have on the only ticket out: BELIEF."

There are many worthy goals of Bible study, but securing heaven on earth is not one of them, at least for Reformed Christians. And the surest way to get off track is to add human effort to what God has already done in the cross of Christ, even when it's called believing God or faith. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation. Everything else is of grace in the Christian experience, too, thanks be to God.