

Transactional Faith

Something that's 'transactional' means that something of value is received as a result of something of value being given. Like a quid pro quo, if I do this for you, then you'll do this for me.

Transactional exchanges typically have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Short-term gratification (if not instant)
- Each party measures the value of the exchange for themselves only and not dependent upon the assessment of the other party
- Each transaction is a discrete event and measured exclusively on its own merits. Past events do not factor into the value received by the transaction at hand.
- The interaction does not presume or require future interactions

Transactional exchanges aren't necessarily always bad ... they can be mutually beneficial, but mutual benefit is not necessarily required. Of course, there are cases where transactional exchanges may not be 'good'. For example, these can also be characteristics of transactional exchanges:

- There are winners and losers (and sometimes the fact that the interaction is bad for one party is exactly the value sought by the other party)
- The end justifies the means
- Expectations, if not met, lead to disappointment, anger and even vengeance.

In the end, it comes down to 'what's in it for me?' (I'll spare you all the obligatory 'Field of Dreams' reference ...)

We often talk about the things that God has promised us. For reference, below, I've included a handful of New Testament scriptures that state 'promises' that Jesus made.

1. What does 'transactional faith' look like? What does 'non-transactional faith' look like?
2. Looking at the Scriptures referenced, do these represent transactional or non-transactional engagements? Explain.
3. What about your faith? Is it ever transactional? Is that OK? Explain

Things Jesus “promised” (all from the ESV):

- We will be judged.
John 5:22-29 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
- The more we are given, the more expectations there are of us.
Luke 12:45-48 But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. 48 But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.
- Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven
John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
- He will use us to bear fruit.
John 15:5-8 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.
- We will be freed by the truth.
John 8:31-36 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth

will set you free.” 33 They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

- Our prayers will be answered to glorify God
John 14:13-14 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.
- We can have eternal life
John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- Jesus will be with us, always
Matthew 28:20 And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- We no longer need to fear sin.
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- He will give us wisdom
James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.