

The Promiser

Written by Chris Tiegreen
Wednesday, 16 December 2009 00:00 -

On a recent episode of *The Office*, the lead character Michael Scott had promised a class of third-graders that if they finished high school and got accepted to college, he would pay their tuition. That was 10 years ago, and now the promise was due. The students invited him to the school for a celebration of "Michael Scott Day," and they honored the man who would make their dreams come true. But Michael didn't have the resources to fulfill his promise—never did, even when he first made it—and he had to retract the promise in humiliating fashion. Afterward, a student approached him and asked a pointed question: "Who does that? Who promises that to a bunch of kids and then doesn't come through like that?"

Indeed, who does that? When an extravagant promiser doesn't come through, the result is tragic (or, in a sitcom, the butt of jokes). But do you realize how often we see God like that—as a promiser who doesn't come through for us? He has given us "very great and precious promises," according to 2 Peter 1:4, but we hardly know what to do with them. We assume they are accompanied by theological fine print and call them mysteries. That's simply a way of reassuring ourselves when God seemingly hasn't delivered on His word, a means to hold on to the truth that He doesn't lie in spite of the appearance that He might have.

But real faith is stubborn. It keeps pressing into what God has promised. No fine print, no theological caveats, no divine games of bait-and-switch. We have to remember that the Promised Land was inherited by those who endured through "faith *and patience*" (Hebrews 6:12). If God has made a concrete promise, expect a concrete fulfillment. No matter how long it takes, no matter how many obstacles you face, believe what He has said. Endure. Hold on. Why? Because God is not like Michael Scott. He means what He says, and He has the resources to follow through on it.