

# Keeping Your Promise

*"Does he promise and then not fulfill?"*

*Numbers 23:19*

I grew up in a home where there was little of this world's goods. It was war time and I recall people coming to our home to hear the broadcasts of Winston Churchill because not everyone had radios during the Second World War but that was one luxury we afforded. It was an old Temple radio, a floor model and taller than I was at the time.

At Christmas we made coloured paper chains to help decorate the Christmas tree because we could not afford much by way of decorations. We got the tree from my Dad's farm up north near Burk's Falls. Each November we would hitch the trailer up to the 1930 Buick and take a trip up there and bring back 30-40 Christmas trees and sell them to pay for the trip and have our own fresh tree and have a visit with our Dad's brother and mom who lived near his farm. It was great fun riding on the horse drawn sleigh and cutting down good trees.

Then my fifth birthday came along and I got the surprise of my life. Little did I or my Dad know, but he was going to teach me a lesson in honesty and keeping your word. What happened was that Dad and Mom told me that they were going to take me to the bicycle shop and buy me a tricycle.

Well, this was absolutely astounding! We almost always bought secondhand things when it came to something like a tricycle or other major thing like that. I could scarcely believe my ears. We walked into the store and my eyes popped. I looked in wonder at the

display. I had never seen such an amazing conglomeration of metal and rubber before. As I stood transfixed, my father spoke up and said something he lived to regret. He and I were standing in front of the tricycle department and he said, "Gordon, you may have any one you want." I was dumbfounded. How could I choose from among so many?

Then I saw it. The tricycle I had spotted was the most enormous tricycle I have ever seen in my life. It stood well above all the rest and was far too big for me to ride. My Dad placed me on it and demonstrated to me that my legs were too short to reach the pedals. I would never be able to pedal it. "I want it." I said in response. "You promised me." I said. There was no reasoning with me, I was totally irrational. Even the salesman could not talk to me about another bike.

Out came the cheque book and as my Dad wrote the cheque the salesman spoke about making blocks for the pedals to help me until my legs grew longer. I learned a lesson in honesty that day and so did my Dad. I have never forgotten the incident. Where the money came from to pay for it I never knew. Dad did not complain, that was not his style. He had made a commitment and that was that. He quit talking and paid up.

Unconsciously my father acted in a godly manner. You see God is always as good as His work. In 2 Timothy 2:13 it says of God, "he will remain faithful" (NIV). In Malachi 3:6 God says, "I the Lord

do not change" (NIV). In Numbers 23:19 it says, "God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and then not fulfill?" (NIV)

God is to be trusted above everyone else because He is all wise and never makes a promise He cannot fulfill. He is all powerful so nothing can prevent His will from being done. God has never broken a promise yet. His track record is perfect.

So when God promises to hear the faintest prayer He will. When He promises to bless and come near all who cry out to Him, He shall. But when God says the wicked shall perish, they shall. God is holy and just. He will not gather into heaven any who have rejected Him in this life. It is certain that if you live without God you shall die without Him as well.

God says in Ezekiel 33:11

"Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die?" (NIV)

God sincerely invites us to come to Him, but He never coerces anyone. Have you come?