



# GATEWAY EQUIP

## What About Vows?

October 27, 2018

**Introduction: Jesus spoke about vows.**

Matthew 5:33-37 (NKJV) – <sup>33</sup>“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ <sup>34</sup> But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup> nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> But let your ‘Yes,’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

## Notes

General principles that the Lord gave us concerning vows and oaths.

1. Jesus dissuaded us from vows and oaths.
2. He recognized the reality of vows and oaths.
3. He reminded us that our word is significant.

We find the same principles in the Torah.

Numbers 30:1-16 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, “This *is* the thing which **the LORD has commanded**:

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV) – We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet **without sin**.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) – For He made Him who **knew no sin** to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:21-22 (NKJV) – <sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

<sup>22</sup> “Who **committed no sin**,

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**Nor was deceit found in His mouth.** [Jesus spoke no sin.]

**GOD THE FATHER'S COMMANDS ABOUT VOWS AND OATHS –**

<sup>2</sup> If a man makes a **vow** to the LORD, or swears an **oath** to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

**YOUNG UNMARRIED WOMAN –**

<sup>3</sup> “Or if a woman makes a **vow** to the LORD, and binds *herself* by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, <sup>4</sup> and her father hears her **vow** and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her **vows** shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. <sup>5</sup> But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her **vows** nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.

**MARRIED WOMAN –**

<sup>6</sup> “If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her **vows** or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, <sup>7</sup> and her husband hears *it*, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her **vows** shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. <sup>8</sup> But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears *it*, he shall make void her **vow** which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.

**WIDOWED OR DIVORCED WOMAN –**

<sup>9</sup> “Also any **vow** of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

**ONGOING AUTHORITY OF A HUSBAND OVER A WIDOWED OR DIVORCED WOMAN –**

<sup>10</sup> “If she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an agreement with an **oath**, <sup>11</sup> and her husband heard *it*, and made no response to her *and* did not overrule her, then all her **vows** shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. <sup>12</sup> But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard *them*, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her **vows** or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void, and the LORD will release her.

**GENERAL AUTHORITY OF HUSBANDS –**

<sup>13</sup> Every **vow** and every binding **oath** to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. <sup>14</sup> Now if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her **vows** or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard *them*. <sup>15</sup> But if he does make them void after he has heard *them*, then he shall bear her guilt.”

**GOD THE FATHER’S COMMANDS ABOUT VOWS AND OATHS –**

<sup>16</sup> These *are* the statutes which **the LORD commanded** Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father’s house.

**I. Connecting The Sermon on the Mount with Numbers.**

**1. Like Jesus, Numbers dissuades us from vows and oaths.**

- Young unmarried woman can have her vow nullified by her Father (Num. 30:3-5).
- Married woman can have her vow nullified by her husband (Num. 30:6-8).

**2. Like Jesus, Numbers recognized the reality of vows and oaths.**

- In **reality** – all this protects the husband and the wife.
  - Women depended upon men for their income.
  - Men were protected from excessive commitments (Num. 30:4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14 & 15).

**3. Like Jesus, Numbers reminds us that our word is significant.**

- Men are bound by their vows and oaths (Num. 30:2).
- Women can also be bound by their oaths (Num. 30:4 TWICE, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11).

**II. What are vows and oaths? ... and dedications?**

**1. Vows are conditional promises.**

- The noun נָדַר [neder] appears 13 times in this chapter.

**A. Conditional – the word “if” is attached to vows.**

**Jacob**

Genesis 28:20-21 (NKJV) – <sup>20</sup> Then Jacob made a **vow**, saying, “**If** God will be with me, and keep me in

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this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, <sup>21</sup> so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. <sup>22</sup> And this stone which I have set as a **pillar shall be God's house**, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

**Charam** – חָרָם, [*charam*] – to totally devote to God.

Numbers 21:2 (NKJV) – So Israel made a **vow** to the LORD, and said, "**if** You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will **utterly destroy** [חָרָם, *charam*] their cities."

**Jephthah**

Judges 11:30-31 (NKJV) – <sup>30</sup> And Jephthah made a **vow** to the LORD, and said, "**if** You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, <sup>31</sup> then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

**Hannah**

1 Samuel 1:11 (NKJV) – Then she made a **vow** and said, "O LORD of hosts, **if** You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

**B. Vows are also promises offered to the sanctuary** (Gen. 28:20-21; Matt. 5:34-35 & 37). (**Promises** are **positive** statements to **do** something.)

**There is the special case of the Nazirite Vow (a positive promise of consecration with attached negative associations – negative because the worshipper will also abstain from something.)**

**C. What does all this say about the sanctity of wedding vows?** (Mal. 2:13-15; 1 Pet. 3:7)? (**FYI: we call them "wedding vows," but they actually could also be called**

**“wedding oaths” because they include aspects of an oath. They are binding, unconditional covenants.)**

**Please note:** when I taught this at Havdalah Equip on Oct. 27, 2018, I said that weddings were really oaths rather than vows. Actually, they are both.

- **Weddings are vows** because they are promises to do something. “I give myself to you...”
- **Weddings are oaths** because they are also ceremonies in which we make an unconditional promise.
- “Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife, to love and respect her, honor and cherish her, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity; and leaving all others to keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?”
- We are unconditionally promising, “No person, poverty, or sickness will separate me from you.”

Malachi 2:13-15 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> You cover the altar of the LORD with tears,  
With weeping and crying;  
**So He does not regard the offering anymore,**  
*-The above line is similar to 1 Peter 3:7. Prayers are hindered.*

**Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.**

<sup>14</sup> Yet you say, “For what reason?”  
**Because the LORD has been witness  
Between you and the wife of your youth,**  
With whom you have dealt treacherously;  
**Yet she is your companion  
And your wife by covenant. – A covenant is a positive oath.**

<sup>15</sup> But did He not make *them* one,  
Having a remnant of the Spirit?  
And why one?  
He seeks godly offspring.  
“Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV) – Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

### Vows are positive promises (“I will do this.”)

The positive promise of consecration made by the Nazirite – Numbers 6:5 & 8 (NKJV) – <sup>5</sup> ‘All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; **until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy.** *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.... <sup>8</sup> **All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.**

The Nazirite’s unique negative promises of abstention which are attached to the positive promise of consecration to the LORD – 3 negative (abstentions). Numbers 6:3-6 – no grapes, no razor, no association with the dead

The Nazirite Vow is sealed with sacrifices (Num. 6:13-15).

All vows are sealed with a sacrifice (Lev. 7:16-17 & 22:18-21).

- Vows are 1 of the 3 kinds of peace offerings.
- There are 3 kinds of peace offerings: vow, thanksgiving and free-will (Lev. 7:5-16)
- So, all vows are sealed with a peace offering.

**Leviticus 7:16-17** (NKJV) – <sup>16</sup> But if the **sacrifice of his offering is a vow** or a voluntary **offering**, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; <sup>17</sup> the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire.

~ A wedding ring is typically made of gold. It is a sacrificial gift symbolic of the sealing of the covenant.

~ Ultimately, when we make a **vow** (especially a **wedding vow / oath**), we are saying that we will look to the Lord’s sacrificial death to empower us to complete the vow.

## 2. Oaths are **unconditional promises – positive or negative.**

- The noun for oath is שְׁבֻעַ [shâbuw‘ah] appears 3 times in this chapter.

- The verbal form (שָׁבַע, *shaba'* appears once – in Numbers 30:2 with the word “swears.”
- Numbers 30:3 uses the phrase: “oath to bind”; bind = to tie or harness.
- Numbers 30:13 uses the phrase “oath to afflict”; *'anah*; used of Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29, 31; 23:27, 29 & 32).

Hebrews 6:16-18 (NKJV) – <sup>16</sup> For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. <sup>17</sup> Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an **oath**, <sup>18</sup> that by two **immutable things**, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.

**Negative oaths are promises to clear yourself of a charge** (Exo. 22:11; Lev. 6:3 & 5).

**Positive oaths are promises to commit yourself.**

**David promised unconditionally to make Solomon his successor** (1 Kings 1:13, 17, 30).

**A covenant is a positive oath of commitment.**

**Abimelech made a covenant with Abraham** (Gen. 21:22-32).

**Abimelech said to Abraham** – Gen. 21:23 (NKJV) – Now therefore, **swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity;** but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt.”

**Laban made a covenant with Jacob** (Gen. 31:44-53).

**Laban said to Jacob** – Gen. 31:44 & 52-53 (NKJV) – <sup>44</sup> Now therefore, **come, let us make a covenant**, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.” ... <sup>52</sup> This heap *is* a witness, and ***this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.*** <sup>53</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.

**Oaths are offered in the name of the LORD** (Gen. 21:23; 31:44-53; 2 Chr. 15:12-15; Lev. 6:3 & 5).

**3. Dedications** (Josh. 6:17-19; Lev. 27:30-33).

Dedications are not in the future.

- They not mentioned in Numbers 30.
- They are **immediate**.
- These are **not conditional**.