

Torah Studies – Commandment #5

Exodus 20:12 “**Honour** thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be **long** upon the **land** which Yahweh thy God **giveth** thee.”

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
HONOUR	3513	<i>kâbad</i>	rich, honorable, make glorious, promote to honour
LONG	748	<i>'ârak</i>	draw out, lengthen, prolong, + out live, tarry long
LAND	127	<i>ădâmâh</i>	country, earth, ground
GIVETH	5414	<i>nâthan</i>	bestow, bring forth, grant, recompense

Synthesis:

The commandment to “honor your father and your mother” appears often in the Bible. (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 6:2, 3) It involves four key actions.

- Appreciate them. You honor your father and mother when you are thankful for all they have done for you. You can show your appreciation by valuing their guidance. (Proverbs 7:1, 2; 23:26) The Bible encourages you to view your parents as your “glory,” that is, to be proud of them.— Proverbs 17:6.
- Accept their authority. While you are young, you honor your father and mother when you recognize the authority God has given them. Colossians 3:20 tells young ones: “Be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing to Yahweh.” Even young Jesus willingly obeyed his parents.—Luke 2:51.
- Treat them with respect. (Leviticus 19:3; Hebrews 12:9) This often involves what you say and how you say it. True, some parents at times act in ways that make it hard to respect them. Even then, children can honor their parents by avoiding disrespectful speech and actions. (Proverbs 30:17) The Bible teaches that speaking abusively of one’s father or mother is a serious offense.—Matthew 15:4.
- Provide for them. When your parents get old, they may need practical support. You can honor them by trying your best to make sure that they have what they need. (1 Timothy 5:4, 8) For instance, shortly before he died, Jesus arranged for the care of his mother.—John 19:25-27.

Misconception: To honor your father and mother, you must let them control your marriage. The Bible teaches that the marriage bond takes priority over other family relationships. Genesis 2:24 says: “A man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife.” (Matthew 19:4, 5)

Torah Studies – Commandment #5 (continued)

Of course, married couples can benefit from the advice of their parents or in-laws. (Proverbs 23:22) However, a couple may rightly decide to set boundaries limiting the involvement of relatives in their marriage.—Matthew 19:6.

Misconception: Your father and mother have ultimate authority.

Although God gave parents authority within the family, all human authority has limits—it never overrules God’s authority. For instance, when a high court ordered Jesus’ disciples to disobey God, they replied: “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.” (Acts 5:27-29) Likewise, children obey their parents “in union with Yahweh,” that is, in all things that do not conflict with God’s laws.—Ephesians 6:1.

Misconception: Honoring your father and mother requires you to follow their religious beliefs.

The Bible encourages us to test what we are being taught to see whether it is the truth. (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1) An individual who does so may eventually choose a faith that differs from that of his parents. The Bible mentions a number of faithful servants of God who did not follow the religion of their parents, including Abraham, Ruth, and the apostle Paul.—Joshua 24:2, 14, 15; Ruth 1:15, 16; Galatians 1:14-16, 22-24.

Misconception: To honor your father and mother, you must share in traditional rites of ancestor worship.

The Bible says: “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.” (Luke 4:8) A person who worships his ancestors is displeasing to God. Moreover, the Bible teaches that “the dead know nothing at all.” They are not aware of any homage rendered to them; neither can they help or harm the living.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Isaiah 8:19.

Torah Studies – Statutes #330-331

Statute Summary:

Statute #330: Diligently teach your children the Commandments and Statutes of Torah.

Statute #331: Spend time talking of the Torah principles with your family when you are enjoying relaxation time at home, in the morning, in the evening, and during your travel time.

Deuteronomy 6:7 “And thou shalt **teach** them **diligently** unto thy children, and shalt **talk** of them when thou **sittest** in thine house, and when thou **walkest** by the way, and when thou **liest** down, and when thou **risest** up.”

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
TEACH	8150	<i>shānan</i>	to point, to inculcate (indoctrinate), prick, sharpen, teach diligently
DILIGENTLY	8150	<i>shānan</i>	to point, to inculcate (indoctrinate), prick, sharpen, whet
TALK	1696	<i>dābar</i>	to speak, to subdue, answer, bid, command, commune, declare, rehearse, use [entreaties]
SITTEST	3427	<i>yāshab</i>	remain, return, seat, settle, sit down, still, remain, abide, ease self
WALKEST	1980	<i>hālak</i>	behave (self), abroad, along, away, forward, on, out, up and down

Synthesis:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is the **Shema**, which we studied under the First Commandment. But there is a part of the **Shema** which applies here, under the Fifth Commandment. This is the part where it tells us to “diligently teach” the **Torah** to our children. To diligently teach our children the Statutes actually means to “indoctrinate” them in the Truth.

Today, “indoctrination” is equated with “brainwashing”. In fact, it is even considered to be child-abuse to so thoroughly teach our beliefs to our children. Our society today thinks that we should let our children decide for themselves what is truth. But this is counter to Scripture. The Bible says to “train up a child in the way he should go”. This is righteous diligence in teaching our children the Truth. When we train our children in this manner, it helps prevent them straying from the Path of Righteousness. It is also a vital, preventative step which saves them from dishonoring their earthly parents – and their Heavenly Father.

Torah Studies – Statutes #332-334

Statute Summary:

Statute #332: All vows (including pledges or promises) made by a man of Israel are made first and fore-most to Yahweh.

Statute #333: If a man vows something, or makes a promise, his soul is bound by the oath.

Statute #334: The man may not break his word, but must do all that he has sworn to do.

Numbers 30:2 “If a man **vow** a vow unto Yahweh, or **swear** an **oath** to **bind** his **soul** with a **bond**; he shall not **break** his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
VOW	5087	<i>nāḏar</i>	to promise (positively, to do or give something to God): - (make a) vow
SWEAR	7650	<i>shāba`</i>	to be complete, to seven oneself, that is, swear, adjure, charge (by an oath, with an oath)
OATH	7621	<i>shebū`āh</i>	something sworn, that is, an oath: - curse
BIND	631	<i>'āsar</i>	to yoke or hitch; by analogy to fasten in any sense, put in bonds, set in array, tie
SOUL	5315	<i>nephesh</i>	a breathing creature, that is, animal or (abstractly) vitality
BOND	632	<i>'ēsār</i>	obligation or vow (of abstinence): - binding, bond
BREAK	2490	<i>chālal</i>	to bore, that is, (by implication) to wound, to dissolve, to break (one's word)

Synthesis:

Honoring our Heavenly Father involves keeping our word. Psalm 15:1-4 further addresses this concept of the seriousness of following through with what we have said:

- Psalm 15:1-4 – “Yahweh, who shall abide in Thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy Hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart... In whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoureth them that fear Yahweh. **He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.**”

Torah Studies – Statutes #332-334 (continued)

There is a tremendous temptation to break our word when a pledge or contract turns out to be a financial fiasco. But when Psalm 15 describes the kind of person who “may dwell on God’s holy hill,” one of the marks of that person is that “he swears to his own hurt and does not change.”

What that means is that he makes a promise, and even if it hurts to follow through on it, he does not change his commitment. His word is more valuable than his money. His integrity is more precious than his wealth. He stands by his word even if it hurts. Where do we get the strength of character to do that?

There is a story in the Old Testament that gives an answer (2 Chronicles 25:5-9). Amaziah was the king of Judah. He was being threatened by the Edomites. So, he counted the men in his country above 20 years old, and formed an army of 300,000 men. He also went to the northern kingdom of Israel and hired 100,000 valiant warriors. He paid them 100 talents of silver (about 6,600 pounds of silver).

But this displeased Yahweh and a man of God came to Amaziah and said, “O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for Yahweh is not with Israel... God will bring you down before the enemy.”

You can imagine Amaziah’s first thought. “Amaziah said to the man of God, ‘But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?’” It was a reasonable question. It is the question we all ask when we have made a rash commitment of money and things go wrong. Should Amaziah stand by his commitment to the warriors of Israel when he tells them to go home? What should he do?

The answer of the man of God was simple: “Yahweh has much more to give you than this.” In other words: trust God and keep your word. Stand by your commitment because Yahweh will take care of you and see that your integrity is rewarded in ways that you could never imagine.

The issue at a moment like this is trust. Will we trust God to act for us? Will we take Psalm 37:5 to heart and bank on it: “Commit your way to Yahweh, trust also in Him and He will act”? The issue is trust. Will we trust God to come through for us in His way and in His time? Keeping our promises is something that brings honor to our Heavenly Father.

Many promises are broken because people do not trust God. In fact they don’t even think of God. He is not in the equation. Money is in the equation. Shrewdness is in the equation. Human probabilities are in the equation. But God is forgotten. He is just not as real as the money we might lose.

But the best way to honor our Heavenly Father is to be holy. Be faithful. Keep your promises. Be people of unimpeachable integrity. For God’s sake. “He is a shield to those who walk in integrity” (Proverbs 2:7).

במדבר ל"ג: אִישׁ כִּי יָדַר נֶדָר לִי-הִנֵּה אוֹ הַשְּׁבַע שְׁבַע לְאָסֵר אָסֵר עַל נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכֹל הַיֵּצֵא מִפִּי יַעֲשֶׂה.

Num 30:3 A man who vows a vow to YHWH or swears an oath to bind a bond upon himself: he will not profane his word. For all that goes out from his mouth, he will do.

Torah Studies – Statutes #335-339

Statute Summary:

Statute #335: If a daughter, still living in her father's house, makes a promise (or vows a vow) without her father's approval or permission, when he hears of it, he has the right of "veto". This means that, as a protection for daughters, the father ultimately determines whether his daughter's vow may stand or not.

Statute #336: If the father is quiet about the vow, in the day that he hears of it, his consent to the vow is implied and his daughter's vow stands, before Yahweh. The daughter must now keep her vow as faithfully as vows made by the men of Israel (see Statutes 332-334).

Statute #337: If the father agrees to his daughter's vow, when he hears of it, his daughter's vow stands, before Yahweh. The daughter must now keep her vow as faithfully as vows made by the men of Israel (see Statutes 332-334).

Statute #338: If the father disagrees to his daughter's vow, when he hears of it, his daughter's vow is nullified, before Yahweh. The daughter is now freed from her vow and does not need to keep it.

Statute #339: If a wife makes a promise (or vows a vow) without her husband's approval, when he hears of it, he has the right of "veto". This means that, as a protection for wives, the husband ultimately determines whether his wife's vow may stand or not.

Numbers 30:3-8 "If a woman also **vow** a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; And her father **hear** her vow, and her **bond** wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall **hold his peace** at her: then all her vows **shall stand**, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father **disallow** her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of **none effect**: and the LORD shall forgive her."

Torah Studies – Statutes #335-339 (continued)

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
VOW	5087	<i>nâdar</i>	to promise (positively, to do or give something to God): - (make a) vow
HEAR	8085	<i>shâma</i> ´	to hear intelligently, consent, consider, be content
BOND	632	<i>'esâr</i>	obligation or vow (of abstinence): - binding, bond
HOLD HIS PEACE	2790	<i>chârash</i>	to scratch, engrave, to be silent, to let alone, be quiet, rest
SHALL STAND	6965	<i>qûm</i>	to rise, abide, accomplish, confirm, continue, decree, make good, perform, remain
DISALLOW	5106	<i>nu</i> ´	to refuse, forbid, dissuade, or neutralize: - break, disallow, discourage, make of none effect
NONE EFFECT	6565	<i>pârar</i>	to break up, break (asunder), cast off, cause to cease, make void

Synthesis:

In 1 Samuel 1:11, Hannah vows to Yahweh, pledging that if God grants her a son, she will devote him to Yahweh. Hannah's husband Elkanah is not present when she makes this vow; in fact, she makes it so quietly that Eli the priest, who is present, thinks she is rambling drunk instead of fervently praying.

Hannah conceives and bears a son; sometime later, when Elkanah is about to return to the Tabernacle in Shiloh, Hannah informs her husband that she will not participate with the child in the annual sacrifice and votive offering until after the child is weaned, because once she brings him before Yahweh, he must stay there forever. It is not clear if this is the first Elkanah hears of Hannah's vow. Elkanah replies simply that she should do what she thinks is best.

Clearly, godly husbands and fathers would not nullify the righteous vows of their wives and daughters. But, considering the depth of commitment – before Yahweh – that stands in a vow, the Heavenly Father protects His daughters in this way.

Vows are very serious things!! But, for a woman, under godly authority of either her husband or father, there is an extra measure of protection for vows which buffers them for her. This is a very neat concept. For in a multitude of counselors there is wisdom. Yet a man may rashly make vows, from which he has no exit, other than to "pay" or fulfill them. However, for a young woman, her father's agreement establishes her vow and for a wife, her husband's agreement. Thus, under this godly authority, a woman cannot be bound without the agreement of her own wishes (of course) AND the agreement of her father or husband (two heads are better than one). Praise for His great wisdom in establishing an extra measure of protection for His daughters!

Torah Studies – Statutes #335-339 (continued)

At first, we might think of this Statute as a demonstration of the lesser role of women in society. But, this is the way it appears to the carnal heart. In actuality the protection of women in vows applies to every believer. To see this, we need to remember who the woman is, in the Statute. With Yahweh as our Heavenly Father, we are all the “daughter”.

The daughter does not own the property or wherewithal to pay her vows. So, essentially, she is making vows based upon the ability of her Father, to pay them. Should the Father not have veto rights, considering that she can only keep her promise through His enablement? Vows are not to be taken lightly. And once established, because Yahweh keeps His Word, He also expects His children to keep their word, through His power. Failure to do so makes Him look fickle and unreliable. Such a faulty picture of God casts the Father’s House in a wrong and negative light, before the world.

We, as the daughter of our Heavenly Father (or as the Bride of Christ) should check with our Heavenly Father, before making vows with “our” time, talents, and resources, all of which are from Yahweh. If we are considering making a promise or a vow, we should first wisely seek our Father’s counsel and direction in the matter. Doing this is recognizing that all our ability to “pay” the vow is through Him. But, if we “play the man” and think ourselves able to make vows, taking the Husband/Father role for ourselves. We had better know that the vows will stick. We must pay them – even if it is to our hurt to do so. Thus, as children of Yahweh, we find comfort in the ability to confirm the Father’s Will prior to binding our souls with vows.

Joshua once forgot this principle in the conquest of Canaan. The Gibeonites knew they would be next, so in fear they resorted to trickery to save their lives. (Joshua 9:5) They put on old clothes, took moldy bread with them, and made their way to the camp of Israel. They sought to make a peace-league with Israel. Joshua and the elders were completely taken in by the ruse. Joshua made a peace-league with the deceptive Gibeonites.

Yahweh held Joshua to his vow with the Gibeonites. Israel had to keep the vow with Gibeon, even though they had been deceived into making the vow. Because Joshua could have prayed before vowing, and he could have sought Yahweh’s Will in the matter, but failed to do so, Yahweh said, in effect, “if you want to play the man and make vows, you will also need to keep those vows, even if they turn out to be to your own hurt.”

Israel’s king Saul decided to ignore the vow, and killed several of the pesky Gibeonites. Yahweh counted this as a sin against Israel. During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the Face of Yahweh. Yahweh said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death" (2 Samuel 21).

Certainly, it appears it would have been much better if only Joshua had started off a wise child of Yahweh, seeking His Counsel before making what looked like a good vow to human eyes. But, in the end, Yahweh brought good out of this mistake. Eventually, the Gibeonites were fully assimilated into Israel. As a result, they were among the Israelites who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem after the exile (Nehemiah 3:7). Truly, Yahweh is an awesome God, Who brings good -even out of evil!

Torah Studies – Statutes #340-345

Statute Summary:

Note: Considering how making vows, righteously, puts us in the role of child-daughter under our Heavenly Father, it will not surprise us to find that all vow-related Statutes fall under Fifth Commandment-relating to honoring our Heavenly Father...

(Historic reasons for taking a Nazarite Vow, as recorded by Josephus and the Jewish Encyclopedia included: seeking Divine intervention in a particularly critical prayer request; seeking Divine deliverance from some affliction – like barrenness; also, the husband of a woman suspected of adultery might choose a Nazarite Vow prior to her taking the Cup of Jealousy test. In no Scripturally or Historically recorded case was a Nazarite Vow ever entered into lightly. It was always entered into in situations of extreme need, either on the part of the Nazarite or someone else for whom he/she was interceding.)

Statute 340: Both men and women can choose to voluntarily take a Nazarite vow.

Statute 341: The duration Nazarite vow (also called the days of separation) is typically determined by the individual (although Samson's was a life-long Nazarite vow, invoked by Yahweh).

Statute 342: While under the Nazarite vow, the person is fully set apart as holy unto Yahweh, even more so than a priest of Israel.

Statute 343: While under the Nazarite vow, the person may not eat or drink anything made from grapes, or the grape vine (this includes: grapes, raisins, grape juice, wine, and vinegar).

Statute 344: While under the Nazarite vow, the person may not touch or come near to a dead body, nor attend a funeral – even if a close family member has died.

Statute 345: While under the Nazarite vow, the person may not cut his hair.

Numbers 6:1-8 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall **separate** themselves to **vow** a vow of a **Nazarite**, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the **kernels** even to the **husk**. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no **razor** come upon his head: until the days be **fulfilled**, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the **locks** of the hair of his head grow...”

Torah Studies – Statutes #340-345 (continued)

“...All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body. He shall not **make himself unclean** for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the **consecration** of his God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is **holy** unto the LORD.”

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
SEPARATE	5144	<i>nâzar</i>	to hold aloof, abstain from food and drink and impurity, to set apart (to sacred purposes)
VOW	5087	<i>nâdar</i>	to promise (positively, to do or give something to God), to vow
NAZARITE	5139	<i>nâzîyr</i>	separate, that is, consecrated (as prince, a Nazirite), an unpruned vine
KERNELS	2785	<i>chartsan</i>	a sour grape (as sharp in taste)
HUSK	2085	<i>zâg</i>	to enclose; the skin of a grape
RAZOR	8593	<i>ta'ar</i>	a knife or razor (as making bare); also a scabbard (as being bare) shave
FULFILLED	4390	<i>mâlê'</i>	to fill, be full of, accomplish, be at an end, be expired
LOCKS	6545	<i>pera'</i>	the hair (as disheveled)
MAKE ... UNCLEAN	2930	<i>ṭâmê'</i>	to be foul, in a moral sense (contaminated): - defile (self), pollute (self)
CONSECRATION	5145	<i>nezer</i>	something set apart, that is, (abstractly) dedication (of a priest or Nazirite)
HOLY	6918	<i>qâdôsh</i>	Sacred, a saint, a sanctuary

Synthesis:

Fasting is often associated with intense periods of prayer. But, the Nazirite Vow intensifies the power of the prayer even further. In the past, people have voluntarily taken this sacred vow in order to draw closer to Yahweh and partake of the most intimate prayer communion with Yahweh, available to mankind. Grapes and their products are avoided because the fruit of the vine is a symbol of rejoicing. Clearly, during intense times of prayer, we are to be continually praising Yahweh, as at all times; but, we are also to be spiritually sober, treating the crisis with serious consideration and prayer.

Torah Studies – Statutes #340-345 (*continued*)

Hair is our covering – 1 Corinthians 11:15. During the Nazarite Vow, Yahweh alone wants to take charge of His children's covering. Thus, nothing about the Nazarite's hair comes from human intervention, during the vow. It is like a shadow-picture of the Temple built without hands. No human contrivance interferes. The covering is wholly from Yahweh alone.

It is interesting to see the Hebrew viewpoint on this vow. Recognizing how sacred it is, and how close to Yahweh the person comes to be while under this vow, the Hebrew people say, "When Messiah comes, may He find me a Nazarite." Yes! May we be found wholly dedicated to Yahweh, and by His Grace, a holy Sanctuary to His glory!

Torah Studies – Statutes #346-348

Statute Summary:

Statute 346: All vows are made unto Yahweh, our Heavenly Father.

Statute 347: When we make a vow, Yahweh requires us to pay or perform the thing we have vowed. Failure to do so is a sin.

Statute 348: Because Yahweh requires us to keep our vows, once made, we would be wise to forbear and consider that Yahweh will require our vows of us.

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 “When thou shalt **vow** a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not **slack** to **pay it**: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be **sin** in thee. But if thou shalt **forbear** to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt **keep** and **perform**; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.”

Key Word Study:

Key Word	Strong's Number	Hebrew Word	Meaning
VOW	5087	<i>nâdar</i>	to promise (positively, to do or give something to God): - (make a) vow
SLACK	309	<i>'âchar</i>	to loiter (that is, be behind), procrastinate, hinder, be late
PAY IT	7999	<i>shâlam</i>	to be safe (in mind, body or estate), completed, make good, make to be at peace
SIN	2399	<i>chéṭ'</i>	a crime or its penalty, offence, sin
FORBEAR	2308	<i>châdal</i>	to be flabby, that is, (by implication) desist
KEEP	8104	<i>shâmar</i>	properly to hedge about (as with thorns), that is, guard; generally to protect
PERFORM	6213	<i>âsâh</i>	to do or make, accomplish

Torah Studies – Statutes #346-348 (continued)

Bible Study on Vows:

All vows are sacred.

Some are also foolish and failing to keep them bring us to ruin:

- **Proverbs 20:25** “*It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.*”
- **Ecclesiastes 5:2-6** “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *He hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better *is it* that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?”

God will forgive vow-breakers (Num 30:5, 8, 12; cf. 1 John 1:9), though He warns there may be dire consequences for failing to keep a vow (Eccl 5:6). The key texts where God reveals His perspective on vows are Leviticus 27:1–34, Numbers 30:1–16, Deuteronomy 23:21–23, and Ecclesiastes 5:1–7. Interestingly, the two New Testament texts that mention vows give no indication that God’s perspective on vows has changed (Acts 18:18; 21:23–24).

A vow is a voluntary promise to God to do or not do something (cf. Deut 23:23). Vows are not limited to “If-you-do-this-for-me, I’ll-do-that-for-You” bargains with God. You don’t have to use the words “vow” or “promise” to make a vow. **Anytime you voluntarily tell God you are going to do or not do something for Him, it is a vow.**

God punishes those who break their vows. Claiming that you made a mistake and shouldn’t have vowed or didn’t really mean what you vowed arouses God’s anger against you. Thus, Solomon concludes: Fear God (Eccl 5:7).

Because Numbers 30:2 includes “swearing an oath” as an equivalent of taking a vow, the guilt offering prescribed for breaking an oath (Lev 5:4) would likely apply to a broken vow. This means, that if we have broken any vows in our lifetimes, it would be wise for us to repent of this and claim Yahshua’s Sacrifice as our Guilt Offering, in cleansing for this sin. Since God provides a sacrifice for atoning for a broken vow, forgiveness for breaking a vow is available through Christ, who is our guilt offering (Isa 53:10). But we should also take our future vows seriously, not taking the Sacrifice of Messiah lightly.