

Numbers Chapter 30

- This is a transitional time for the children of Israel. Moses has been told that he will be gathered to his fathers, Joshua is preparing to assume responsibility before the Lord.
- The older generation has died off, the new generation is preparing to enter into the promise land.
- Thus the reminder regarding the various offerings and feast days which the children of Israel are to observe; the Lord now addresses the issue of vows or pledges made by the people.

V: 1-2 Moses speaks to all the heads of the tribes of Israel: Thus sayeth the Lord...

- Addressing the men first: If you take an oath, or a vow, or make a pledge unto the Lord – you are to keep it.
- *“bind his soul” – “he shall not break his word.”*
- This could be seen as an extension or interpretation of the 9th commandment.

Exodus 20:16 *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

Jesus addressed this in the NT:

Matthew 5:37 *“But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”*

- Pretty simple: let your yes be yes and your no be no.
- Later Jesus uses even stronger language in rebuking the religious leaders on this subject:

Matthew 23:16-22 ¹⁶Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! ¹⁷Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? ¹⁸And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. ¹⁹Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? ²⁰Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. ²¹And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. ²²And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.”

- The elders of Israel, the priesthood had taken God's word which was pretty simple, basically just keep your vows, keep your word; and they had "re-interpreted" it, re-defined it, and they began to teach their own dogma allowing their traditions to take the place of God's word on the subject.
- Basically they were developing loop holes, kind of like when nullifying our own promises because we were crossing our fingers.
- Generally this is something that we very much need to guard against, that is the watering down of God's word, allowing our traditions and culture to have precedence over God's word.
- Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for the very same thing:

Mark 7:6-9 ⁶... well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁷Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. ⁸for laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. ⁹And He said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

- Basically we are to keep our word, if we say that we're going to do something we should do it.

Psalms 15:1-4 ¹Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? ²He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. ³He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. ⁴In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

- On a practical level, this may mean talking less, being more careful or circumspect about what we say or commit to.
- On a couple of different occasions I got to drive with Pastor Chuck. It's funny how when he's teaching, it seems personal in a way, probably because it's the holy spirit actually teaching. So when I got in the car with him, it seemed like hanging out with an old friend. At least that was how I felt at first. Speaking from the pulpit and riding in a car are two different things – Chuck was very quiet, in fact he didn't say a word. So I started talking, asking questions, trying to drum up some conversation – it felt a little awkward. Afterwards I was kind of thinking about my experience and the Lord gave me a word about it.

Proverbs 10:19 "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

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V: 3-14 Addresses the issue of a woman, an un-married woman, still in her father's house, married women, widows, and divorcees.

- It is interesting, just an observation that God speaks one verse to the men on this subject – pretty directly, then He takes 12 verses to address the subject with the women.
- To be fair there are actually more issues there than just keeping your word as we'll see.

V: 3-5, 6-8 An un-married woman, or a married woman that makes a vow or a promise unto the Lord, whether or not it is "binding" to her soul depends on her covering, either her father or her husband.

V: 9-12 The widow or the divorced woman is treated like a man in that whatever they promise is binding, not because they don't have a covering – because the Lord is their covering.

- As with the men, it is understood that God listens to us and hears what we say:

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 *"¹Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. ²Be 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."*

- But if they made an oath while there husband or father was there at that time, whatever the husband or father determined at that time the oath is either affirmed or disallowed.
- [The issue at hand moves from being that of keeping a vow to that of authority, submission to authority, and covering](#) – God's order for things.
- The young woman, or the married woman who speaks a vow or promise is under the covering, the authority of either their father or husband.
- If their father or husband hears the oath and says nothing, he has at that point affirmed or confirmed it by his silence.
- If the father or husband upon hearing the oath speaks up, he is able at that point to disallow or make it void.
- Jesus and the word of God have always been the most radical and "counter culture" influence that has ever been. I say this because this principle obviously runs contrary to our modern culture and society.

- The feminist movement, or those with feminist ideals and values probably won't like what we're about to get into. For that matter there are just as many men who've bought into the same mind set and are quite happy to avoid their responsibility as men and let the women in their lives take on that responsibility for which God will still hold them accountable.
- The issue at hand is: that of **authority & submission**.
- People in our culture seem to naturally chafe at authority, in our culture the independent spirit is exalted, many of us have been taught to "challenge authority" – and our culture is pretty pathetic as a result.
- When I was a cop I faced this fact every day. So many people I encountered thought they were smarter and wanted to wax philosophical when the law was so very clear. So often declaring that they were the exception to the rule, just as often these conversations occurred while they were in handcuffs in the back of my police car – there was an un-expected reality that they eventually had to face.
- Hopefully none of us will face the un-expected reality at the end of our lives, we'll acknowledge it now and be prepared for that eventuality.
- The reason we chafe at authority is because we're just a bunch of sinners:

Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;..."

- There is a functional hierarchy that has been instituted by God:
- Please notice that I said "functional" hierarchy as opposed to "value" hierarchy"

Paul tells us:

Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

- The issue isn't value, or who's smarter, the issue is God's divine order of things as He determines, as an example in the family:
 1. God
 2. Husband / father – the man.
 3. Wife / mother – the woman.
 4. Children.
- We each have roles to play. (ICS)
- Men, husbands, fathers:
 1. We are to be submitted to God's authority in our lives:
 2. We have a role to play.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 “¹Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. ²Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

Deuteronomy 27:10 “Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.”

Samuel rebuked king Saul:

1 Samuel 15:22 “And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

Jesus tells His disciples:

John 14:15, 23 “¹⁵If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

“²³Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

1 John 2:3-4 “³And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

- Generally no body really has a problem with men being called to be obedient to the Lord, submitting to His authority, it's kind of a given.
- As men we either are or we aren't and it's fairly obvious.
- As soon as we start talking about women, wives being submitted to their husbands or their fathers then we've got some issues.
- In the news this week the wedding of Prince William of England to Kate Middleton.
- It was announced prior to the wedding that she refused to include in her vows anything regarding obeying her husband as in “Love and obey...” While it was noted in the media, it didn't particularly raise any eyebrows because it is so common.

As part of the curse:

Genesis 3:16 “Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

- Often times people will make the jump from **Genesis 3:16** to **Ephesians 5:22** in a negative way.

Ephesians 5:22 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

- Women have a role to play as well.
 1. To be submitted to God’s authority in their lives, to be obedient to God’s word just like the men.
 2. To submit to the authority of their husbands as unto the Lord.
 3. Like men, women simply have a role to play.
- All of this functions best if everyone plays the role that God has given us to play.
- Interesting that this admonition (**Ephesians 5:22**) while true – because it is God’s word, needs really to be examined within context.

Ephesians 4:17-33 (turn to / read)

- Don’t be like the rest of the world, don’t act like a non-believer.
- Put off those things, and put on the new man after Christ Jesus.
- In Numbers chapter 30 it looks pretty lopsided, the men get one verse telling them to be men of integrity, if you say it then do it.
- The women get 12 verses on the same subject, telling it three different ways, or three different times.
- In Ephesians 5 it is also lopsided, but in the other direction. Women are addressed in 3 verses, whereas the men are directly addressed in the next 9 verses – and bear the greater responsibility.

Ephesians 5:21-33 turn to / read

Colossians 3:18-21 ¹⁸Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. ²⁰children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. ²¹Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

1 Peter 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge / understanding, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

- How a man treats his wife directly impacts his relationship with God.

Numbers 30:13-14

- Our silence in the presence of an oath, is deemed as approval.

V: 15 The husband or father bears the consequences of these actions, he bears the responsibility.

- He had better be hearing from God.

Jeremiah 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”