



Make No Vows...

What is a vow?

- **Vow:** A promise or set of promises that obligates the one who makes the vow(s)
- **Contract:** a written or spoken agreement, especially one concerning employment, sales, or tenancy, that is intended to be enforceable by law.
To enter into a formal and legally binding agreement

What is a vow?



A black and white photograph of a young plant with two large, broad leaves growing out of dark, crumbly soil. The background is dark and out of focus.

The parable of the vineyard workers

Matt 20:1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to those he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And so they went. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day long?’ 7 They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’

8 “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.’ 9 When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius. 10 When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they grumbled at the landowner, 12 saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.’ 13 But he answered and said to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?’ 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last.”

Matt 20:1-16

- **Living under Law vs living under Grace**
 - Are we making a deal, or obeying the Master?
- **No prizes for being “first” in the kingdom**
 - Responsibility to help those who are “last”
- **Side note: Who do you identify with? Maybe YOU are the last worker in the 11th hour...**



**Let your YES Be
YES**

And your NO be NO....

Matt 5:37

Matt 5:37

33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.

Agreements in the Bible

- Isaiah 28:15
 - Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.” 16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.
 - The lack of trust in God’s providence pushed the leaders of Israel to make a pact with evil forces, which they thought would save them. God already had a plan in place...

Agreements in the Bible

- Genesis 4 (implied) Cain vs Abel
- Genesis 18 Sodom and Gomorrah (and the promise of Isaac to Abraham)
- Exodus 3-4 Moses asks for a sign
- Exodus 32 Moses reminds God of his promise
- Judges 11-12 Jephthah
- Acts 5:1-4 Ananias and Sapphira
- Genesis 28 Jacob tries to bargain with God

Agreements in the Bible

- 10 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. 12 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. 14 Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” 17 He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” 18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. 19 He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, 21 and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. 22 This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”
- Jacob already inherited the promises of God through Abraham, but wanted security and thought he could bargain with God.
 - The advent of tithing
 - Pastor Paul preached on Jacob during the Generations series
 - Imagine thinking you could bargain with God’s grace and get a “better deal....”

Were these vows good ideas??

- Necessary?
- Useful?
- Did they demonstrate trust in God?
- Should they have even been taken?



How then, shall we live?

Living out of grace

Contrasting the two lifestyles

- Proverbs 20:14
 - “Bad, bad,” says the buyer, But when he goes his way, then he boasts.
 - We complain about the things we agree to! Remember the vineyard workers
 - God knows what is best when he tells us what we ought and ought not to do!
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
 - 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- James 4:13-17
 - 13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.
- Matthew 5:42
 - 2 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.
- Luke 6:35-38
 - 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, [a]expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful 37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

Contrasting the two lifestyles

When we live “blinded by the god of this age...” we:

- Are worried about meeting our own needs
- Our relationships with others are self-serving and narrow minded
- Our relationship with God becomes means to an end
- Always looking for a favorable exchange or to use leverage to push an advantage (rent seeking)

Contrasting the two lifestyles

Matthew 6:25-34: The Cure for Anxiety

25 “For this reason I say to you, [n]do not be worried about your [o]life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the [p]air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And who of you by being worried can add a *single* [q]hour to his [r]life? 28 And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will* He not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! 31 Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But [s]seek first [t]His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be [u]added to you.

34 “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will [v]care for itself. [w]Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Contrasting the two lifestyles

Reasons we do this:

- Life happens and we become tossed by the storm (get re-blinded)
- Convenience
- Certainty
- Lack of trust or lack of desire for trust
- Perceived accountability (second party risk)

What does God say?

- Num 30:1-2
 - Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the word which the Lord has commanded. 2 If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.
- Deut 23:21
 - 21 “When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you.
- Ecc 5:5
 - 5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

What does God say?

- James 5:12
 - 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but [a]your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.
- Proverbs 13:3
 - The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin
- Proverbs 17:27
 - He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding
- Proverbs 10:19
 - When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.



1. This works in your daily life...Miranda rights (remain silent)
2. The enemy wants to record every idle word and use it against you
3. Is it possible to have a relationship built on vows?
 - a. Can I loan something to my wife?
 - b. Can I hold my father or mother to a written contract? Deut 23:19, 24-25
 - i. ¹⁹ Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest. 24 If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. 25 If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain.

More reasons to avoid vows

Luke 15: the Prodigal Son(s)

Both chose to live out of a contract

- Both wanted “What they were owed”
- Neither of them saw the father rightly

The Father wanted them to use what was already theirs! He wanted partners who had some “skin in the game,” not more slaves or employees who were under contract.

The Older

- Thought his father was holding out on him

The Younger

- Thought his father was a barrier to the good life

Luke 15: the Prodigal Son(s)

God wants us to live FREE! Living free means relying on His grace and His generosity, knowing he can provide better results than any deal we can come up with on our own. Let's not limit his boundless fruitfulness by locking ourselves into a contract.

The two sons had everything they could ever need, and more. They denied the power of the family ties and their own inheritance because of their short sightedness, biases and blinded eyes

The Father did not condemn either son, because he knew that they were blinded, but invited them into the way of grace.

Some examples from the world: Salary vs Stake

- Matt Damon with Avatar
 - 10% gross approx. 650 million missed out

vs:

- Michael Jordan with Nike
 - 5% gross
 - 1985 NBA Pay: \$630,000
 - 1985 Nike revenue: \$6.4 mil
 - Total NBA earnings: \$94 mil
 - Total Nike earnings (as of 2026): 2.4 bil
 - Around 250 million a year and increasing

Final Prayer

Remove our blindness

Breaking old vows

May God open our eyes and empower us
to live free

Rest in our Chief Cornerstone

Trust in His generosity

Thank Him for the price he paid so that we
can live free of all bonds, vows and
contracts.