

When Keeping a Vow is Bad

He (*we'll call him 'Jim'*) was here last week for prayer counseling. Jim is a forty something PK (pastor's kid), and his emotional situation was a sense of dread. Dread is a tiresome burden to carry around and keep hidden. Initially, the origin of this feeling was unclear.

We quickly found ourselves working through a painful little-boy memory where he had misinterpreted a situation and adopted lies that essentially led him to believe, "I'm not wanted (loved) by my dad unless I have perfect behavior". This, then, led to the belief that "I am hopeless".

Then it got really interesting; he discovered that at the same time, another part of his mind had made a fighting decision (or 'vow'): **"I will make myself acceptable - no matter what - I am going to be perfect!"**

This kind of a decision or vow is a very common response made by a hurting child in a state of desperate self-protection. Without experience or wisdom, young Jim's mind made the best decision (subconsciously) he could and, with daily determination, he worked at that vow for four decades! Consequently, as an adult, each day contained varying levels of a thinly veiled sense of dread that he wouldn't get life perfect. This, he believed, meant he was unacceptable and unloveable. Falling short was very painful and he was becoming exhausted.

A "vow" is nothing more than a self-protective decision made in response to emotional pain in hopes of survival.

Examples:

'I must protect myself!'

'I will never let anyone tell me what to do!'

'I will be the one to control my situation!'

'I will never open my heart again!'

'I will never expose myself to _____ again!'

continued on pg 2

NEWS

Last month we asked if any of you wanted to come help in the gardens. We received quite a few responses, thank you! So, on March 10th, we had our first official "Garden(ing) Party". Our heroes were Michael McGee and Wendy Bents, who worked like trojans for most of the day!



They really did work hard...!

We will be having more garden(ing) parties in the near future. If this is something you would like to do to support Noble Maritime, please let us know!

Another first was a private retreat for a former pastor and his 30 yr old son. The father was blessed and has had the opportunity to use this prayer ministry in a pastoral care role at his current church – with a further vision of developing a training group to multiply the fruit! The son was radically impacted by a healing encounter with the Lord, and, wanting to encourage us, he helped launch a Facebook page for Noble Maritime Ministries: <http://facebook.com/NobleMaritimeMinistries> Check it out! We would love to hear from all of you fellow Facebookers!

Continued from pg 1

The trouble with vows:

- They lay mostly hidden/subconscious but have a powerful influence over our will.
- They are like promises you have made to yourself, thus breaking them is extremely disconcerting.
- Having cognitive knowledge of correct doctrine is almost powerless in comparison.
- Vows usurp God's role in your life, i.e., Protector, Leader, Savior, Benefactor. Because God will not violate our free will, the vow essentially pushes Him out of that area of our life (de-thrones Him and exposes us).

Possible clues you are being driven by a vow:

- You have the desire to do something or to stop behaving in a certain way but you can't seem to get through an invisible wall.
- You are emotionally stifled
- You have a strong drivenness that is unhealthy or unrelenting.

If you believe there might be a vow in place, the cure is simple:

1. As with all mind-renewal work, a person's will must be engaged; you must be willing to change. So, first we check for an inner willingness to be finished with the vow. If you feel a resistance, ask yourself why and receive truth from the Lord about your hesitation.

In Jim's situation, he imagined letting the vow go and felt a reluctance, which was the emotional clue to a lie, "I'll have nothing and be nobody". God showed him a picture of himself as a knight in shining armor. The Lord said, "Relax in your armor." To Jim's heart the armor represented a free gift of identity and value.

- 2.** Once exposed, simply confess the vow to God.
- 3.** If necessary, ask forgiveness for usurping His role and invite Him to be your Protector, Sanctifier, or whatever the case.
- 4.** Make a new truth-based decision.

In the wounded memory, (as the hurting little boy), Jim received the revelation that he wasn't required to "make himself perfect" in order to be acceptable. He renounced the childhood vow and agreed with the finished work of Christ that made him completely "accepted in the Beloved"! Eph. 1:6

5. Practice new LIFE and renewed, truth-based thinking! Rom 12:2

Grace and Blessings, Neil and crew

NEWS...continued

Also last month we asked if anyone could get excited about contributing supplies and/or skills to convert a storage room into a guest bathroom. We received an offer for free custom cabinets! Yahoo! Thank you, God!



Have you ever wished for a Marriage Conference that was short and fun but full of valuable secrets for an incredible marriage? And did I mention side splitting hilarious? Kathy & I attended "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage" video conference last weekend – just to check it out as a potential resource for others – Hah! We learned a bunch of new things even though we'll be celebrating our 25th Anniversary in May! It was a hoot! We would highly recommend it! They call it "husband friendly" as there are no embarrassing small group discussions or homework but just outright telling it like it is, with highly amusing hilarity! See if there is one near you: <http://www.laughyourway.com/>



All dressed up for a benefit dinner for Youth Dynamics

Tax-deductible donations may be made to:

Noble Maritime Ministries
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or online at www.noblemaritime.com

