

## The Value of Vows

Vows and goals are commitments to do something and are not in the form of swearing! Smith's Dictionary defines a vow as; *"a solemn promise made to God to perform or to abstain from performing a certain thing."* Jesus taught those who would swear, that since they have no power over the person or thing they swore by, that they should not swear but agree to perform their obligations. *"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.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one"* (Matthew 5:33-37).

In his message to the church years later, James repeated Christ's teaching as recorded in James 5:12, *"But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment."*

So without adding any extra words to a promise, a simple "I will" or "I will not" states the acceptance or rejection of an obligation. When we believe the Gospel of Christ and determine to follow Him, we set a goal to arrive in Heaven where He is. Goals require a commitment to do what is necessary to achieve or attain the goal. For a Christian, the requirement changes with time and growth.

The first vows of a new believer, whether stated or not, are to confess Jesus as the Christ and to be born of water and the Spirit in baptism. Then new vows might be to learn more from the scriptures each day, attend special study classes, or even attend schools where the Bible is taught. With learning and age, the vows can change to a desire to demonstrate Godliness in one's life, teach Bible class, or preach the gospel. Throughout life, always keep the goal of a crown of life in heaven as the objective and formulate vows to get there.

Our daily life is what it is because of our vows or lack of vows. If we are motivated to reach our goals, we will obligate ourselves, vow to do, what is necessary. A job requires educational degrees, special mechanical skills, geographical location, and other possible requirements. If we want the job, we will commit to obtaining the requirements.

The high cost of not making vows, not obligating self to do what is necessary, is that there will be no clear path to the goal. Without vows, there is a fear of being trapped into doing what others want, led by peer pressure, and losing sight of the goal. The Wiseman of Israel warned of this in Proverbs 4:25-27, *"Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil."*

King Saul had no goal other than to keep his throne. David, however, vowed to serve God and achieved the throne for his descendant to reign forever. Saul of Tarsus had the wrong goal and made the wrong vows. But the apostle Paul had his eye on the goal and made vows to follow The Christ to the Crown of Victory. *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:13-14). And 2

Timothy 4:7-8, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."*

Have you made vows to:

- Pray for the sick, elderly, spread of the gospel, our government ...?
- Attend the worship assemblies when physically able?
- Study your Bible regularly?
- Give as you have been prospered with time and energy as well money?
- Follow your Lord and Christ into heaven?

*"Beloved, in regard to all things I pray that you prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers"* (3 John 1:2).