

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

NUMBERS 26-30

The German playwright, Bertolt Brecht, once said, “What they could do with round here is a good war. What else can you expect with peace running wild all over the place? You know what the trouble with peace is? No organization.”

Actually he’s right! In peacetime society gets slack. People become self-centered and individualistic. But let a war break out and a nation tightens its belt, and draws together. It becomes disciplined and united. People get organized.

When Israel left Egypt God ordered a census. His plan was to send His people to war. They were to invade the Promised Land and drive out the enemy. And they got organized. The people were counted. The tribes were told *where to camp* and *how to march*. Moses mobilized and organized God’s army and readied for battle.

But it takes more than organization to do a work for God. All the mobilization and organization in the world can never take the place of a bold faith. Without faith people get organized to go nowhere. *And this happened to Israel...* Due to their unbelief they allowed fear to rule their destiny, and they failed to enter the land.

And tragically they wandered in the wilderness for 40 long years.

But God starts over. Now that the first generation is dead in the desert, God takes their offspring and mounts another offensive on the inhabitants of Canaan. The Promised Land is

still a promised land waiting on someone to trust God and take possession. God is now ready to rally His troops and lead them to victory.

But first Israel needs to be reorganized. Wandering through the wilderness is no preparation for warfare. Tourist and soldier are two different occupations.

An army needs structure, and accountability, and a chain of command.

And all this is a lesson for the church. In the New Testament the Christian life is described as a battle, and the church is God's army. This is why we too need to be organized.

Structure, accountability, proper authority - are no substitute for a bold faith, but they're still needed if we're to be victorious in the spiritual battle we face.

The church should learn a lesson from Israel of old. There's *a wandering mentality* and there's *a warfare mentality*. We need to adopt the latter.

Chapter 26 begins, "And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." Just as before - when Israel left Egypt - the organization begins with a God-ordained census.

The book of Numbers begins and ends by numbering the people.

And remember "When God counts people it means that

people count to God.”

While in bondage in Egypt the Hebrews were a nameless, innumerable band of slaves. Here, to their Egyptian taskmasters the individual was expendable.

But now Israel belongs to God - not pharaoh. They're God's people. And each person matters to God. Thus, to hammer home this point, God orders a census.

Always remember what Augustine said, “God loves each one of us as if there's only one of us to love.” Nobody ever gets lost in the crowd with God. He accounts for all His kids. God has His eye on every single member of His worldwide family.

“So Moses and Eleazar the priest...” Notice, it's no longer Moses and Aaron the priest... Aaron is dead and his son, Eleazar, has taken his place.

Moses and Eleazar “spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying: “Take a census of the people from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt.” This is a second census, 38 years after the first.

The first tribe that's counted is Reuben - Jacob's oldest son. Verse 7 tells us there were 43,730 men, 20 years old and older, in the tribe of Reuben. The first census counted 46,500 men - a loss of 2770 men - or 6%.

Notice verse 9, “The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against

Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men; and they became a sign. Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.”

Indeed, they became a sign! God put his stamp of approval on the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron. Authority was established and secured.

In verse 12 Simeon is numbered. He totals 22,000 – more than half the 59,300 men counted in Numbers 1. Simeon loses 37,100 men – 63% of the tribe.

The closest any other tribe comes to these losses is Ephraim, which lost 20% of the men. It makes you wonder why Simeon suffered such heavy losses...

And here’s a possibility. Notice the chapter begins, “**And it came to pass, after the plague...**” Chapter 25 describes a plague on Israel that killed 24,000 people.

And remember what caused it... A leader of the tribe of Simeon took a pagan woman into the Tabernacle, bowed to her gods, and committed adultery with the girl. And it angered God. Because this perpetrator was a leader among the Simeonites perhaps the whole tribe was guilty of this sin and punished.

Verse 15 lists the tribe of Gad. They had 40,500 men – a loss of 11%.

Verse 19 counts the sons of Judah. There were 76,500 – up

3% over 38 years.

Issachar numbered 64,300 men. This was an addition of 9,900 men, or 18%.

Zebulum numbered 60,500 – a population gain of 5%.

Verse 28 counts the sons of Manasseh, 52,700 men. Manasseh was one of David's sons. In chapter 1 Manasseh had only 32,200 soldiers. Over 38 years in the wilderness this tribe added 20,500 people – a remarkable increase of 64%.

Notice a detail given in verse 33, “Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.” At the time, an oriental census would've rarely included female names. We'll find out in chapter 27 why their names appear here.

Verse 35 totals up the sons of Ephraim as 32,500 - sadly, a loss of 20%.

Verse 38 totals the Benjamins – 45,600 men, an increase of 29%.

In 38 years the tribe of Dan grew 3% - from 62,700 to 64,400.

The sons of Asher numbered 53,400 men. One daughter gets mentioned.

Verse 48 counts Naphtali. There were 45,400 men – a loss of 15%.

Verse 51, “These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel: 601,730.” The total number 38 years earlier was 603,550. That meant over the four decades they wandered through the wilderness Israel’s national population shrunk slightly – 3/10ths of a percent. Overall, the nation lost 1,820 soldiers.

Meaning that life in the wilderness is about the same as life in bondage.

Hey, God doesn’t save us to live a life compromised by fear and unbelief. He saves us to bring us into a better life. He wants us to rise up in faith and possess God’s blessings. God wants us as Christians to live a fruitful life - full of victory.

It’s interesting, that the first census taken after Israel enters the land – in the days of David, 2 Samuel 24 – numbered 1.3 million men 20 years old and older. Obviously, when the nation obeyed the Lord they more than doubled in number.

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. To a large tribe you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them.

But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller." Notice, before the first shot gets

fired, or the first battle won - God is already talking about how to divide the land.

Hey, when God goes before you, and you trust in Him, victory is assumed.

Verse 57, “And these are those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites.” Remember, the three families of the Levites. It was their responsibility to carry the Tabernacle.

Gershon carried the **fabric** - *Kohath* the **furniture** – and *Merari* the **frame**.

“These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites (The Mushites were the couples who went on the CCSM marriage retreat.)

“...and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.” Amran and Jochebed were the parents who hid their baby from pharaoh’s executioners.

Hebrews 11:23-24 talks about them, “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.” Here we learn their names.

Verse 60, “To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar

and Ithamar. And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD.”

Proving once and for all that when it comes to serving God motivation matters. Serve God your own way – for your own purposes - and you too will get burned.

By the way, here’s a little known detail... The episode with Nadab and Abihu, and the fire from heaven is the reason that often “*priests*” are called “*friars*”.

“Now those who were numbered of them were 23,000, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.” When Israel occupies the land, rather than have its own territory the tribe of Levi will live in cities within the boundaries of other tribes.

Levi’s unique inheritance was the Lord, and the service of the Tabernacle.

Verse 63, “These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. For the LORD had said of them, “They shall surely die in the wilderness.” So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.” Caleb and Joshua were the two spies who brought back a good report - the only two men to have faith.

And God blessed Caleb and Joshua's faith with the unique privilege of being the only two men of a generation to enter the land flowing with milk and honey.

Chapter 27 highlights a situation that demonstrates the faith of the second generation. Unlike their fathers, they believed they would possess the land. Their faith shows up in a squabble – *something they do well* - but at least it shows up...

Verse 1, "Then came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah." Zelophehad was a spoiled man with 5 daughters.

"And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: "Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among the brothers of our father." So Moses brought their case before the LORD."

In most ancient cultures only men could own land, but here 5 daughters want their father's parcel when they get into the Land of Promise. They take their case before Moses – and to his credit, Moses takes it before the Lord.

Moses could've assumed, and ruled according to custom – but often what's customary isn't God's will. Moses keeps an open mind and takes it to God.

In verse 6 God renders His verdict. “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them.” Certainly, Hebrew culture was ascribed to male leadership – and biblically so - but in this case God sides with the females.

Just because God calls on men to lead in the home and the church, it doesn't mean that God's daughters have no rights. Sometimes God sides with His girls.

Verse 8, “And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter.

If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers.

And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the kinsman closest him in his family, and he shall possess it.' " And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The end of chapter 27 is the end of the road for Moses.

Verse 12, “Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. And when you have seen it, you also shall

be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered.”

Notice, God doesn't say Moses will die, although it's implied. Rather death is seen as being “gathered to your people” - in other words, there's life beyond the grave. Death isn't consignment to a grave, but a journey to a populated place.

If you just joined us tonight you're probably asking isn't Moses' death a little untimely. As *Israel marches in, Moses checks out...* Why didn't he enter the land?

Verse 14, “For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes.” (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

Moses is a lesson to all Christian leaders. Misrepresenting God is a big deal.

God told Moses to speak to the rock, but in his anger he struck it twice.

The rock represented Jesus. He was struck only once. Now all we have to do is speak to the rock and out pours living water. But because Moses marred the picture God told him he would see the Promised Land, but never enter.

Now Moses ascends Mount Abarim... Abarim is actually a mountain range.

Its highest peak is Mount Nebo, which rises 4000 feet above the Dead Sea, on the northeast shore. From there Moses could see the Jordan Valley, and the hills beyond. This is the end of the road for Moses. I wonder what's on his mind?

In his last days what preoccupies Moses' attention? Verse 15 tells us...

"Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

To me, this reveals Moses' heart more than any other instance. Moses has done all he can. He's about to leave this world. He's brought Israel as far as God will allow... *Moses, don't you think it's time to worry about yourself for a change?*

But Moses cares about Israel. He asks God to raise up a new leader - a man to shepherd the people... *Until his dying breath Moses' concern is the flock of God.*

Verse 18, "And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight."

Joshua has several qualities that will make him a good leader. He was a man of faith. He'd been mentored by Moses. He'd seen God's glory through Moses.

But the one key ingredient is mentioned here... he was filled with the Spirit.

God continues, "And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim;

at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him - all the congregation." For a generation Israel's leaders were Moses and Aaron. Now the baton is passed to Joshua and Eleazar.

"So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses."

. In chapters 28-29, Moses describes the types and number of sacrifices offered at the various feast that God appointed. One calculation says that all the annual feasts combined called for minimum of 1,269 sacrifices. That's a lot of beef!

Imagine the animals killed over 1500-years of the Hebrew sacrificial system.

And here's the point to remember... not one of them or their sum total - ever cleansed a man of his sin. Their purpose was to point us to Jesus Christ.

Verse 1, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.'

Notice, God calls the sacrifices "My food".

The pagans believed their gods literally had to eat – like humans. But that was never the case with the one, true God. In Psalm 50, God scoffs at the idea of Him needing a protein diet, "I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of

your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.”

They weren't feeding God with their sacrifices. He doesn't need to eat meat.

God continues, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” Here's the point of Israel's sacrifice – not that it feeds God – but it showed the person's thanksgiving.

It was an opportunity to fellowship with God...

And this is what our times of worship, and our acts of sacrifice, are all about... they're opportunities for us to fellowship with God – to enter His presence.

In chapter 28 the first offerings he outlines are the daily sacrifices...

Every morning and every evening the priest was suppose to bring a male lamb and slaughter it before God. **"And you shall say to them, 'This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil."** Along with the sacrifice add 1/10th of a bushel of flour and a 1½ quarts of olive oil.

Verses 9-10 describe the Sabbath sacrifices. 'And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering - this is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.'

On the Sabbath you doubled the sacrifices you offered the other six days.

Verses 11-15 provide details concerning once-a-month sacrifices... 'At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and 7 lambs in their first year, without blemish...' Moses goes on to describe grain and drink offerings that accompany these sacrifices.

The monthly sacrifices were also called "New Moons" – following the phases of the moon. In Isaiah 1:14 God says to the people of Isaiah's day, "I hate your New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the sacred meeting..." By the time of Isaiah these regular sacrifices had become hollow and meaningless. It was a charade.

Israel tried to cover up a sinful heart with outward sacrifice. Thus, God tells them to "bring no more futile sacrifices... wash yourselves... learn to do good..."

The sacrifices were supposed to accompany obedience and godliness not to be a substitute for them... The regular sacrifices were an opportunity to worship.

So there were two daily sacrifices – a Sabbath, or weekly sacrifice - monthly sacrifices – and now Moses describes the annual sacrifices God requires...

Verses 16-25 describe the sacrifices that accompanied the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The feast took place for seven days after Passover.

And on each of those seven days the people were to eat unleavened bread.

It's interesting that the first day of unleavened bread was the day Jesus was buried. If His body and life had been infected with the leaven of sin He would've never be resurrected, but because He was sinless 3 days later He lived again.

A “**holy convocation,**” or “**holy gathering,**” took place on the first day and the last day of the Feast. On those days the people were not to work, but to worship.

Verse 19, “**And you shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year.**” And he goes on to describe the grain and drink offerings that are to accompany them.

Verse 26 recalls the sacrifices of the Feast of Weeks. “**Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.**”

This feast was also called Pentecost – the Greek word means “*fifty*”. This feast occurred the day after the seventh week after the Feast of Firstfruits. On this day the priest also waved two of the first sheaves of wheat from the harvest.

And it was this same day that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church to begin a new last days' harvest. That harvest continues today, and if we're going to be part of it – a witness for Jesus – we also need that Pentecostal power.

Verses 27-31 outlines the sacrifices offered at Pentecost. But for us we are the sacrifice. Three times in Scripture God dedicated a new dwelling place...

At the Tabernacle, Moses offered sacrifices and fire fell from heaven.

At the Temple, Solomon offered sacrifices and fire fell from heaven.

At the birth of the Church, there were tongues of fire dancing over the heads of the disciples. Again fire fell on the sacrifices. But at Pentecost there were living sacrifices – people yielded to the Lord... *We too need to be living sacrifices.*

Chapter 29 jumps to the three fall feasts of Israel.

Verse 1, “**And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets.**” This was called the Feast of Trumpets.

The trumpet blew sounding the end of the harvest, and the workers came up out of the fields to join in a *holy huddle* or “**holy convocation.**” What a parallel to the rapture. That's exactly what will happen when Jesus returns for His church.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 tells us, “**For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in**

Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” A trumpet will blow - the workers will come out of the fields - and we’ll all gather with the Lord in the air for a holy convocation.

Verses 2-6 lay out the number and types of sacrifices for this celebration.

Verse 7 describes *the Day of Atonement*, or in the Hebrew “*Yom Kippur*”.

“On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls;” Hebrew scholars take this phrase to mean a food fast. The Day of Atonement is the only place in Scripture where God commands a fast.

“You shall not do any work. You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD as a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish.” And verses 9-11 describe the sacrificial supplements...

Verse 12 deals with the Feast of Tabernacles. “On the 15th day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days.” This was the joyous feast – a celebration - where Israel remembered God’s provision in the wilderness.

The family would pitch a tent or tabernacle and live outside

for 7 days.

And the sacrifices at the Feast of Tabernacles were multiplied. Verse 13 tells us, “You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: 13 young bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs in their first year.”

Notice verse 17, “On the second day present 12 young bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs in their first year without blemish...” On the third day it was 11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs. On the fourth day it was 10 bulls. On the fifth day 9 bulls - on the sixth day 8 – on the seventh day they presented 7 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs.

Verse 35, “On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work. You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings...” That’s a lot of bull... 71 bulls, 15 rams, and 105 lambs were sacrificed over one week.

One man’s tabulation says that in the course of a year the priest would sacrifice 1068 lambs, 113 bulls, 32 rams, more than a ton of flour, and some 1000 bottles of oil and wine. And this doesn’t include the thousands of individual sacrifices

In the days of Jesus it was recorded that during one Passover over 255,600 lambs were sacrificed. And not one of them could take away man’s sin.

This is why all the sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Verse 39, “These things you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts...” Notice the terminology... “appointed feasts”... (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.” So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Here’s a question... “What’s the best way to meet with a really busy person?”

The answer... “Make an appointment!” And I’m not talking about you making an appointment with God. God is not a busy person. He’s more accessible than anyone you’ve ever met. You can go to God anytime day or night. You never need an appointment with God. *No, the person who’s so busy is you!*

And that’s why God wants to make appointments with you!

This is why God set aside times for Him to meet with Israel. And He has the same desire for you. He wants to spend time with us – to fellowship with us.

And understand God wants regular times...

Look at nature and you’ll see God likes rhythm. The seasons of the year - the phases of the moon - ocean tides - celestial orbits – all nature works in a rhythm.

And there’s definitely a rhythm to spiritual life and communion with God.

First, God wants daily appointments with us. He wants us to open the day and close day by looking to the Lamb and

expressing our praise and thanks to Him.

Once a week God wants us to double what we give Him on a daily basis. Set aside one day in seven where we cease from our work - use it for praise and play.

Perhaps you've never thought of taking some time monthly to get away and get back in rhythm with God. A new moon celebration might prevent a bad day or a rough week. What keeps my sanity is a periodic retreat with me and the Lord.

And in addition to a daily, weekly, monthly appointment, God made feasts that He wanted His people to observe annually. In other words, make sure you use your Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter - not just as a day to stuff your face with food or watch sports - but as an appointment with the Lord.

Author Eric Fife writes, **“We are so occupied with what we think is urgent that we don't have time to think about what is important.”** That's true, unless we make an appointment. It's the appointment with God that keeps us regular and frequent.

Hey, let me ask you one more question... **What happens when you're not regular?** You get constipated. You don't feel right. You feel bloated and sick.

Irregularity leads to all kinds of other problems... And the same is true with spiritual irregularity. God loves you! He wants you to keep your appointments.

Chapter 30, **“Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, “This is the thing which the LORD has commanded:**

If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind

himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

Numbers 30 teaches us the seriousness of taking a vow.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 stresses this very point, “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed - better not to vow than to vow and not pay.” Your word should be your bond.

Read this with me again, “If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” This includes a marital vow - a business agreement – even a promise to your kids, or a friend, or a customer.

If you make a promise it’s vitally important to God that you keep your word.

Verse 3, “Or if a woman vows a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.”

In ancient Israel it was understood that a single woman remained under her father’s authority... *And the custom wasn’t repressive – it was protective.*

If a girl made a rash vow her father knew would get her into

trouble he had the right to overrule her. The father had veto power over his daughter's plans.

This nonsense that a teenage girl can get an abortion without her parent's permission is not only ludicrous - it's unbiblical. It's amazing that there are states where a girl needs parental permission to get her ears pierced, but not an abortion.

Hey, a father's authority in the life of his daughter cannot be underestimated.

There have been times in my little girl's life where I might not have said the right words, or took the right action – but the fact that I've just been there as an authority figure in her life has saved my daughter a lot of hardship.

I believe the principle of authority has profound impact today - for fathers, for daughters, and for the other men's sons who want to marry those daughters.

If a daughter is still in High School or living under your roof this should be a given. But I believe a single daughter – even an older daughter - remains under her father's authority until she gets married. And a single man who wants to pursue that daughter should recognize and respect that authority.

And a daughter should desire for her father to play this kind of role in her life. Girls don't *resent it* – *respect it*. God intends it not to repress, but to protect.

Verse 6, "But if indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, and her husband hears it, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall

stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears it, he shall make void her vow which she vowed and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.” This too is an excellent idea. Every credit card charge should have a 30 day window where the husband can veto the charge.

Ladies, I’m being a little facetious, but just a little...

If you have a level-headed husband, and you’re prone to impulse purchases you need to see utilize his veto power. It’s not intended to repressive, but protective. Rather than resent it, use it for your own good. It’s biblical.

"Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her." If a woman has no male authority in her life she has no one in authority over her to veto any bad decisions she might make.

And trust me there’s many a widow who wished she still had her husband in her life serving in this role. If you’re a woman you’ll probably outlive your husband and father. One day they’ll be gone, and you might just wish you had him back.

So while the man who loves you is there... don’t begrudge his influence.

And let me draw one more application... In a spiritual sense we’re all women. We’re the bride of Christ. And Jesus is our authority. And I’m so thankful...

Because sometimes I make promises I can’t keep, and I make prayer requests that I don’t really want... and Jesus is faithful to override my foolishness.

Moses continues in verse 10, “If she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, and her husband heard it, and made no response to her and did not overrule her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard them, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void, and the LORD will forgive her.

Verse 13, “Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. Now if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard them. But if he does make them void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt. These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house.”

Tribes of Israel - First and Second Census (Numbers 1 and 26)

TRIBE	BEFORE	AFTER	CHANGE	PERCENT
Reuben	46,500	43,730	-2,770	-6%
Simeon	59,300	22,200	-37,100	-63%
Gad	45,650	40,500	-5,150	-11%
Judah	74,600	76,500	+1,900	+3%
Issachar	54,400	64,300	+9,900	+18%
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	+3,100	+5%
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	+20,500	+64%
Ephraim	40,500	32,500	-8,000	-20%
Benjamin	35,400	45,600	+10,200	+29%
Dan	62,700	64,400	+1,700	+3%
Asher	41,500	53,400	+11,900	+29%
Naphtali	53,400	45,400	-8,000	-15%
Levi	Not counted	Not counted		
Total	603,550	601,730	-1,820	-0.3%

