

Separation to Fully Focus on The Lord

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. We'll take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to Numbers chapter 6 and verse 1.

Tonight we're going to talk about the Nazarites and their separation. The Nazarites and their separation from the world and to God and their dedication of themselves to the Lord. Read with me, if you would, verse 1.

The Bible said, The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite to separate themselves unto the Lord.

We're going to stop right there with verse 2 because you'll get the rest of them kind of read to you as we go through the passage of Scripture. If you have your Bible open, notice in verse 1 or verse 2, it can be a man or a woman.

So a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow. Now the woman does not have to grow a beard to do that. That was supposed to be funny. Thank you, Jeff.

[1 : 0 0] Appreciate the courtesy laugh. So you don't have to grow a beard, but they're going to let their hair down. It's going to be pretty obvious what they're doing. They're not going to be taking care of themselves.

Underline that they are separating themselves unto the Lord. The end of verse 2. They vow a vow of a Nazarite to separate themselves unto the Lord.

Chapter 5 talked about suspicion and conviction. Chapter 6 talks about consecration and purification. There can't really be a ministry until there's first moral purity.

We kind of got that solved in chapter 5 when we talked about the woman that might be committing adultery and the law of jealousies. Now, the next thing today before we start the chapter is don't confuse a Nazarite and a Nazarene.

Often Jesus is pictured as kind of a wild woolly booger because we think of him as a Nazarite. Jesus was not a Nazarite. He was a Nazarene.

[2 : 0 0] That means he was from the city of Nazareth. So look if you would in your Bible at John 1 and verse 45. You might make a note of that in the corner of your chapter 6 so you can have that there for later on.

But in John 1 and verse 45, the Bible says, Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses and the law and the prophets did right, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael said unto him, Can there be any good thing that comes out of Nazareth? And Philip said unto him, Come and see. A Nazarite was from Nazareth like a Nazarene was from Nazareth.

Well, watch me get confused. A Nazarene was from Nazareth like a Georgian is from Georgia. You're a Georgian because you're from here. A Nazarite was taking a special vow.

The word Nazarite means to be set apart to dedicate. A Nazarite, and you're going to find this out in the chapter, very different than a Nazarene. A Nazarite could not touch any dead bodies.

[3 : 01] Jesus touched dead bodies. A Nazarite could not drink or eat anything from the vine. Not a raisin, not a grape, not wine made from there, nothing.

They couldn't, a Nazarite could not have grape jelly in the morning for breakfast. That would be off the table. It's a vow he's taken to separate himself.

A Nazarite was someone who vowed to separate themselves for a period of time to totally focus on the Lord. They separated themselves to totally focus on the Lord. That type of, that separation was somewhere between a month or two up to a year.

That's only, we know that from tradition more than anything else. The word separation or that idea is used 16 times in this chapter to separate. So this is a chapter about separation.

A separation from sin and a separation to God. Read with me if you would chapter 6, verse 2 again. Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite to separate themselves unto the Lord.

[4 : 06] So the Bible explained itself, a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord. And what they're going to do, there are going to be some signs that they're separated. They're going to do some weird stuff so everybody knows, hey, they're not quite normal.

They're doing something different that sets them apart. Verse 3, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he eat any liquor of grapes nor eat moist grapes.

He's not even going to eat moist grapes or dried grapes. That'd be called a raisin. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

Stay away from anything that had to do with the grape vine. Stay away from any of it. And I'm going to pause here and take you to a couple of verses about the Bible.

It's kind of a common thing today. Y'all people quit texting me in church because I'm using this as my watch. Okay. Which one of you didn't like that comment? I know. All right. So I will tell you just a second.

[5 : 09] You know, alcohol is kind of a, kind of like today, most churches are trying to say it's okay to drink alcohol and alcohol is kind of accepted. Some preachers have gotten famous for talking about going to have a beer with their people after church or whatever.

And I'd just like to say to you, here's an interesting chapter on separation. And when they separated themselves from the Lord, they said, no alcohol, no grape jelly. I mean, they went the whole route of no.

And I'd like to show you a couple of verses. Now, I don't believe that it means you can't ever have a drink of alcohol, though I've never had a drink of alcohol, except when I was in church. When I was a kid, preacher, Ben, I'd just gotten married.

We went to a Sand Mountain church, Sand Mountain, Alabama, I think. Might have been Georgia. I went there to preach on a Sunday out of Rome, Georgia. And when I looked at the grape juice in the little tray, I thought to myself, something's wrong with that grape juice.

Now, I've drank, drunk, drank, drank a whole bunch of Welch's. And I looked down there, and I saw that, and I thought, that stuff looks like there's something wrong with it. And so we took the Lord's Supper, we drank it, and I got in the car, and my wife, the sophisticated methodist, had plenty of her share of alcohol.

[6 : 18] Amen? And so we got in the car, and I said, as we drove away, I said, those poor, dumb hillbillies. I'm a hillbilly. I said, those poor, dumb hillbillies, they don't know that they're Welch's. Well, something was wrong.

It's rotted. They kept by stumping their refrigerator too long. And she said, oh, you're the poor dummy. It was homebrew. That was homemade wine that you just drank, and I ruined my testimony. Because until then, I'd never had a drop.

Now, my wife does not have that testimony. Say amen. But drinking the fermented might affect your judgment. Look at Proverbs chapter 31 and verse 4.

This is one of my favorite passages. There's tons of Bible verses about being careful about wine and alcohol because it's a mocker. It makes fun of you. It enjoys destroying you and laughing at you.

It's like, hey, take you a little drink. One little drink's not going to hurt you. You take one little drink. And the next thing you know, wine is laughing at you because it'll take you into drunkenness. But this is my favorite.

[7 : 17] This is my favorite. Lemuel's mother's talking to him in chapter 31 and verse 4. It says, it's not for kings, O Lemuel. It's not for kings to drink wine nor princes strong drink.

Now, I wish you'd underline this. And I want you to notice that if you were a king, Lemuel's mother said, son, don't drink alcohol. Don't drink alcohol. It's not for kings. It's not for leaders to drink wine nor princes to drink strong drink.

Verse 5. Lest they drink and forget the law and pervert the judgment of any afflicted. It's possible that if you drink, you might, underline in verse 5, forget the law and pervert the judgment.

You might get enough drink in you that it would affect you and pervert your judgment and not help you do what's right as you are in a leadership position. Verse 6.

Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish and wine unto those of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more.

[8 : 17] That's like the funniest statement to me. Here's a mother talking to her son. And let me put that in Tennessee Hillbilly for you. She looks at her son and says, you're a leader. You're a king. You're a prince.

You're going to do something with your life. Don't drink. It might mess you up and not let you do a good job. However, there are losers out there. They're dying. And if they're dying, go ahead and let them drink. Ain't going to hurt nothing.

They're dying anyway. Give them the morphine. Let them have a comfortable ride out of here. Or if they're a loser, they can't make any money and everything's going wrong, he can drink to forget his poverty and remember his misery no more.

But that's not who you are, son. So I would say to you, if I could say anything, be careful about alcohol. You know, I'm afraid of it, just to be blunt on us. Some of you are going to say, well, you're crazy.

But I'm afraid of it. I watched what it's done to too many people. And by the way, the drug that affects more people and ruins more lives in the world today is not cocaine. It's alcohol. Be careful.

[9 : 10] God's leaders should stay away from anything that might cause them to forget the law or pervert judgment. Go with me if you would to verse 5. So the first thing was he stays away from anything that could even give the remote idea that he might be going to get too much to drink, that he might get intoxicated.

The second thing is he took a step that would publicly identify him as what he was, a Nazirite. Verse 5, all the days of the vow of his separation, there shall no razor come upon his head until the days be fulfilled in which he separates himself unto the Lord.

He shall be holy and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. It's pretty easy, this guy. This woman's got no split ends. Yeah, she's got plenty of them.

She doesn't even get to trim the split ends off. I mean, her hair's just going where it wants to go. For one month, she's just letting it go. For the guy, his beard's everywhere, his hair is everywhere, it's easy to see that they have taken the vow of a Nazirite.

They were easily identified, and you should be easily identified. You've got to understand that when a guy's walking down the street and he's got his hair growing, he's let it grow for a long time, he's looking like a mammoth over there, a woolly mammoth.

[10 : 22] He's just got the hair growing everywhere. They're going to look at him and say, that guy's taking a vow. That guy's dedicated to the Lord. That guy's saying he's serving God. And it was for a time. And there's three major things that are going on.

Don't forget, they're not having grape jelly in the morning. They're not cutting their hair. They're not trimming their beard. And that made them easily identified. But look at the next thing. It was a difficult separation.

In verse 6, he said, All the days he separates himself from the Lord, he shall come at no dead body. Underline that, at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his daddy or his mother or his brother or his sister when they die, because the consecration of his God is upon his head.

That's a wild separation. Now, he's not going to have anything that has to do with the vine. Number two, he's not going to cut his hair, trim his beard. And number three now, if anybody dies, he has nothing to do with it.

Daddy's funeral, sorry, not going. Mama's funeral, sorry, not going. Not getting close to dead bodies. That had to be a very harsh thing. He could not get near death.

[11 : 24] Not even the death of his closest family members. Our Lord, the Lord Jesus, wants us to have a love for him that makes our love for anything else look like hatred.

Look in your Bible at Luke 14, 26. I want you to realize that in God's terms, I'm supposed to love him far beyond anything else on the planet. I'm supposed to love God so much that the love I feel towards everything else, the love I have towards the money I have, the wife I have, the children I have, and my own life is supposed to look like complete and utter hatred.

Can you imagine being a Nazirite? You just told him, I'm going to be a Nazirite. I'm dedicating myself to the Lord. And your daddy dies, you don't get to go. He said, not even your daddy, not even your mother. Your mother dies, your father dies, wherever.

You're not going. That would have been a harsh statement to say, I love God so much, I'm not even going to the funeral of the people closest to me. And that sounds extremely harsh, but when you get to the New Testament, God calls on all of us to make that same decision.

Look at Luke 14, 26. Look at what the Bible says. It says, if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sister, yea, in his own life also he cannot be my disciple.

[12 : 45] That's a wild verse. Here's what Jesus said. Now you've got to understand, everybody's following him. I'm a preacher. You know what my job is? My job is to get you to love Jesus and follow him. So I basically said, come on guys, whatever it takes, I want to get you to follow Jesus.

I'm so glad. Let me make it easy for you to follow Jesus. Let me take the bite out of the decision. Let me take the hard things. That's kind of where most preachers live. We're like, if we get you to come to church, what do you need?

Let me make it like you like it. Let me fix everything the way you want it. That's not Jesus. Jesus. They're coming after him. And if you ever notice, he has almost no one follow him. At the end of his ministry, there's 120 people that meet in the upper room.

The largest number Jesus has that stayed with him in ministry was 500 mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15. People didn't follow Jesus very well. You say, why didn't they?

Well, he was drastic. He was severe. I mean, he turns to those following him and said, you want to come after me? You want to follow me? Let me explain something basic. I want you to hate your daddy and your mother and your brother and your sister.

[13 : 47] And I want you to hate your own life also. Or you can't be my disciple. Let me explain something to you. In all the New Testament, there's no word for Christian. There's no word. This is not like, well, regular people get saved and they can still love their mama and their daddy.

And then later on, if you really get on fire for God, you can hate your mama and your daddy. No, he said, you want to follow me? You want to come after me? You turn everything is nothing to you. I am everything. Nothing else matters.

Come to me 100% or don't come at all. Can't be my disciple. Let me read you another verse. Look at Matthew chapter 10 and verse 34. Matthew 10, 34. If you know about the Nazarites, you know when you get to the New Testament, it's not that harsh what Jesus is going to say.

The Bible says in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 34, think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. That's the wildest thing you're ever going to read.

Do you understand that? Jesus turned out and said, y'all guys think I came here to bring peace? I didn't come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. Well, what's that mean, Jesus? Verse 35. For I am come to set at variance a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

[14 : 57] Look at the word underlined at variance. I want them to be against each other. I'm going to put daddy against his son, son against his daddy. I'm going to put mother against the daughter, daughter against the mother.

Verse 36. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household. Verse 37. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

He that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. That's a wild verse. Verse 37. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

He that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that takes not his own cross and follows after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it.

He that loses his life for my sake shall find it. I didn't say those words. Those are straight out of the mouth of Jesus to people following him. Look at the radical things he's saying. You want to follow me? Let me explain something. I'm number one.

[15 : 55] I'm everything or I'm nothing. You come wholly believing in me or you don't come at all. You understand that. We are to be separate from sin and that is often quite difficult.

We're to be separate from sin. We're to be totally in love with God. He's first. He's everything. You may be required to take a stand that hurts even in your family.

He that is separated to the Lord is holy to him. Look at verse 8. Numbers chapter 6 and verse 8. The Bible says all the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord.

Now, I had some people ask to help me. Would you all come up here right quick? That means Catherine and Micah too. And Catherine, you can sit over here close to my wife if you don't mind. And you ladies, if you'd stand over here.

Right over here just real quickly. All the other girls. And Micah is going to stand right in the middle of y'all. Give me a couple more girls. You two young girls look like you'd help. Come right over here. Now, watch this if you would. There you go. Come on, ladies.

[16 : 51] Now, watch this. Separation is both positive and negative. Now, you know, when we talk separation, it's always seen as an ugly thing. Hey, I need y'all to kind of stand in a circle, girls.

And Micah right in the middle of them. Boy, Micah's got his choice. Pretty girls everywhere he turns. When we talk about separation, we almost always see it as something very negative and very ugly.

But that's because we're not understanding what the teaching is. Could you stand up here? This is Micah's wife, the mother of his baby. They have a beautiful relationship. I've said this until you're sick of me saying it. But when they walked out the door at the wedding, this girl skipped at the door.

She did a little, I don't know how to do it. I could get her to do it, but she might not want to do that. But she liked being married. And here's what separation is.

It is Micah saying, man, you guys are nice. I like you. You're nice girls. You're nice everything. But I'd rather go towards this other girl. Now, how negative is that separation? Watch this.

[17 : 53] How negative is that separation? I wonder if Micah's thinking, man, I really want to hang with y'all. I mean, I'd rather be over here. But, well, I've got to go with her. That's not the way he's thinking. Can you say amen?

That's not the way he's thinking. I asked Micah if he'd be willing to do this tonight. And I said something about her skipping. And I said, that's because she's leaving her daddy. And he said, well, I think it's because she was coming to me. And I said, that's a real political statement.

He said, hey, politics or what? It's just life. But here's the deal. It's not a hard thing. Is it very hard for you if I ask you, I want you to love this woman right here. Is that hard? Is it hard for me to say to you, you really ought not be over here?

Now, let me ask you this. Is it okay with you if he loves all those girls? It's not? Why not? He should love everybody. Say amen. He should love everybody. Amen. But separation is not a negative thing.

In other words, over here, the Nazarites saying no to the grapes and everything. And no to his family if they die or whatever. And he's letting his hair grow long. And he's looking kind of weird.

[18 : 53] And he's a weirdo in his society. But you could say, well, man, that's all negative. But it wasn't negative because what he was saying is there's the Lord Jesus. There's God.

And he is worth more to me than all of these other things. I've got my eyes focused on him. What's a Nazarite doing? He's focusing on the Lord Jesus. You don't have to take separation as negative.

Independent Baptist, man, we're bad about it. It's no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. But can I tell you, can I get you to come back over here one more time? Say right there. They're starting to hold hands. You've got to watch these two. Now watch this.

Over here, over here, I don't think, I mean, it's not a matter of saying no. It's like, now you could go towards her. You know what? This is why she skipped. It was yes.

Yes, I'm going to get to kiss that girl. Yes, I'm going to get to hug that girl. Yes, I'm going to get to live with that girl. Yes, that girl's pretty. Yes, I like this. How many of y'all feel like he thought that? Say amen. That's what's going on in separation.

[19 : 51] So you look at the Nazarite and you say, man, that's so negative. It's the top. It's the complete opposite of negative. It's the complete positive. It has a negative side, but the negative side is not that big a deal.

Because, honestly, this guy's not wanting to look at these girls. This guy's not wanting to look at these girls. He's got eyes for one girl. And when we give the wedding vow, we even say, will you cleave to her and her alone?

And I've never had one say, excuse me, can we change that just a little bit in there? Just say her and some others. I've never had one of them say that to me yet. When they go to get married, I've seen some live that way.

But thank God the ones I've married, that hasn't been their heart. They want to love their spouse. Can you say amen right there? So that's what's going on. Separation is positive and negative.

I am saying no to sin. I am saying to my mother, I don't love you as much as I love Jesus. I do love my mother. I'm supposed to love my mother. I'm supposed to love my dad. God wants me to, but he wants the comparison to be.

[20 : 52] And by the way, I've known Catherine since she was fairly small. I don't know exactly how old she was when I met her. And she loves her mother and she loves her daddy. But if you want to give her a choice today, and I won't do it publicly, because I don't want to hurt John's feelings.

But if I were to offer her, you can move back in with your dad and mom. It's okay. Micah's going to let you. I'm pretty sure she's going to look at me and say, are you crazy? I don't want to go back to them old people.

Say amen. She's going to be like, I'd far rather stay where I am. And I said, but it's so negative. You had to say no to your mother. You had to say no to your daddy. And she said, I ain't really saying no that much. I'm just saying yes to Micah.

And that changes the whole view. Can you say amen right there? Thank you. Y'all can all have a seat. Now, I don't know if that's as pretty to you as it is to me. But Micah and Catherine love each other.

And I've known that since before they were married. They were very much in love. And it's not a negative thing. But in separation, there is a positive side. And there is a negative side. So you read and you say, man, he couldn't touch anybody dead.

[21 : 52] But it wasn't really about not touching anybody dead. It was about I'm attached to him that's living. And so I've got to be hooked up to him that's living. It wasn't about I can't have any wine. Wine. It was about I don't have time for wine.

It might get my mind off of Jesus. It might get my mind on myself. And I want to look into Jesus. It wasn't that he couldn't cut his hair. And he was sitting there thinking, I really wish I could cut my hair. It wasn't. He was saying, everybody's going to know I love Jesus.

And most every girl I know carries some kind of mark on her that says, I belong to somebody else and I love them. So this whole chapter is about separation. The whole chapter is about separation.

We are positively devoted to God. Negatively, we are abstaining from things that do not please God. But it ought not be. Can I just tell you this?

Separation ought never be in your mind negative. It ought never be about what I have to give up. It ought to be about what I get to have.

[22 : 48] Because I'm so in love with Jesus. I never, ever think to myself, man, I just wish I could get drunk. I think that would be fun. I don't ever think that.

I don't ever think I wish I could be like other guys that have a whole bunch of women. I'm like, man, I am so happy where I am. Yesterday, we were at a 60th wedding anniversary.

And on the way home, Betty says, reckon we'll get there? And I said, nope, I ain't living that long. But I might because I'd only be 79. But the whole point being, the whole point being that loving Jesus is much more positive than everything else I've ever been called on to give up.

The goal is to glorify the Lord, the Lord Jesus, and to obey his word. By the way, separation in the Bible is never about isolation. Some of us become isolationist.

And so we want to herd our family into the corral and keep them away from society. It's kind of like what the monks and the nuns did in Peru.

[23 : 56] I can take you to a place that's been in existence for over 450 years. And you would find people in there that once their mother or dad took them to this place, at the age of sometimes as young as 10 and 12 years old, their parents would walk them in and give their children to God.

And from then on, their children would never, ever see their parents again. They even fixed a place where they could talk to their parents through lattice work. But there'd be two sets of lattice work so they couldn't reach them.

And they would hang a curtain so they couldn't see mom and dad. And they could serve. And they would dedicate themselves in isolation to prayer and seeking God. That's not what's going on here. It's not about being isolated.

It's about being focused and dedicated on Jesus as everything to me. Now go with me to chapter 6, if you would, in verse 9. The first thing was separation.

The second thing was you get a do-over. This is pretty good. You get a second chance. Chapter 6 and verse 9. The Bible said if any man died very suddenly by him.

[24 : 58] See, somebody just drops dead. Here's a Nazirite. And he's riding down the road with another Nazirite even. And they're riding down the road. One of them drops dead. Well, he just messed up his whole vow. The other guy died unexpectedly right beside him.

Verse 9 says that he hath defiled the head of his consecration. Then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing. And on the seventh day he shall shave it. If someone broke the vow, they were to shave their head and bring a sin offering.

If I can get you to understand, there's this big dedication. I love Jesus. I am 100% serving him. I have every intention. But sometimes things happen above and out of your control.

This guy had somebody die by him suddenly. If he'd have known he was going to die, he'd have just stayed away. Looks like my dad is laying on his death bed and he may die. I'm not going to go over there because it'd mess up my vow. It looks like that person's dying.

I'm not going to go over there. I'm going to stay away because I don't want it to corrupt me or defile me or mess me up. But this happens suddenly. And some of you will say, man, I love Jesus. I've been trying to serve him with all my heart.

[25 : 59] And some things have gone wrong in my life. And sometimes I feel like I'm done for, used up, no chance, no way to go. The Nazirite, he had a chance. He had another chance.

And here's what goes on. The first thing he was to do, they were to bring a sin offering. Chapter 6 and verse 10. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tabernacle.

A sin offering in verse 11. A burnt offering to make an atonement for him. The days of his service would be lost. So if you've got your Bible open, look at verse 12. If you mess up, intentionally or unintentionally, much of your service might be lost.

Look at verse 12. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation. He shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering. But the days that were before shall be lost. Because his separation was defiled.

He lost ground. But he gets to start over. Forgiven. Would you listen to that? He might have messed up. But he gets to start over.

[27 : 01] Forgiven. He was already a child of God. He was already dedicating himself to the Lord. He was already making promises to God. But if he messed up, there's a chance for him to start over. The lamb he brings speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ dying for us.

He brings a lamb. He brings this lamb to the Lord. And he says, here's the lamb. Consecrate me. Dine my place. Make up for my failures.

That's what Jesus does for all of us. Everybody in this room, you are a failure. You can't go to heaven if you're not a failure. You can't go to heaven if you hadn't messed up.

Sinners go to heaven. Sinners that recognize that they're sinners go to heaven. Good guys don't go to heaven. Good guys may wear white hats, but they don't go to heaven. All of us that go to heaven go to heaven because we realize we were a sinner.

We realize Jesus died for us. We accepted his free sacrifice on the cross for us. And we're saved. So he gets a chance to start over. The vow has been defiled, but he gets to start over. There was forgiveness.

[28 : 02] There was forgiveness. There was forgiveness. Life was not over. Failure could be overcome. Things could happen. A vow might be defiled by an accident, but there was a remedy.

All he had to do, all he had to do, wait a week, shave his head, and start growing his hair again. All he had to do was make a vow again.

On the seventh day he shaved his head. The defiled hair had to go. The defiled person came and made a sacrifice. They were able to rededicate themselves to the Lord. No failure was permanent.

The victorious Christian life is a series of beginning again. So can I just say something to you real quickly? I hope you understand separation is positive, not negative.

But I also hope you understand this. You've already messed up. And you already decided, I'm going to do big stuff for God. And you even made promises. Kind of like this Nazirite. We do all kind of promises.

[28 : 59] We make all kind of promises to God. And then we don't keep those promises. And what ends up happening is you begin to think, well, I'm a failure anyway. And I already messed up. And God's already upset. And there's no need to even try.

And so we kind of quit on God. You've probably never been there. But I've known a lot of people to get there. They're like, I said I was going to read my Bible through in one month. And I tried to read my Bible through in a month.

But I didn't get it done. So I'm not going to read my Bible through. Because the last time I made a promise, it didn't work. I'm just not going to make a promise. I'm not going to get involved in faith promise. Because I said I was going to do something I didn't do before. I messed up before. And I'm just not going to do anything before.

And we come up with all these excuses. You'll meet people that have been in church, really said they loved God, really acted like they loved God. And then they mess up. And their attitude is once you mess up as a Christian, it's all over.

Well, it wasn't that way in Numbers chapter 6. In Numbers chapter 6, you mess up, you get another chance. You mess up, you might lose ground. But you get another chance. That guy got to go in.

[29 : 57] Let's say he made a six-month or a two-month promise. Which they say the common promise was one month or two months. And he made a one-month or two-month promise. And he goes in. Somebody died on day 59.

And on day 59, he was one day away of fulfilling his vow. One day away of completing his vow, which we're about to talk about here in just a second. And it's all messed up. Well, God wasn't mad.

God wasn't mad. Nobody was upset. You serve a loving, sweet, kind, gracious, long-suffering, merciful God. Can you say amen right there? God wasn't mad. He said, look, buddy, not a problem.

Wait a week. Get the contamination off of you. Shave your head. Because that was a sign you made a vow to me. And start back up again. Bring me a lamb. Bring me a lamb.

Because the lamb's the way we all got forgiveness. Amen? It's the lamb. It's always been the lamb. And it'll always be the lamb. The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.

[30 : 55] Can I just say that? It's a series of new beginnings. It is constantly realizing I might have messed up, but the God of heaven still loves me. And the God of heaven is still at work in my life.

So if you messed up, if something's gone wrong in your life, and if you wonder what's going on, God loves you. Go to the lamb. Confess over the lamb.

And get back up and start again. One of my favorite YouTube videos I've ever seen is a racing girl. She's one of these girls. They run the long track or whatever.

And it's a long race. And she trips and falls. And everybody runs away and leaves her. And you've probably seen it. Some of you have seen it. If you had it, you will tonight, I guess. But after everybody left, she jumped back up.

And everybody's like, there's no way. The announcer says, poor girl. She was doing so well. She tripped and fell. She got back up and ran, caught them all, passed them all again, and won the race. And set a record.

[31 : 50] You mess up, get up. No whining. No complaining. Go to the Lord. Confess your sin. Get up. We don't quit. Can I hear an amen right there? Third thing.

The vow gets completed in verse 13. In verse 13, the vow is completed. And this is the law of the Nazarite. When the days of his separation are fulfilled. So he's done it. His 60 days are up.

He shall be brought into the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So he gets to the door of the congregation. And he brings an offering. And that's found in verse 14. And in the offering, he brings a male lamb, a female lamb, and a ram.

I mean, he's got three animals he's bringing. Each was for a different offering. The burnt offering was a symbol of total dedication. I love Jesus. I love God. I am dedicating my life to the burnt offering.

The sin offering was because no matter what you do, it doesn't make you sinless. Let me just tell you, if you get baptized or you come to church, you need to always remember it's not about what you do.

[32 : 49] It's about who you are. It's not about what you do. It's about who he is and what he did. And so the guy's doing great, man. I'm glad he fulfilled his vow. But that didn't make him right. It was always the lamb.

It's always the lamb. It doesn't matter how much money you give. It doesn't matter how many things you do. It's always the lamb. Then they brought a peace offering, a fellowship offering. In verse 14, a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour, mingled with oil, wafers of unleavened bread, anointing with oil, and their meat offering and their drink offerings.

And the priest got a part of that offering. And there was like a big fellowship meal. Praise God. We're together and excited about what God's doing. In verse 18, they shaved the Nazarite's head and they placed the hair on the altar.

There was a celebration and fellowship meal together. Remember that salvation is never a reward for anything you do. Keeping the vow was something that they did already. It's the people of God.

Now, watch this. If Mike and Catherine never have marriage problems, I'm in trouble. But you know what? Catherine is doing a whole lot of stuff as Micah's wife.

[33 : 53] She takes care of him and she does all these things for him, but she doesn't do any of that to be his wife. She does that because she is his wife. She isn't trying to earn the position.

She was given the position. I don't do things for God so God will like me. He already likes me. Can you say amen? Man, he doesn't just like me. He loves me. I'm not doing anything to gain his favor.

I just want to give something to him. I'm not doing it to get something from him. I'm just saying, man, you've been so good to me. I want to give something to you. And that's what's going on with a Nazarite vow.

They were given to God and not getting from him. Let me give you some applications and I'll be through. I should want to be fully consecrated and dedicated to the Lord Jesus. If you read this passage of Scripture, if you read it, it ought to come across your mind.

Man, I do want to be 100% for Jesus. Every Christian in this room, you ought to be saying, I want to do anything Jesus wants me to do. You ought to be giving a blank sheet of paper to God and saying, I will go anywhere you want me to go.

[34 : 52] I will do anything you want me to do. You are God. You are Lord. And my life is totally dedicated to you and whatever your will is for my life. The Nazarite was saying, God. God. God first.

God second. God last. God above my dad. God. God above my pleasures. God above what I wanted. I'm doing that. The second thing, separating myself from sin into the Lord should be a deep, heartfelt desire for me.

Can I just say to you as a Christian, there ought to be something to you that says, man, I do love Jesus. And you ought not find it negative. You ought not find it like a horrible thing.

You ought to find it like I get to do this because I'm in love with Jesus. I'm serving Him. So when Andrea and Chris were going to get married, Chris has diabetes.

And diabetes is a nasty and ugly disease. And he's had it since he was 14. And so Andrea comes in the living room. And Chris says, Dad, why don't you talk to her? I said, OK.

[35 : 50] So she sat down. And I said, what are you going to do when he loses his feet? And I went through all the most horrific things that could happen to a diabetic. And Andrea's answer was, my dad's a quadriplegic.

I have cleaned his nose. I have fed him. I have cleaned him. I have helped him. I can love my husband. She didn't do that because she had to.

She didn't do that because she's paid to. The other day when we were sitting with Chris in Alabama, he and his wife and family were in Alabama. And he was finding out some negative news about some more skin cancer and stuff.

He looked at her and said, I guess everything Dad told you is coming true. You're going to be taking care of God. He's getting his leg cut off from the cancer now. Not really. Not that bad. And she laughed and said, it's OK. Because you are in love.

Your desire to Jesus ought to be greater than any other desire that you have. Stay away from things that might draw you away from loving Jesus. That's what a Nazarite was doing.

[36 : 48] That's why he didn't go to that grapevine. Stay away from that. There are steps you should take to protect your marriage, by the way. The same deal. You know, there's tons of things that every man in this room ought to say.

I'm not looking at that junk on the Internet. It could ruin my marriage. Can you say amen right there? I'm looking at that junk. I'm not looking at naked women and sex. I'm not doing that. I'm staying away from that junk because I love my wife.

You say, well, we're not legalists here. We don't have to follow rules. No, you don't have to follow rules. But if you love your wife, you won't do without anybody telling you to. Say amen. I'm going to stay away from that alcohol. I'm going to stay away from those bars. I'm going to stay away from places where you pick up girls because I already picked mine up 41 years ago.

Say amen. You're going to love your wife. You're going to stay there with her. It's not a matter of rules but of love. Don't be embarrassed to be publicly identified as belonging to Jesus.

It's so easy. This Nazirite, when he walked down the street, everybody's going, there he goes. That's a Nazirite. Anybody want? If a son had walked to his dad and said, dad, why does that guy look like he does? Man, he looks all hairy and woolly.

[37 : 51] I mean, why are you taking better care of himself? His dad said, son, that's a special man. He's made a vow to God. He's doing something. Don't be embarrassed about who you are and loving Jesus.

You don't have to wear lapel pins and say, I love Jesus. You don't have to put 50 bumper stickers on your car. That's not what I'm talking about. But you know what? You ought not be embarrassed to say, I love Jesus. I love Jesus.

Realize that serving God and loving him can cause you to make decisions and do difficult things. It can cause you to have to do difficult things and make difficult decisions.

When the Lord dealt with my heart about being a missionary to Peru, and I went in and sat down with my dad. My dad had moved from Tennessee to Georgia to be a part of our church. He had been a part of our church for several years. I really believed with all my heart God wanted me to go to Peru.

So we went over to the house, and I sat down with him, and there were two chairs in the living room. They both faced the same way. He was sitting in one, and I sat in the other one. And I said, Dad, the Lord's really dealing with my heart about going to the mission field. I don't want you to hear it.

[38 : 48] When everybody else hears it, I'm going to go ahead and tell you. He kept staring straight ahead. He said, What are you going to do? I said, I'm going to go to Peru. I'm going to go to Mexico first. I'm going to learn Spanish. And I'm going to go down to Peru, and I'm going to live in Peru. And he said, Well, that's a good thing.

You've never been a good son anyway. He said, You're not a good pastor. You're not even a good Christian. I think that would be good for you to do. Man, I was shocked.

He moved from Tennessee to be a part of my church. After I became a missionary, he told people all the time, I never, ever was upset. I never doubted, and I always believed in him.

He never believed this. The director of my mission board's son came in and told his dad, God wants me to go to Moldova. And the director of the mission board got livid, started yelling, What are you doing? Don't be stupid.

Because it's kind of hard sometimes. But following Jesus sometimes carries a cost. Don't make separation about being isolated from other people.

[39 : 44] You could probably help. No, you can start over. You can start over. You are not too far gone. I don't care what mess you've made. God can always use you. And realize that if you checked out this verse, giving is a big part of worship and sacrifice.

The guy made a promise to God. And when he finished his promise, he comes with a male lamb, a female lamb, and a ram. And he comes with all that bread and all that stuff that's prepared. I mean, it was a costly thing.

I'm going to do all these things that it's going to cost me big time. But serving God is costly. It costs your life. It costs putting Jesus first. By the way, if you get rebellious when somebody talks about you being a giver and how you ought to give to God, you really don't understand the Bible because in the Bible, giving to God would be like kind of natural.

He gave so much to me. I want to give. And so that part of giving in chapter six was just a natural thing. So where are you tonight? I hope you understand.

You are just separate from the world, but it's not a separation from. It's a separation to. I'm in love with Jesus. I get to spend time with him. I hope you understand that you can start over.

[40 : 52] It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done wrong. It's not over till it's over. They asked an old evangelist when I was a kid. They said, when do you give up on people? He said, I'll usually wait till four days after they're dead.

When they've been dead four days, I figure it's too late because one guy was dead four days and Jesus raised him from the dead. So I'm always thinking maybe for four days I can still hope. But you are not too far gone.

Keep trusting God and realize that when you fulfill your vow, you didn't do anything. To get saved. You did it because you love Jesus. You didn't do anything to get favors from God.

You did it just because you love him. And that's why they did these vows. It was not about what they could get. It was about what they could give. Father in heaven, I love you. And I thank you for your wonderful word. I thank you for your salvation.

I thank you for how you've worked in our lives. And I pray that your name will be honored and glorified and magnified. I love you. Thank you and appreciate all you do. God, save those who don't know you. And God, those that do know you here tonight, help us tonight to take separation from the world and to you as a very positive thing in our lives.

[41 : 56] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.