

## Keeping Vows

Some say that keeping vows is “not that big of a deal.” We can see by the recent statistics on marriage and divorce that the marriage vows count for little in today’s society. In addition, what about our commitment to Christ when we were immersed in the waters of baptism? Did we promise to lose our lives for Christ and the Gospel? Did we agree that Jesus is our King and Lord? If He truly is our Lord, we must do the things He says (Luke 6:46). I keep hearing from those who claim to be members of the church that the reason they became Christians was to escape pain and suffering and to go to heaven instead of hell. Their minds (attitudes) seem to focus on what they can get from God rather than how they can serve Him. They seem to have forgotten that they did not create themselves, but that He created them (Psalm 100:3; Romans 1:21; Mark 8:36-37).

Judas Iscariot sold his soul for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). Some today seem quite willing to sell their souls for a high paying job, a new house, a new car or even prestige or power. Both partners in a household will frequently work seven days a week to lay up treasure here on earth (Luke 12:16-21; Matthew 6:26), but they rarely will spend more than an hour on Sunday to serve the Lord. Would spending that much time each week make any other commitment prosper? Certainly not! So, why do people think it would please their Creator?

Others, claiming to be church brethren, cite family ties or commitments to explain why they have no time to assemble for study or worship or to work for Christ during the week. Maybe they believe they have to spend hours upon hours educating their children or helping them with homework. When Christians find it necessary to care for aged parents, aunts, or grandmothers in the home, they should find a way to work that care around church attendance. They cannot neglect their responsibility to care for the aged, but they must not use their care as an excuse to miss services on a regular basis. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37). “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

The Scriptures above appear to discourage Christians at times and cause them to want to explain them away rather than to believe and trust them. However, they also need to consider the promises given to those who do trust and obey. “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matthew 19:29).

Christians should remember the account of Hannah in the Old Testament who made a vow to God and kept it. Hannah promised that if God would give her a son, she would lend him to the service of God forever. God heard her prayer, gave her little Samuel, and she faithfully kept her promise. Not only did God bless her with a son, but later He gave her three more sons and two daughters (1 Samuel 2:20-21). There can be no doubt that the “mother heart” in Hannah made her ponder her choice many times. We know she never forgot Samuel because she made a little coat to give him at the annual feast every year (1 Samuel 2:19). She must have had great joy in remembering Samuel as she stitched.

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