

Chapter 9 | Blockage Removal: Vows

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Vows are an important part of how people ratify behaviors. As I said, acts undertaken in moments of weakness or advantages taken of a person in an environment of confusion can lead to a ratification of this very harmful view of who a person sees himself or herself to be. But other things that people do are just as sufficient in confirming or ratifying this false image. One of the most common things that people do to confirm or ratify a false image of themselves is to make vows: “I will never” or “I swear.” It is a way that a person wishes to emphasize putting distance between themselves and other people whom they view as causing them harm, but these vows become statements that the enemy can use fairly consistently over time to torment you, to remind you of a view of yourself to which you have committed yourself. Now, it is important to understand why people make vows. Typically, people make vows because they are convicted that a form of behavior that victimizes them is so wrong that they commit themselves to a course of action that they believe to be the best course of action to be undertaken in a permanent way. And it becomes their default setting.

Let me give you some examples. These are real examples from my experience in life. Obviously, I will not say enough to identify the persons, because some of these events involve confidential relationships. But I will say enough to establish the fact of what I am attempting to communicate, as well as to provide a basis of understanding that is wide enough to be identified with by persons who either have made such vows or know people who have made this type of vow, especially if you are having to live with or try to help someone who has made such a vow, and you do not actually understand why they cannot change their point of view. You may appeal to them reasonably. You may do whatever is normal and customary, or even go above and beyond in trying to show them another way, and they reach that point beyond which you cannot push them. You cannot move them, you cannot shake them, you cannot cajole them, you cannot beg them. You cannot even intimidate them to move. That is the strength and the power of a vow. Now most people do not actually remember the vows they made, but they do continue to act out of those vows, and in that context, the enemy continues to perfect his entrapment of them.

For example, I have known two women, mother and daughter, and I have known them for a long period of years. The mother, when I first was introduced to her, chronically lost her job. She went

from job to job. Just in the time I knew her, which was probably a five-year period, I would say the most she held a job was for probably eight months. This is an intelligent woman. She had a responsible position. At times she was even in charge of other people. But I would hear the same story over and over again, and the story ran something like this: the boss was a man, and he was acting dishonorably and he was acting thuggishly, without any consideration for her or the other workers. That would be her excuse one time, after another, after another. On average, she was gone to a new job every eight months, to the point where one time I actually sat down with her at her request—in fact, I sat down with her more than once—and heard her story. There were two things that always happened when I met with her: one was, she always complained about different men in her life; the other thing was, she was trying desperately to gain my approval for how she foundationed her life.

She believed in the teachings of a particular teacher, and she believed that her inside information derived from this teacher gave her a standing that was worthy of my recognition; this was a Bible teacher. Now, there is no evidence that anything she had heard was at work in her life. She would come and present her newest hearing from this teacher and her understanding of it, but it actually had no effect on her life that I could tell. Those were the two things. But in my meetings with her, privately, and I knew her socially, so in those engagements the story of her life emerged. That story was one of how, as a young mother, she was married to a man at the time who was, by her description, a terror. She would get up in the middle of the night and pack up her two children in the car and take off in the darkness, not knowing where she was going to go. They would end up spending the night in the parking lot of someplace like Wal-Mart, that was lighted.

The problem with her was her experience, true or false, accurately reported or inaccurately reported, her experience with her husband was terrifying to her. She got up and fled, took her children out with her, and they fled. The children knew that fleeing from a father was a part of life. In her mindset, then, she developed this view that all men are terrorists, and you must be prepared to leave them at will. So whenever she had a boss, and she seemed to have a man as boss—at least in all the stories I talked to her about her boss, the boss was never a woman—but with a man as a boss, eight months on average and she would be gone, because she went into the job looking for

and anticipating that the man was going to be a terrorist, like that husband from whom she fled was.

She subsequently married, but when she married the second time, she married a very docile man because she wanted to be sure that she could control the man. Needless to say, docile men, typically, do not provide much in the way of security, emotional or financial, so you repeat the process of being disappointed in a man. This time a docile man, but one who does not meet your expectations because he cannot address your underlying need for security and well-being. So you end up taking up for yourself, and you are disappointed. It was layer, upon layer, upon layer. At some point she made the decision that, “I will never trust a man. I just cannot bring myself to trust a man.” Now that is a vow that ratified a thing that was wrong in the first place, if indeed the first husband was as she described him to me. There is no way he should be like that. He was a terror to her and to her children.

I do not know; I am skeptical about her narrative. Because when I knew her, she was quite flakey, so I do not know if fleeing from her husband was the beginning point of her problem. Very likely it was not. But in those days—it has been many years now—in those days I did not know how to get back into her story, and I do not even know if she would have let me get back into her story. In those days, I began with the story she told me. Now I would have taken her back through that narrative, presuming she would have been willing to have gone back through that. Because, by the time I met her, she just wanted to be confirmed that her decisions were still reasonable decisions—that a reasonable person would consider her decisions so. But she made vows that she would never be under the rule of a man again, and it distressed her life and has distressed her life to this day. She is now an older woman, well into her eighties.

She had a daughter, one of the children who packed up in the car and fled. That child was imprinted with this experience as her baseline view of men. I happen to know this situation quite well. She married a very excellent man, a peaceful man, a hard-working man, and one who had experienced a good deal of trauma in his own life. But he overcame and came to the place of seeing the need to rule his family well, ruling for their benefit. When he made the effort to try to change the dynamic of the family situation, he ran smack into the wall of a second-generation, being his wife,

who had also made the same vow. Her vow was merely the extension of her mother's vow, that she would never trust a man. I worked extensively with the couple, and I could always get the man to see something greater than he came in seeing, but I could not move the woman. She refused to come under his authority. Eventually, the marriage ended. But what I saw in the process... There is more to the story, obviously. It is not about telling a person's story. It is about illustrating how a vow can hold you in place with a false identity and allow your enemy to plunder you with a lie.

Another example of the same principle: I knew a man whose father was a very caring man. But he, unwittingly upon his death, charged the man with the care of his family—his mother, his brothers, and his sisters. Although the mother had no intention of submitting to the rule of this, the eldest son, and the brothers and sisters were not inclined to do that either, he was tormented by the fact that his was the responsibility to take care of people, even people who did not want his authority, even people who refused to come under his authority. His baseline was that he was under a vow. He accepted his father's commission even though he should not have. But he lived his life under a vow of making sure that everybody under his rule was okay and taking responsibility for their well-being, regardless of whether or not they accepted his authority.

I saw the wrongfulness of putting people under vows early in my life. When I would be traveling, and I would say to Nick, my younger son who was just a boy in some of those days, I would foolishly say to him, "Now son, you are the man of the house. You must take care of everything while I am gone." A twelve-year-old boy trying to rule over his mother, trying to rule over the house in my absence? I do not think so. When I did that one notable time, and I got home, Lucy called me aside nearly as soon as I walked in the door and said to me, "You have got to do something about Nick." I said, "What has Nick been doing? What do I need to do about Nick?" She said, "He will not go outside and play. He has been underfoot the whole time you were gone. I would look around, and he would be sitting and watching me." She said, "You need to talk to him." Then I remembered I had said to him that he needed to be the man of the house while I was gone. It sounded good, but it was wrong. It was a horrible wrong because I was putting a burden on him that he had no possible way of carrying. So he carried it the way a twelve-year-old boy would carry a vow, or would carry a commission that he had accepted as guiding his behavior in my absence, and that is trying to rule over his mother. When I saw the reality of it, I called him

over and I said, “Son, I need to ask you to forgive me.” And he looked at me strangely, “What did you do, Dad?” I said, “I put a burden on you that I should not have. I told you to be the man of the house, and you are not a man, you are a boy, so I am relieving you of your duty, and I am asking you to forgive me for giving you an impossible commission. You are dismissed from your duty.” He said, “Okay,” and he turned around, ran out to go and play with his friends.

But I had an inkling of what happens when you come under a vow,

- Either of your own making—the “I will never...” kind of vow or “I swear that I won’t...”
- Or, when someone puts you in bondage. Someone of importance, like your father or your mother, puts you into bondage to something you cannot do—you lack the ability to do it, the maturity to do it, the resources to do it, the intelligence to do it, and on and on.

You are simply not able to do it. But if you accepted that, you will feel as a failure at that time, and the sense of failing and of failure will follow you. I dealt with a man some time ago who was very successful in his business, top of his class of people in that business, but he lived waiting for the other shoe to fall. He always felt like he was a fraud because he failed at athletics earlier on, and he had a father who constantly reminded him of his failure. So, vows are either things that you make yourself to establish a wall between you and some form of oppression, or vows may be things that people put on you—important people, respectable, honorable people, like your parents, persons of authority, school teachers, and the like—that you cannot meet. Vows may result from the treatment of others by you. Kids in school who are taunted and bullied, who are made fun of, they make vows that they will never speak up again to be ridiculed. Again, people who experience a stirring up of an emotion that had been there previously, but had been dormant, but in a certain environment that emotion would be stirred up.

I knew this woman who made a vow that she would never be in the same room again with a certain person; that was about reacting to a father who left her mother. She vowed, then, that she would never have anything to do with her father, and did not up until he died. But even though he died, the memory of that disappointment guided her actions decades later. When that emotion was stirred by an encounter with another man of authority, she transferred the whole weight of how she saw her father, who now was dead and removed from the picture, she transferred the whole weight of her accusations to the man in question. The man did nothing wrong (I happen to know the

situation), but the woman could not be placated because the emotion to her that connected her in the present situation back to that past occurrence was so strong, so seminal, that vow was evoked. She trapped herself in the vow and refused to be rescued out of it. Such is the nature of ratification by vows.

Michael Barrett has a substantial teaching on this matter, and it will be included as part of an ancillary body of material for the training of persons to discern vows—about ratification of false identities by vows you enter into at certain points in your adult life [See link for information from Michael Barrett on vows: https://www.citychurchla.com/city/current_messages]. When those things happen, now you have given your enemy an independent basis for accusing you. So all the things that were put into the emotions of your soul, all the emotions that were stirred from the womb and coming forward that were stored up in your soul, which are subject to being triggered by current issues in your environment that remind you of these emotions, those all have a new focus and a new force to oppress you when those lies, now, have been agreed upon or agreed with by you yourself.

When you say, “This false image of myself is true,” then your enemy can ignore even going back to the past, and he can simply remind you of the time when you said that you “would never” or that you “would not”—however you swore; or, as we said, ratification through your acts. We said ratification took place through two things: one is your acts, the other your statements—the acts you did that in your mind cast you as a guilty actor in the very things that are false that your enemy accused you of. By those two measures, by acts and statements, and by a subsequent order of statements, where you accept a false commission and are living out of that false commission when you cannot possibly fulfill that commission, all of these are some of the ways that ratification takes place:

- by acts,
- by statements,
- and by accepting false commissions.

So when you are leading a person through blockage removal, when you come to the place of recognizing that a secondary basis exists for their oppression by the enemy through ratification, look at all three areas to see,

- in what manner they agreed with the lie,
- or they attempted to put up a wall to shield them from the lie,
- or they are trying to live out a commission that was falsely put on them that they have no basis of being able to carry.

Usually, the spirit of accusation is present here, within this mix, and the common response of the person is to feel like both a fraud and a failure. Internally, they will feel as a failure. Nothing they ever do, to them, will be good enough. They will live in anticipation of “the next shoe falling,” which is to say that they do not believe that they have become who God actually made them to be. Even if they are successful, they will not accept that as the truth of who they are as a foundation for building the future. They will instead listen to the lie. Quite often you will see successful people anesthetizing themselves from the anticipation of the lie through drugs, alcohol, using their advanced positions economically, socially, to try and dampen down the cutting effects of this lie. This causes problems, which in turn reinforces the accusation that they are frauds and failures. Ratification is a damaging thing that gives the enemy new ammunition with which to oppress you.

In the next section, we will start to discuss how you break these strongholds.