

# Inner Vows and Bitter Root Judgments

Healing Streams, Savannah, GA. All scriptures are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

## Free will in a real world

By the gift of free will God made us sovereign over our own hearts. This allows us to live in inner freedom even under conditions of outward bondage, as Paul and Silas experienced when in prison (Acts 16:25). However, it also creates the possibility that we will live in inner bondage even under conditions of outward freedom. Sometimes it is not the choices we make in the present that limit our freedom, but ones we have rashly made in the past.

**It is a snare to a man to make a rash dedication, Then later to consider his vows.**  
Proverbs 20:25 WEB

## The invasion of innocence

We have been given free will in real world in which an invisible enemy has been at work to ensnare us as captives to his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26). One of the ways the evil one ensnares us is by the invasion of innocence. When hurt or injustice happened to us as children, if we were left uncovered (if there was no wise and understanding adult with us who was able to guide our heart through truth), we may be led astray in our innocence and ignorance of God's ways into making vows suggested to us by temptation.

**"Therefore my people go into captivity for lack of knowledge."** Isaiah 5:13 WEB  
**"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."** Hosea 4:6

Without knowledge we may also have formed bitter root judgments that caused us to make inner vows, thus placing our future in bondage and captivity to the past. This seems so entirely unfair! And yet God has created us in His image as a people of the word. Our words and the agreement of our wills with them have tremendous life-shaping power, whether we wish it were so or not.

**Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.**  
Proverbs 18:21

## The inner vow backfires

Inner vows are misguided attempts to avoid repeating behaviors we reject or dislike in others or to avoid situations that we hate or fear (Such as: "I'll never speak in public again!" or "I'll never become a drunk like my father!"). They can be a way of trying to break generational patterns in our own strength—but the vow inadvertently puts all the burden of transformation on self instead of upon the Lord and therefore binds the one who vowed to the very pattern he or she hoped to avoid. Inner vows, like outer vows, are very binding as the scriptures reveal:

**"If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth."**  
Deuteronomy 23:21-23

**I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.** Psalm 56:12

**When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.**  
Ecclesiastes 5:4-5



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Fortunately, the Lord our Father and Husband has preserved a way to disannul our rash vows prompted by the enemy's deceptions, if we go to Him (see Numbers 30:1-8).

**Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. Isaiah 28:18**

**The only difficult part** to breaking inner vows is discerning where we have made them. Ask the Lord for discernment and recollection. Discernment because there are vows that we may make as freewill offerings to Him—these we would be wise to keep. But there may be other vows that the enemy used to bring us into agreement with his plans for our life that have been hidden in forgetfulness—these the Father disallows if we renounce them.

*Father, I repent of making bitter judgments against \_\_\_\_\_ and I renounce the inner vow(s) I made to \_\_\_\_\_. Forgive me and break their power off of me.*

