



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of October 8, 2017

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a “worship discussion” guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 6:1-21 “Vow”

- Warm Up. Have you ever taken a vow? For what reason did you take it? What factors challenge the keeping of your vow? What did you do if the vow was ever broken?
- Read Numbers 6:1-8. What three commitments marked the vow of the Nazarite? While we can really only guess the reasons why these three actions were chosen as marks of the vow, clearly God believed this served Him & His people. How might the one who took this vow be a blessing to the community of God’s people? How might one who took these vows think about their relationship to the Lord?
- Jesus regularly confronted self-righteous acts of religion (i.e. [Matthew 6:16-18](#)) or the making of vows (i.e. [Matthew 5:33-37](#)). How do you reconcile God’s commands in Numbers 6 with the teaching of Jesus?
- Read Numbers 6:9-12. The LORD recognizes the risk the this vow could be broken, intentionally or inadvertently. What actions were commanded for those who broke their vow?
- This passage reminds us that God has made us a peculiar people, and that we should often *expect* to be regarded as strange. What is one thing you have started or stopped doing simply because Jesus loves you?
- Part of the value of the Nazarite vow was as a witness for others. And some of that witness was in the public ways the vow breaker had to be reconciled! In light of this, who is someone in your life that encourages you to press on in following Jesus?
- Sooner or later, each of us will break our vows. Human vows commanded by the LORD also remind us of the promises and sacrifices *He* has made. How have you seen Jesus be faithful to His promises? How has His atoning sacrifice on the Cross been precious to you this week?
- Pray for one another that the Lord would strengthen us for following Jesus Christ.

Questions about this week’s study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
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Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Numbers 6:1-21](#).

- A Nazirite was a man or woman whose voluntary vow was a temporary personal commitment to avoid three things:
 - 1.) Anything having to do with grapes (3-4) Why grapes?
 - 2.) The cutting of hair (5)
 - 3.) Dead bodies (6-7)
- The obligations of the Nazirite were much like a lay priest, except that the duration of the vow was temporary.
- Biblical examples include Manoah's wife, Samson's Mom (to a degree), Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist
- Note that much of this passage deals with what to do if the vow is broken (inadvertently or not) and what to do at the end of the vow.
- If the vow was broken, blood had to be spilled to make atonement for the sin, and the time period began all over again.
- When the vow was completed, a number of offerings were required: A whole burnt offering, a sin offering, and unleavened bread
- Finally a meal was eaten in the presence of God.
- What do we make of this? Even if the vow was kept there was a recognition that obedience to vow was not perfect and that sacrifices for sin had to be made.
 - First, these kinds of vows were voluntary but once made, they had to be completed.
 - Second, I think their real impact and purpose had more to do with the people who were watching and less to do with the Nazirite himself. Obviously, this was not in some sort of self-righteous display, but a reminder of commitment and "set apartness" that was to be Israel.
 - Third, even with careful planning the vow was often broken. Sacrifice had to be made.
 - Fourth, all of this ends with a joyful meal eaten before the Lord.
- What does Jesus have to do with this? He clearly was not a Nazirite. Nevertheless...