

AA34. Keeping Our Promises.

We are to keep our promises.

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

Key New Testament Scriptures

Matthew 5:33

Again, you have heard that our fathers were told, 'Do not break your oath,' and 'Keep your vows to ADONAI.'

Mark 7:11-13

But you say, 'If someone says to his father or mother, "I have promised as a korban" ' ' (that is, as a gift to God) ' ' "what I might have used to help you,"' then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus, with your tradition which you had handed down to you, you nullify the Word of God! And you do other things like this.

Additional New Testament Scriptures

Matthew 15:5-6

Acts 18:18

James 5:12

Related New Testament Mitzvot

AA58 Letting Our “Yes” be “Yes” and Our “No” be “No”

Supportive Tanakh Scriptures

Numbers 30:2(1)-3(2)

Then Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Isra'el. He said, "Here is what ADONAI has ordered: when a man makes a vow to ADONAI or formally obligates himself by swearing an oath, he is not to break his word but is to do everything he said he would do.

Deuteronomy 23:22(21)-24(23)

When you make a vow to ADONAI your God, you are not to delay in fulfilling it, for ADONAI your God will certainly demand it of you, and your failure to do so will be your sin. If you choose not to make a vow at all, that will not be a sin for you; but if a vow passes your lips, you must take care to perform it according to what you voluntarily vowed to ADONAI your God, what you promised in words spoken aloud.

Psalms 56:13(12)

God, I have made vows to you; I will fulfill them with thank offerings to you.

Psalms 65:2(1)

To you, God, in Tziyon, silence is praise; and vows to you are to be fulfilled.

Psalms 76:12(11)

Make vows to ADONAI your God, and keep them; all who are around him must bring presents to the one who should be feared.

Ecclesiastes 5:3(4)-4(5)

If you make a vow to God, don't delay in discharging it. For God takes no pleasure in fools, so discharge your vow! Better not to make a vow than to make a vow and not discharge it.

Ecclesiastes 5:5(6)

Don't let your words make you guilty, and don't tell the temple official that you made the vow by mistake. Why give God reason to be angry at what you say and destroy what you have accomplished?

Comment

A vow is a solemn promise; an oath is also a promise, but one that invokes an authority such as a god, a king, or an entity of similar importance. Covenants are enforceable promises that are usually bilateral – i.e. exchanged between individuals. Covenants can also be unilateral and, when they are, they are usually accompanied by a sign or seal.

Most references to promises in the Bible are about God keeping his promises to men and men to God. The New Testament has a few references to human beings keeping their promises to other human beings and the *Tanakh* has more, but they tend to be about specific obligations such as fidelity in commercial transactions. All of this notwithstanding, keeping promises is a godly virtue for which we are held accountable by both God and man. The covenant promise of fidelity in marriage is one of the most important.

Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2

F03 Divorce and Remarriage

M02 Keeping Our Promises