

3. Some Observations: What role do vows and resolves play in the lives of believers?

(a) This is a confused area and believers have usually disagreed on the fullest form or final meaning. Some bitterly object to "New Year's Resolutions" and such things as "faith promises". Nevertheless under the older covenant vows were permissible and some were even encouraged. The expression is different in the newer covenant but probably the spiritual principles are not changed.

(b) But some things are clear:

-That vows or resolutions are wrong (meaning immoral) is not true--based on their usage in the Old Testament. Things moral and immoral do not change their fundamental character from dispensation to dispensation.

-That they are to be used with care is also obvious in the Old T. as in Eccl. 5:1 ff and in the New T. in the practice of Paul.

-Furthermore, private commitment in our age seems better than public commitment.

--The willingness to vow or not to vow is not necessarily any indication of spirituality on the part of the one who speaks. How He will respond to God is the vital interaction.

-Furthermore, every type of promise seems equally to be stupid. Some seek to avoid a strong open commitment in favor of quiet vows. But we all are equally telling before the Lord.

4. Some Practical Lessons: In the whole process of making promises and vows, the following should be closely observed:

- (a) recognize our deep dependence on the Lord
- (b) keep our resolves realistic in the light of what honors Him.
- (c) give ourselves to His will in accord with the calling of His Word.

5. Conclusion: The thrust of this is that one need not be fearful of desiring to do something for the Lord. But he must keep it in the bounds of the Lord's announced will. Then if the resolve fails he still expects to receive the grace that upholds even the failing sinner or, more realistically, the faltering saint. We mean that the resolve must be to His honor and we can carry the responsibility of fulfilling it that same way.