

The Covenant of Job

(Job 31:1-12)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Job 31 Job was said to have made a **covenant with his eyes**.
 - A. This covenant was made in his defense against three friends who didn't believe him innocent.
 - B. They assumed that with the level of suffering Job had encountered (losing nearly all his family, property, and health), he had surely done something sinful to incur such judgment from God.
 - C. Job defended his integrity at every point, and in his final appeal mentions this covenant.
2. It seems that this covenant worked for Job (Job 1:8 – “Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”).
 - A. It seems to me that all who seek to follow the Lord would want God to say this about them and would be willing to take whatever steps necessary to make it happen.
 - B. So, I would say to you that if you have struggled with sin that has brought you low time and again and you want freedom, or if you simply want to have a purer, more holy life, or if you want a closer walk with God, Job's perspective needs to become your perspective.
 - C. For, the principles revealed here can help anyone to overcome **any sin** that they might face.
3. But I must warn you that making such a vow is no small matter in God's eyes!
 - A. God has always expected people to pay their vows.
 - i. OT (Num. 30:2 – “If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”).
 - ii. NT (Matt. 5:37 – “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”).
 - B. We might be tempted to avoid such a vow of purity, seeing we might not keep it.
 - i. Yet, God demands that His people live pure lives (1 Pet. 1:14-15 – “as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”).
 - ii. To ignore, or take lightly, this demand will put our souls in jeopardy (Hebrews 12:14 – “Pursue peace with all people, and **holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord”).
4. So, let's take some time to consider Job's covenant, or vow, so that we might learn how we might keep such a vow, or live a holy life, before God.
5. To do this we need to examine what Job understood about sin and about God that caused him to both make and keep this vow.

BODY:

I. Job understood the heart of God's desire about purity (31:1)

- A. In connection with this vow Job asks, “Why then should I look upon a young woman?”
 1. The word translated “young woman” can mean just that, but also may refer to one **not belonging to (separated/not joined) another**, or one unwed, and who is to be sexually pure.
 2. Job understood the *separate* nature of such a woman, that he had no right to lust after her, seeing her body did not belong to him.
 3. Job understood that only in marriage does a man have a right to lust after a woman, meaning his *spouse's* body (1 Cor. 4:2-4 – “But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. ³ The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”).
- B. Anyone who wants to be free from the bondage of sin, must learn to see life as did Job—that freedom and purity of life begins with the eyes.

1. Jesus said it this way (Lk. 11:34 – “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.”)
2. We cannot allow our eyes to look upon that which is forbidden, to allow our eyes open the door of the soul to what is against God’s will for our lives!
3. Job understood this was remained pure before God as a result.

II. Job understood that nothing escapes God’s view (31:4 – “Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?”).

- A. That Job knows God counted “all [his] steps” reveals Job’s knowledge of God’s omniscience.
 1. He took care in his steps because God misses nothing; nothing is hidden from His sight.
 2. He sees every minute detail, the whole process, of all that we do, seeing far more that we can of our deeds (Heb. 4:13 – “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things** are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”).
- B. Until we come to grips with the fact that nothing can hide our thoughts and deeds from God, we will never be faithful to the pledge of purity that God demands in our lives!
 1. God is with us, watching us, every minute of every day.
 2. This can be uncomfortable to the wicked, but will always be a blessing for those seeking righteousness, seeing that His presence is a constant source of strength (1 Cor. 10:13 – “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”).

III. Job understood that God responds to our sin.

- A. He knew that the *portion* and *inheritance* given by God the Almighty to the wicked, the workers of iniquity, is destruction and disaster! (31:2-3).
 1. Job knew that God responds to sin—that God would not stand by or allow his, or anyone else’s, sin to go unpunished!
 2. Since God continually observed his every step, all that mattered to Job was what God would give him, what would be his portion from God in the end!
- B. Job understood that sin brings *great* and *deserving* loss (31:7-10, 12).
 1. Job knew that if he turned from God’s way and *walked according to the lust of His eyes*, he would rightfully lose all his possession (31:7-8).
 2. He knew that if he gave in to the lusts of the eye and was enticed into an illicit relationship, He would rightfully lose his wife to another (31:9-10).
 3. To sum it up, he knew that sin would rightfully bring catastrophic loss upon his life (31:12).
 - a. There is no blaming others for the consequences our sins bring on ourselves.
 - b. I know we live in the culture of blame, but we will never overcome sin and lives of purity and hope until we understand that we are responsible for our actions—no one else!
 4. Until we grasp firmly the cost of our sin, firmly planting it in our minds *before* we commit sin, we will continue to rob ourselves of true life and continue down that road to total loss!
- C. Job understood that God was *just in His judgments* against wickedness (31:11).
 1. Job knew sin is *deserving of God’s judgment* (31:11).
 - a. We don’t like to think of sin that way.
 - b. We want to keep God punishment out of the picture.
 - c. We want to blame others when the problems role in...or even blame God and His people!
 2. When we lust for what is not ours to have, whether sexually or materially, or seek to respond against others in ways not ours to do, we are invoking God’s judgment (Col. 3:5-7 – “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”).
- D. Until we understand and practically apply these principles to our lives, our actions will easily slip out of our control and be given over to the pursuit of sin!

IV. Job understood the nature of sinful desire (31:1).

- A. Job said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I **look upon** a young woman?”
 - 1. **Look upon** (NKJV) carries the idea of gazing on, or looking intently, upon this unlawful woman—a woman to which he had no right, no claim.
 - a. The word carries the idea of marking something in the mind, thinking intently on something.
 - b. These are no momentary glances or simple appreciations of beauty; this is a bold stare that allows the mind and heart to be engaged in concentration.
 - 2. Looking intently is the first step of lust leading to deadly sin.
- B. Job understood that the second step is that of the heart following the eyes (31:7).
 - 1. The NKJV says, “If...my heart walked after my eyes,” while the NASB, “If... my heart followed my eyes,” and the ESV, “if... my heart has gone after my eyes.”
 - 2. In any case, Job understood the second step of lust leading to sin involves the heart *following* the eyes.
 - a. It is not God’s design for our eyes to lead our heart—to simply allow our heart to rush after all that we see.
 - b. If our heart is led by our eyes, our eyes will be allowed to roam free with no filter on what thoughts the heart will consider.
 - 3. Until one understands that the eyes must be ruled by the heart, and not the other way around, we continually open ourselves up to temptations and their consequences!
- C. Job made a covenant with his eyes because he knew that the last step of lust was the enticement to sin (31:9 – “If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor’s door”).
 - 1. This word *entice* can be translated seduce (HCSB, NLT), and carries the meaning of “to make gullible” or be “simple-minded.”
 - 2. When the heart is enticed it means it becomes gullible, foolish, only seeing things through the lens of the eyes—the pleasure of seeing a beautiful woman, the joy of a new car/house, the satisfaction of someone getting what they deserve.
 - 3. It does not matter the sin, the process of lust leaves us as gullible simpletons with tunnel vision, being unable to see the big picture, to see things from God’s viewpoint!

V. Understanding all this, Job made a covenant with his eyes.

- A. This was a solemn vow, a pledge, to act in holy fashion with his eyes.
 - 1. He made a formal agreement with his mind to never allow his eyes to dwell on the image of a woman, to dwell upon that which was not rightfully his.
 - 2. He made this covenant before God, who knew his ever thought and action.
- B. What would such a covenant look like today?
 - 1. Start by understanding one’s own limitations.
 - a. Like Job, we must understand that the human body has its urges that must be controlled by the heart.
 - b. Our eyes will take in any information we choose in our heart to place in front of them, whether righteous leading to righteousness, or sinfully enticing leading to sin!
 - c. You must seek for God to rule your heart so that your heart will rule your eyes!
 - 2. Resign yourself that God knows your every thought, intent, and action, and use that for your advantage, gaining strength to overcome from His presence, as did Job (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - 3. Understand and wholeheartedly agree with God’s desire and design for your purity.
 - a. If we are not in agreement with God concerning the value and need for purity, we will never be pure!
 - b. Paul described the needed breakaway from the evil of our past (Rom. 6:20-23 – “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you

- have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”).
4. One would seek to cultivate a healthy respect for our sinful urges means we must decide to channel them correctly.
 - a. For those affected sorely by sexual temptations...
 - i. Some must discipline their bodies (1 Cor. 9:27 – “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”).
 - ii. Others will direct these desires towards building healthy, godly relationships, culminating in the marriage covenant (1 Cor. 7:2 – “Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.”).
 - b. For those who may be stricken by material lust, you need to channel that energy for the good of others (Ephesians 4:28 – “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”).
 5. Understand the destruction sin brings, not only in this life, but in the one to come (Rev. 21:8 – “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”).
 6. Know the value and reward of righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11-12 – “But you, O man of God, flee these things and **pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.** ¹² **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,** to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. As those who pursue wholeness of life, whether it be sexually, materially, or socially, we must pursue this first through spiritual wholeness, through a proper relationship and life with God.
2. This begins with humbly giving up your life to Jesus, bowing at His feet in faith as you confess His as your lord and Christ, dying to yourself and being buried with Christ in baptism, in which you will be raised with Christ to newness of life!
3. Will you come to Jesus today, allowing Him to guide your way and make your life whole?