

Acts 18 “Taken a Vow”

Acts 18:18-23

Feb 15, 2026

Acts 18:18-23

18 After staying for some time, Paul said farewell to the brothers and sisters and sailed away to Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved his head at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. 19 When they reached Ephesus he left them there, but he himself entered the synagogue and debated with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he declined, 21 but he said farewell and added, “I’ll come back to you again, if God wills.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.

22 On landing at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, then went down to Antioch.

23 After spending some time there, he set out, traveling through one place after another in the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

A nazarite vow.

Numbers 6:1-8. The Lord instructed Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When a man or woman makes a special vow, a Nazirite vow, to consecrate himself to the Lord, 3 he is to abstain from wine and beer. He must not drink vinegar made from wine or from beer. He must not drink any grape juice or eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 He is not to eat anything produced by the grapevine, from seeds to skin, during the period of his consecration.

5 “You must not cut his hair throughout the time of his vow of consecration. He may be holy until the time is completed during which he consecrates himself to the Lord; he is to let the hair of his head grow long. 6 He must not go near a dead body during the time he consecrates himself to the Lord. 7 He is not to defile himself for his father or mother, or his brother or sister, when they die, while the mark of consecration to his God is on his head. 8 He is holy to the Lord during the time of consecration.

Three things to abstain from.

The High Priest.

Exodus 28:3

3 “You are to make a pure gold medallion and engrave it, like the engraving of a seal: Holy to the Lord.

Leviticus 21:11

11 He must not make himself unclean by touching a dead body. He must not go near a dead body, even if it is his own father or mother.

Exodus 19:5

5 Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, 6 and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.'

What would you do without to know God more deeply?

Numbers 6:9-12

9 "If someone suddenly dies near him, defiling his consecrated head, he must shave his head on the day of his purification; he is to shave it on the seventh day. 10 On the eighth day he is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 11 The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement on behalf of the Nazirite, since he incurred guilt because of the corpse. On that day he is to consecrate his head again. 12 He is to rededicate his time of consecration to the Lord and to bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. But do not count the initial period of consecration because it became defiled.

Start over.

Can't finish alone.

Numbers 6:13-15

13 "This is the law of the Nazirite: On the day his time of consecration is completed, he is to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. 14 He is to present an offering to the Lord of one unblemished year-old male lamb as a burnt offering, one unblemished year-old female lamb as a sin offering, one unblemished ram as a fellowship offering, 15 along with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of unleavened cakes made from fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers coated with oil.

Acts 21:23-24

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have made a vow. 24 Take these men, purify yourself along with them, and pay for them to get their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that what they were told about you amounts to nothing, but that you yourself are also careful about observing the law.

Jesus made an oath that provided a better and more lasting promise.

Hebrews 7:23-28. 23 Now many have become Levitical priests, since they are prevented by death from remaining in office. 24 But because he remains forever, he holds his priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them. 26 For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He doesn't need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all time when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men

who are weak, but the promise of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son, who has been perfected forever.

Christ made those things we most need true.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Word during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Have you ever set aside something unto the Lord (ie. a period time, maybe an activity) as an act of devotion? What was it? Share the experience?
- 3.) Did that commitment to the God become public or costly? How did you deal with the attention or uncertainty?
- 4.) Discuss the idea that God often grows and matures us alongside our deliberate pursuit of Him. How have you seen this proved in your own life?
- 5.) Two thoughts connected to the Nazarite vow were that you might have to start over and it was difficult to finish on your own. How can the gospel be understood alongside this vow?
- 6.) Read Hebrews 7:22-28. How does the passage highlight Jesus as the better vow keeper? What does that mean for us?
- 7.) Paul still made a vow to God in light of the gospel. Why do you think he did that? What was Paul trying to show or prove? How does the gospel make us even more bold rather than lazy?
- 8.) Finish your Life Group time praying and seeing how your group might pursue God together.