

# The Nazarite Vow

by Gary Wilkerson

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*Gary Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes the Nazarite vow as a profound commitment to spiritual separation and a deeper relationship with Jesus.*

**Duration:** 42:52

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:12, Exodus 34:9, Numbers 6:2-3, Numbers 6:13, Matthew 6:33, John 7:37-38, Acts 2:17

**Topics:** "Nazarite"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Numbers chapter 6 and the concept of the Nazarite vow. The vow is seen as a way for both men and women to consecrate themselves to the Lord and go deeper in their relationship with Jesus. The speaker shares a powerful story of a 118-year-old woman in Brazil who made this vow and dedicated her life to prayer and bringing deliverance to her city. Despite living in extreme poverty, she remained committed to her calling and led others to Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the importance of hungering for more of Jesus and living a life of consecration.

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## Transcript

Heavenly Father, we have gathered here in this place on this day because we are hungry for you, because we are thirsty for you, because on this morning we need you like we've never needed you before. We say with Moses, we cannot go without you. Change our hearts, renew our passion, send rivers of living water into our thirsting souls.

Bless the words that are brought forth from your scripture, and bless the ears that hear the word of the Living God. We give you thanks. In Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated. I'd like to thank Brother Erlo Steegan for allowing my father and I to be here with you in this setting. And if you turn with me in your scriptures to Numbers chapter 6, I want to talk about the Nazarite vow.

This is a vow only for those men and women of God who are hungry for more of Jesus. This is a lifestyle of consecration. This is a movement for those who want to go further than they've ever gone in Christ before.

I believe you are here today because something in your soul is yet unsatisfied. You want more of Jesus. You want more of His Word in your soul.

You want more of His Spirit in your life. You want Jesus more than you've ever wanted Him. Numbers chapter 6, then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, whether either a man or a woman consecrates an offering to take a vow of a Nazarite to separate himself to the Lord.

And the first part of verse 3 says, he shall separate himself. Now I like this because it says whether it be a man or a woman. Across the world today, many women are seen as second-class citizens in the kingdom of God.

Many women are seen as limited. This Numbers chapter 6 speaks of one of the greatest vows you can take to the Lord. And it speaks of men and women taking these vows.

I met a woman last year in Brazil. She is 118 years old. She was born a slave in Brazil.

Freed from slavery when she was nine years old. Met Jesus when she was 18 years old. Was forced to move into one of the worst ghettos and slums in Brazil.

Living in the worst poverty imaginable. When she was 18 years old, she met Jesus. She made this Nazarite vow.

She said I will pray. I will separate myself. I will live holy.

And I will give myself to bring deliverance to this city. And for the last 100 years, she's been on her knees every day. And when I met her in that slum, I told her our ministry has some financial resources.

We want to move you into a nice apartment. We want to get you a nice bed so you don't have to sleep on the dirt floors. And you should have seen her face.

I thought she was about to rebuke me in the name of Jesus. Because she felt I was tempting her to leave the call of God on her life. To spend every day of her life in that slum.

And pray that God would deliver those people. And she led a young man to Jesus. Who was a drug addict and a gang member.

He became the first Christian in that neighborhood. And many people were drug addicts. There were no police there.

The neighborhood was run by the gang lords. And she began to lead them to Jesus. Until one day, I walked into that church.

And there were hundreds of people. And the pastor that was preaching was the young man she led to Jesus. And he said to me, look at my congregation.

Every single one of these people, except for the smallest of children, were once drug addicts. Were once alcoholics. Were once bound up in witchcraft.

Some of the teenagers used to walk through these streets with machine guns. He says this is the church God has given me. And it's because of one reason.

This 118-year-old woman has spent the last 100 years in this Nazarite vow. Separating herself from the world. Having no ambition.

No desire for her own comfort. Not looking to be known as a world-famous evangelist. Nothing but a hunger for Jesus.

Nothing but a desire to see her people delivered. Men and women, together, we can consecrate ourselves to take a vow to serve the Lord. This vow is a very special vow.

In Numbers chapter 6, it speaks of three different things that the Nazarite separates himself from. It says there's no drinking of wine. It says that they can't touch dead bodies.

And it says they are not to cut their hair. Now, the vow may change in each generation. But there's an ideal or a concept behind the vow.

Such as saying, I will touch no unclean thing. The word, speaking of when a Nazarite would not cut his hair, comes from a root word found in Leviticus chapter 25. And in Leviticus 25, the Hebrew's word is a Nazir.

And the word Nazir means an unrestricted vine. But the outward growing of the hair was only symbolic of what was going on in the heart. These young men and these young women wanted an unrestricted heart.

Wanted a heart that was nothing holding them back from pursuing Jesus with all they had. No matter what was going on in the world around them. No matter how much they were tempted to prosperity.

No matter how much their flesh may have longed for the comforts of the world. They said, I gladly surrender that all. For the cause of Jesus Christ.

For the interest of the kingdom of God. I gladly give all that up. It's not even a sacrifice.

Because of Jesus. I want him so much. That those things mean nothing to me.

They asked God for an unrestricted love. For an unrestricted power. For an unrestricted passion.

To have no fear of man. To have no fear of the armies of God. To have no fear of the kingdom of darkness.

But to stand in passion for Jesus. This seems like it might be a difficult vow. When this vow was brought to a completion.

Some took a vow for a year. Some for seven years. Some took a vow for a lifetime.

For those when the vow was to be brought to a completion. They were called to offer a lamb. And then also a female lamb.

And then a ram. And then grain and bread offerings. Wine and drink offerings.

Cakes and raisins. Now these weren't rich people. Many of them had been traveling through the desert.

And this sacrifice that they were called to offer to the Lord. Would be like coming to me. And saying give the Lord your car.

Give the Lord all of the best of your clothes except for one last garment. Empty your bank account. And give it all to Jesus.

There's a gospel in America. That says come to Jesus. And he'll fill you with many things.

Many material things. And I do believe that God blesses us. But there's another gospel.

The Nazarite gospel. Like that 118 year old woman. It says take the whole world.

But give me Jesus. Lord if I could have one blessing. If you came to me and asked me if I could have one thing.

It would be a passion for Jesus. A heart on fire for God. An ever increasing love for him.

I will surrender all. So the Nazarite had to bring everything that he had. Sometimes he didn't even have enough to finish this offering.

You may remember in the book of Acts. In the book of Acts there were four young men. And James the pastor of the church in Jerusalem.

Says these four young men had taken a vow. And Paul comes to Jerusalem. And maybe he brought some resources with him.

So James says to Paul. Go to the temple. These young men can't pay the sacrifice.

Go with them. And help them. So that they could finish their sacrifice.

Here they were these four young men in Jerusalem. Totally sold out to Jesus. Had no material resources.

They needed help from other people just to pay the vow. But they gladly gave it all. How many of you are willing to gladly give it all for Jesus? How many of us would count it a privilege to give our all to Jesus? There's one last thing in number six I want to show you.

In verse twenty one. Look at the middle part of verse twenty one. It speaks of the vows to the Lord.

The offerings for his separation. And besides that. Whatever else is available.

Whatever else is in his hand. Have you been giving? Have you been sacrificing? Do you feel broken? Do you feel you've given it all to Jesus? The Nazarite has such a heart. Such a single minded devotion.

That after having given it all. He turns to the Lord. And says Lord.

If there's anything else in my hand. If there's anything else in my heart. I give it all to you.

Silver and gold have I none. But a heart of passion I have. And I will not give you a divided heart.

I will not give you an unclean heart. I will not give you a heart that is part mine and part yours. If there's anything left of me.

If there's any work of flesh in me. If there's any ambition for my own gain in me. If it's still in my hand.

Even if I've sacrificed everything else. Just that little bit that I can still hold in my own hand. I lay that down before you.

Because I love you. Because you were my king. Because you were my Lord.

Because you sacrificed all for me. I want more of Jesus. I want more of Jesus.

I thank Jesus for all he's given me. I have a portion of Jesus. But I want more of Jesus.

I want more tomorrow. I want more the next day. I want more every day.

Of all the lessons I thank the Lord that my father has taught me. The one I thank him most for is this one single lesson. He told me when I was a teenager.

That a man can have as much of Jesus as he wants. You and I can have as much of Jesus as we want. We may not all preach well.

We may not all be excellent leaders. You may be like me in the ministry. And may not have great administrative skills.

You may not be eloquent when you preach like me. I'm not eloquent. You may not be like me.

You may not have riches. But you can have as much of Jesus as you want. Do you want more of Jesus? I want to be like David.

When he was young. The Psalms record his life. And he said I was glad to go with a congregation to the house of the Lord.

He was a busy man. Leading and administrating. But he always loved that one day of the week where they would go to the house of the Lord.

But something started growing in his heart. One day was no longer enough. And he says oh that I might spend a day in his presence.

Better is one day in his presence than a thousand elsewhere. Do you see what's happening to David? When he's young. He says one day I want to go to church.

But that's not enough any longer. Now he gets to the church. And after the service is over.

The music is finished. The preaching is done. He says it's not enough.

I want to stay longer. I want to hear more of Jesus. I want to sing more of his songs.

If everyone leaves the church. I want to lay behind the pulpit. And just spend the day in his presence.

Because there's no better day spent. No greater time than we can enjoy. Than those days with Jesus.

When I started the ministry. I told my church. One day a week.

I'm coming into the sanctuary. And I'm going to lay down behind the pulpit. And I don't want anybody to disturb me.

And I would just lay in God's presence. And sometimes it was hard work. Many times I fell asleep.

Has that ever happened to you? But I didn't quit. Because I was hungry. And there were times where the glory of God came.

And I remember times laying on my face in the carpet. Saying to Jesus. I love world missions.

I love preaching the gospel. I love leading a congregation. I love strategizing about how to reach my city.

I love training young men in the ministry. But there's nothing more. There's no greater pleasure.

Than this moment with you Jesus. This moment right here. This moment right now.

There's no better joy. There's no greater pleasure. It doesn't get better than this.

The vice president of Zambia came to our conference last week. He said this is like Christmas. When we can all gather together.

And seek the Lord. And I believe that. But for me.

Christmas. Is that one day. That one better day.

That one day in the house of the Lord. It's better than a thousand elsewhere. And I also want to tell you.

That that one day. Will empower the thousand elsewhere. If you don't have that one day.

You can spend a thousand elsewhere. And you can preach eloquent sermons. And you can lead large ministries.

But without that one day. It will be without power. It will be without glory.

It will be without Jesus. But David hasn't had enough. He says Lord I love this one day with you.

And I'm a very busy man. Is there any way though Lord. I could have just a little bit more.

And a cry gets into his soul. That one day on my face before you is not enough. Maybe I could give up being a king.

And get a new job. Oh that I could be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. That way every single day.

Seven days of the week. It would be my job. To stand at the door.

To stand at the door. And be there in the house of the Lord. Not just the physical building.

But he was hungry for more than just one day. And I told my church. I'm hungry for more.

I know you want me to be a counselor. I know you want me to marry the young couples and bury those who are dying. I know you want me to put the brochures and the bulletins together every week.

But I need more time with Jesus. I'm hungry for more of Jesus. And I asked some men in my church.

Would you visit the sick. Would you feed the poor. Would you do the weddings and the funerals.

Would you allow me to become a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. Would you allow me to do what Paul did. And separate myself for prayer and ministry of the word.

So that when I stood in the pulpit. So that when we had to make important decisions about what God was going to be doing in our city and hearing him about that. I could know that I've heard from God.

I wanted more of Jesus. I believed my father. I believed my father.

But I could have as much of Jesus as I wanted. And David says something else now. I like being a doorkeeper.

I'm here in his presence now every day. But I still want more. And now he says this.

Oh that I might dwell. Oh that I might dwell in the house of the Lord. All the days of my life.

Not just a job at the door. But living there. Oh that he might dwell.

Oh but he's hungry for more. And as he gets older. He says I'm dwelling now in the house of the Lord.

I began to spend days in my sanctuary with the doors shut. People kept entering. No matter how much I tried to train them.

They'd come in and interrupt me. And I understand David's heart. When in Psalms.

I believe it's either chapter 90 or 91. He says that he that dwelleth in the secret place. The secret place of the Most High.

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Now he wants to get in the shadow. Now he wants to dwell in a secret place.

He wants to hide. In the temple. In the Holy of Holies.

It was the Ark of the Covenant. And on the Ark of the Covenant were two angels with their wings covering the covenant. And I picture David going behind that Ark of the Covenant.

He had brought it into a tent. And he was dwelling in the house of the Lord. But he didn't want to be interrupted.

So I could picture him in my own understanding. Going behind that Ark of the Covenant. And kneeling down behind it.

Hiding under those wings. And saying to Jesus. Saying to God.

This is my secret place. Abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. And uninterrupted.

He wanted to be an unrestricted vine. To have a Nazarite heart. To surrender all to Jesus.

Joshua had this heart as well. Do you remember Moses as he would speak to the Lord face to face? He would go into that tent wouldn't he? And he would spend the day in that tent. And in Exodus chapter 33.

It says that Moses talked to God as a man would speak to a friend face to face. But Joshua would stand outside or sit outside the tent. And the Bible says that at night.

Moses would go back into the camp. But Joshua. The son of Nun.

A young man. Would not depart from the tent. He wasn't in the inner court yet.

He wasn't face to face yet. He didn't exactly have what Moses had yet. I consider myself still a reasonably young man.

And I see some elders here. I see my own father. I see Pastor Erlo Stig.

I see distinguished elders. Men with history with God. Women with a history of God.

Been shut in with God. And I want what they have. I'm not there yet.

But I've made a covenant. I've made a vow. That as I spend the day with Jesus.

When they go back into the camp at night. I say to the Lord. This is my catch up time.

Now that they're not talking to you. Now that maybe they're sleeping. I can have a little extra time with you.

Because I want to know you like they know you. Because I believe. One day.

I'll be called into the tent. I'll be that man. I'll be the one that has that intimacy with you.

Friends. I want to encourage you. When you find a man or woman of God who has more of Jesus than you do.

Get a godly jealousy. A godly envy in your heart. And say to yourself.

I want what they have. But I want more than they have. I want what my father David Wilkerson has.

I want what Pastor Erlo Stigin has. But I'll unashamedly tell both of you. That before it's said and done.

If you'll excuse me to say so. I want more than you have. And that's going to take a consecration.

Beyond my strength. Because I can't do it. I look at their lifestyles.

Totally separated from the Lord. I look at my own father. And he's so devout to the Lord.

How could I ever get a double portion? Numbers chapter 6 tells you how. That second verse. It says when a man or woman consecrates himself.

One translation says when that man makes a special vow. The word consecration. Or devotion.

Or separation. Is used almost 20 times in this scripture. 20 times in this one chapter.

And it's always used. It always uses the exact same Hebrew word. Except for one time.

And it's the first time. It's the beginning. It's of first importance.

And this Hebrew word. Is pay law. Pay law.

And this word pay law. Is a different interpretation for the word devotion. It is used 15 times in scripture.

14 times it is used to describe God. When God parted the Red Sea. The Bible said he did wonders.

The word wonders there is pay law. When Joshua crossed the Jordan. He cried out to God.

You have done wonders in our midst. The crossing into the promised land. Was a supernatural work of God.

It was pay law. Whenever God did this supernatural wonder. The word means undescrivable.

Beyond human capability. So supernatural that it could only be attributed to God. Only God can do it.

That word pay law is mentioned 14 times in that way. But only one time. Is it described about a man.

When a man takes a pay law vow. When you take this Nazarite vow. It's not just self discipline.

It's not just someone who has a little bit more fire. It's not someone who just is able to humanly consecrate themselves because they are very devout. That doesn't impress me.

Devotion alone does not impress me. Devotion alone does not impress God. Most Muslims pray more than most Christians.

But that's not a pay law work. That's not a God work. There are religions that will fast for days on end.

But that's not a pay law work. I'm not interested in just human devotion. I'm not interested in a church telling me what's right and what's wrong.

I'm not interested in a church just telling me here's the rules and regulations. I'm not interested in how they tell me to separate myself if it's man's ideas of devotion. Because I've found for me that kind of devotion doesn't work.

I need a supernatural devotion. I need God who began this good work in me. He began this work of devotion.

A Christ-centered devotion. A Holy Spirit devotion. A fire from the Holy Ghost devotion.

A wondrous and awesome devotion that comes only from God. Pastor, if you're living in your own strength, trying hard in your own power to live disciplined, trying in your own human capabilities to preach under the anointing, it's not going to work. The demons aren't going to flee.

The sin is going to come back. It's crouching at the door. It's looking for entrance back into your heart.

And making promises, coming to the altar, and telling God, I'll never do that again. I promise you I'll fast and pray. I promise you I'll separate myself.

In human strength, it's not enough. You need the supernatural. You need the empowering of the Holy Ghost.

Otherwise you'll be exhausted. You'll want to give up. You'll want to surrender.

And your works will be effortless. Your works will be without effect and without power. Would you stand with me, please? Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we have heard about the Nazarite today. And I believe there are men and women in this place who long to take a Nazarite vow. Not a human vow.

Every human vow I've taken, Lord, I've broken. But I thank you for that supernatural consecration that helps me to keep your word. That supernatural endowment of power from on high, that fills me with a new passion for Jesus.

Give that to us, Jesus.

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