

1Corinthians 19-02-03a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to see everyone here and to spend this time together in fellowship and in the study of God's Word the enjoyment of Music which I think is dear to God's heart. He invented it.

He gave us the capability to perform it and to enjoy it and It is a wonderful Part of our worship and we're grateful for that. We look forward to it here between our sessions this morning we're going to continue our study in 1st Corinthians the final chapter by way of Acts and we'll be looking at a couple of chapters in Acts as well as some Old Testament scripture in the book of Numbers so we'll be Making that other kind of music which is the riffling of the pages of the Word of God Today is the 3rd of February 2019 and Our study in 1st Corinthians has brought us to the final chapter and to the collection for the Saints Paul's Discernment of where he should go when and why and We've seen also the travel plans of others such as Timothy being guided by God through circumstances and in some cases Plans being contingent on what God reveals through the Arrangement of those circumstances, of course We can succeed and we can also Not succeed in Those determinations and we're going to see an interesting case this morning of Divine guidance versus human free will if you will So let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our time of investigation this morning, and then we'll begin father we are grateful for this time of Gathering our unity as a church our sharing and the good things that you have blessed us with the provision that you have made for us the opportunities that we have to speak the truth to one another in love to be encouraged and motivated as we Journey through this life together in the light of your word and with the goal and the desire of living in a way that reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus and is A following after him in terms of faith and obedience. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word and these Events in the life of the Apostle Paul that God the Holy Spirit will Illuminate them for us and teach them to us in a way that is meaningful and helpful and will guide us in the Progress of our own lives we want to live Pleasing in your sight we want to be prepared for service and for opportunity in the ages that are to come and we know that these Potentials and privileges are ours because of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Almost unimaginably Great work on our behalf the expression of your love his love for us his faithfulness in going to the cross and bearing our sins in partaking forevermore of our flesh and becoming the mediator between heaven and earth and between your throne and our Fallen condition, we are so grateful.

We thank you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you that in this age we are Especially related to you through him and we pray that everything we do this morning and in the light of the word we learn Will be pleasing in your sight. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen We turn first And as I said, we will be turning a number of places this morning But we turn first to first Corinthians chapter 16 You will remember that the subject of the collection for the Saints was introduced here and It is discussed in more detail in the second letter to the Corinthians both of these Discussions are Antecedent to the Trip that Paul is going to make to

deliver this gift. We saw him last time mentioned that once they had set aside at the beginning of the week some Portion and it isn't a proportion there wasn't a tenth it wasn't some tithe related thing but as they saw That they had something to set by and this didn't necessarily have to be money Some of the members of the early church were slaves Many of them were of a lower economic class and would not necessarily have Financial means to contribute but they might have other things they they might have been weavers of cloth They we saw Lydia and the the seller of purple and there might have been those who could set aside other things that would be beneficial To the poor and so whatever it was could have been grain from the harvest. It could have been Goods that were made by hand It could have been objects that might have come into their possession that had value and could be sold later.

Whatever it was They would set aside So that there be no collections when I come Paul said and he is desirous of avoiding any sort of pressure this is kind of the opposite of what you see the church doing in a lot of cases today where there will be a special speaker or there will be a Some other occasion or anniversary or whatever and a special collection is is taken up at that time and This doesn't make that wrong. It is not how you do a thing it is why you do a thing and Paul is anxious in the case of the Corinthians that it not be done under any sort of Pressure or that they feel the need to do something extraordinary When he arrives it he's hoping that they will set this aside in advance, so he says and This morning not to confuse you but because I did all of my studying out of my old most favorite Bible Which is a King James if you hear a few these and thous, that's why I'm going to read from it because I have I have memory of where things are on pages and If I switch Bibles in midstream I can't find anything so bear with me my my stuff's coming out of the King James this morning Yours is close enough. You won't you won't get lost Now concerning the collection for the Saints.

This is 1st Corinthians 16 1 as I have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye so it's not unique to Corinth This has been a suggestion for all of them in fact more than a suggestion He says I've given order now Let's just think about that word order for a moment There was a time when I could give orders why I Fulfilled a rank I was an officer and there are those Who are? Required to respond to the orders of officers if I give an order there is authority that goes with that rank Right so if Paul is giving an order What is his authority who is he to be giving orders orders to the churches of Galatia or the church in Corinth? What's the source of his authority? The Lord Jesus Christ personally commissioned him as an apostle right I? Want to establish that point now because it's going to come up here a little bit later in a different context Upon the first day of the week verse 2 let every one of you lay by him in store as He has prospered notice God is in italics there just as Fitting as appropriate as you're able it's up to you lay by if you've if you've been prospered That there be no gatherings when I come no collections when I come and this is the same word that was in verse 1 Concerning the gathering concerning the collection Then verse 3 when I come whoever you shall approve Them will I send with letters to bring your liberality to Jerusalem remember we switch the position of that letters So that it makes sense the and and it makes sense in Greek, but it came across strangely in English here Whoever you approve them I will send with letters and once again, this is the

apostolic Approval the apostolic authority that would come with this gift if Paul cannot come himself he will send an apostolic letter that authenticates and Verifies the legitimacy of this gift and may have some further instructions about how they hope it will be used your liberality to Jerusalem If it be fitting if it be suitable that I go also They shall go with me in lieu of a letter the Apostle himself will go Then I will come to you, and I shall pass through Macedonia for I do pass through Macedonia some of your earliest King James versions will append a superscript to this letter and if you look in an old And my grandmother's King James for example says at the bottom of the letter written from Philippi and and that's Not correct. He's in Ephesus. We know that from verse 8. I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

That's where he is He's writing this letter from Ephesus, but there was a misunderstanding of this passing through Macedonia and There was this Uninspired note that said written from Philippi if you ever see a Bible like that you can safely disregard it They they just didn't understand verse 5 It may be that I will abide yea and winter with you that you may bring me on my journey wherever I Go for I will not see you now by the way but I trust to tarry a while with you if the Lord permit and this is much more emphatic in Greek than it comes across in English, but the second person plural pronouns here you all If you notice how many of them are Included in verses 6 and 7 Winter with you that you may bring me on my journey both of those pronouns are put in the emphatic position and are stated instead of just included in the verb and Paul is expressing here Sort of subtly and a little bit indirectly the importance that he places on seeing them and spending time with them It's important to him, and he says yes, I'm passing through Macedonia, and I've got this schedule, but you are important you all Figure prominently in my plans and priorities, and I want to winter with you I would like you to be the ones to speed me on my journey I Unfortunately will not see you now in In my travels by the way, but I trust to tarry a while I want to spend some quality time with you, and you recall that he was there Well over a year and a half when the church was founded but I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost the great and effectual door is open and we talked about the nature of divine guidance and so long as we can see that God has given us an opportunity that is effectual and there is meaningful fruit of the Spirit fruit in terms of blessing In us and through us and around us in the situation Generally speaking as a general principle of guidance you tarry there. I will tarry here because God is obviously Getting good things done with my presence here, and this is a helpful Consideration when we are looking at our circumstances to see You know as long as the Ravens are bringing the food And you're sitting by the brook Cherith it may seem like a strange place to be But if that's where God is working And that's where God would have us be then We're Elijah, and we just sit there at the point that the brook dries up and the birds stop bringing food Hmm, maybe God's saying it's time to leave so it seems self-evident But sometimes we have to remind ourselves that God Is a God of common sense and If something is bearing the fruit related to your gifts your abilities to bear that fruit then We have to consider any sort of a change pretty carefully You know the vernacular secular view of this is one in the hand is worth two in the bush if you've got something going on now A potential that is largely unknown needs to have some pretty serious divine Instigation with it I think many people have have thought that they heard or saw the leading of the Lord to leave

what was a fruitful and beneficial Place and Opportunity and have discovered that that might have been something that appealed, but it ends up being a dead end and A branch that ends up having to be broken off So we look at the Apostle Paul's example here, and we're going to look at it very closely this morning because of the collection Turn a few pages over to 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 Moreover brethren we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia How in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality To their power I bear witness and beyond their power they were willing of themselves beseeching us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and Take the fellowship of the ministering. This is actually Diakonia, this is deacon a form of the word deacon the fellowship of Service or ministry to the Saints this they did not as we hoped But first gave themselves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God In a nutshell as Paul has traveled through Macedonia these churches although they themselves are under a great deal of pressure and persecution and hardship heard about the plight of the poor in Jerusalem and Having first given themselves, and it's a wonderful phrase here They first gave themselves to the Lord in 8 5 having given themselves Now they look around for what else they can give but If you skip that step the a lot of the giving may be Not something that God can really bless it has to come from someone who has already first given themselves and unto us meaning that they Appreciated the apostolic witness the ministry the teaching the guidance that the Apostle Paul gave the treasure of the gospel that he brought to them and the the teachings of the mystery and the ways of Christ They valued that and they devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles just as they did giving themselves to the Lord In so much that we besought Titus that as he had begun he would also finish in you the same grace also Paul has sent Titus back to Corinth to Hopefully do a similar thing and that the Corinthians will follow that pattern of giving themselves to the Lord of Being conscious of the needs of Saints around them we've seen their Insensitivity to that in 1st Corinthians and Paul had to exhort and Chasten them about how they were acting at meals and their insensitivity to those who were taking offense by various associations that they might have and So Therefore verse 7 as you abound in everything and notice that this is Corresponding to in the same way that you abound or to the extent that you abound in faith in Utterance and in knowledge and in all diligence and in your love to us See that you abound in this grace also and you notice the word see is in italics there It sounds a little stronger in English than it is in in Greek.

This is more of a hope of Paul It's difficult to command That which you have just said needs to come from the heart, you know, I Trust that you'll give yourself and that you'll be concerned about the Saints see that you abound in this grace I mean you it's it's stronger here. You notice it's just Paul's hope that as They're growing and abounding in faith utterance and knowledge in diligence and in love that this grace will grow Concomitantly that it's another thing that stays in balance with that and notice in verse 8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the earnestness of others and to prove the sincerity of your love and Essentially what he's saying here is that I am Illustrating this principle by telling you about the churches in Macedonia and what they have done and This is a way that to the extent that you are fulfilling the two great commandments to love God and love one another Here's a practical way you can do so there is

this need and as the churches in Macedonia became aware they responded This is your opportunity to express to prove In the sense of demonstrating what's already there. It's not a way of generating love.

It's not a way of manufacturing simulated love, but you know, this is proof in the sense of If a mine proves out you go down there and you find that there really is gold and So this is a way of showing that there really is love here is an avenue of expression for you Know verse 9. It's the 2nd Corinthians 8 9 You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor That through his poverty you might be rich and in this I give advice Not by way of command, this is a suggestion this is Apostolic advice this is expedient for you who have begun before not only to do but also to be willing a year ago Now therefore perform the doing of it that as there was a readiness to will so there may be a Performance you you said that this was a good idea when I talked to you a year ago you were All for it There's always in church subscription plans when they're wanting to build a new building especially They'll hand out pledge cards I pledge Will give \$30 a month You know if we go forward with this building plan, and there's bills associated with it You can count on me as the deacons or the elders Figure out the church budget and all of this money that they're going to be sending out They need to know that they're going to have a certain amount of income and so they'll ask the congregation Pledge this much that we can count on coming into the coffers so that we can write the the checks on the loan It's going to take to build well The they always have to apply a factor and say well it we've had total pledges of In a large church, let's say \$30,000 a month well They will typically not budget and count on getting more than about half of that because a lot of people who pledge can't come through the Circumstances health issues car died had to buy another one. You know as a Lady said when Patty and I were filling out some By the house paperwork we said well, you know we're hoping to do this at the other and she said well you know life happens and you you may Look at a rosy future, and then life happens, and well it does and so people that Intend to do things are not always able to come through what Paul is saying here is in verse 11 perform the doing and We want to be careful to not commit to things related to our spiritual life that We are there's a possibility that we can't come through We can intend we can work toward it but to pledge and to promise and to make a commitment needs to be a serious thing on our part and I Think this may be behind The if the Lord wills if God permits you know Paul said that Just a few verses earlier in Corinthians. You know I hope to see you if if God permits There's two different words there one is is God permits and the other if God wills and So he is saying perform the doing of it you had the rip the readiness of will let there be also performance out of that which you have out of what you have and They didn't commit to an amount they committed to a gift, and he says great or small Let's get the gift together so I can take it if there be a willing mind It is accepted according to that which a man has not according to that which he has not verse 12 Ideally we can make the kind of commitments that we fulfill the extent of it may be uncertain You're moving I will show up and help you move how much furniture I can carry before my back gives out God only knows, but I'll be there We We I don't know how much food we can bring to the potluck, but we'll bring something It may just be a bag of chips, but we'll be there and we'll bring something so It is

helpful to observe Paul saying What counts is? That when you make a commitment you follow through the extent God will remember the widow with the two mites It is she has evidently Before the Lord made a commitment to Support the work of the Lord at the temple well that particular month all she could bring was a couple of small copper coins a couple of leptar, but that's what she brought and he says It is accepted according to what you have You work with what you have if it's just a little bit then work with that if it's a lot work with that I Mean not that others may be eased and you burdened But by an equality that now at this time your abundance can supply their want So that their abundance also can be a supply for your want that there may be equality And this is also a helpful bit of guidance the kind of Assistance and the kind of support that we can render to one another shouldn't be So costly that it creates an imbalance There should be Give and take in both directions.

I would say give and receive maybe in in both directions and Not sort of a one-way perpetual Flow of Resources the church is designed to be such that all of the members and all of the gifts function in multiple directions, so This is sort of a guarding against just One way charity That can actually create dependence or can create a Real inequity it can be a hardship on the recipient if they have no way to reciprocate or to provide something that's within their Purview it's it can be a big distraction And so there needs to be sensitivity Paul has been arguing to the Corinthians for Sensitivity to others all the way through the first letter and he does the same thing in the second letter And he does so here by an equality there should be opportunity for balance and If we are fortunate enough to receive blessing we can look for ways to be a blessing and to help maintain that equality Right now you've got an abundance, and they've got a want There will be a time when you have a need and they've got an abundance and it can be In the immaterial realm as well as It is written verse 15 he that had gathered much had nothing over he that had gathered little had no lack It's like the common grace that God gave Israel with the manna Which is what he's referring to back there in Exodus so Thanks be to God who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you And this is another provision that God makes it's another form of divine guidance Titus has a heart full of concern and Is anxious to do what he can in Corinth and God put that Care into his heart he accepted the expertise Exhortation being diligent of his own accord he went to you And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches and so on So this is the phase of Encouraging everyone to set aside and to make this gift possible Whatever it may be now turn over to Acts and let's see how this turned out We'll begin in Acts chapter chapter 17 This is in the middle of the Same chronology if you will that we had in Our epistle to the Corinthians and After he has traveled through Athens and given his great sermon at Mars Hill You've come to Acts chapter 18 after these things Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth He finds Aquila and Priscilla, and they are tent makers. They work together every Sabbath. He goes to the Synagogue and we saw this at the be at the introduction of our letter Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ Paul was pressed in his spirit Paul had this urge to preach to the Jews and Notice that and was or in italics there testify to the Jews Jesus Christ now There are 11 Disciples you lose James early and so you have ten who are sent to the Jews.

There is one Apostle sent to the Gentiles Who is the one Apostle specifically sent to the Gentiles by the Lord Jesus Christ himself? It's Paul as He goes to the Gentiles. He's going to encounter Christian Jews he's going to encounter converts and There is certainly going to be some overlap, but his mission is the Gentiles Every time he turns to the Jews trouble happens Notice here They opposed themselves and blasphemed So Paul shakes his raiment This is kind of like Jesus telling the disciples if you go to a village And they don't accept your message go out and shake the dust off Well, he's shaken the dust of these people symbolically off of himself, and he says Your blood be on your own heads. I am clean from now on I will go to the Gentiles well he was told to do that from the beginning I Will go to the Gentiles, so he's I'm finished with trying to go to the Jews.

I'll go to the Gentiles So he departed from there entered into a certain man's house named Titus justice in Corinth who worshiped God He's got a house right next to the synagogue and so on he continued there verse 11 a year and six months teaching the Word of God to them then you have this dispute in front of Galileo the Roman Pro consul there he's the deputy in Achaia that region and The Jews accused Paul and bring him to the judgment seat this fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law verse 13 he's contrary to the law of Moses and Galileo basically kicks him all out and So the Jews find Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, and they blame him for letting Paul talk in the synagogue and because Paul Lost his focus in my view and tried to go to the Jews when that's not his mission He basically gets Sosthenes beat to a pulp Because after all is said and done all the Greeks took Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue and beat him before the judgment seat and Galileo didn't stop them. He just didn't care. He said that's a that's a That's a intramural squabble there.

They're all Jews of some stripe. I don't know what they're arguing about some Yeshua some Jesus involved here. I don't know what it is, but it doesn't break any Roman laws So get the hints so Sosthenes suffers for allowing Paul to preach in the synagogue and you know there are times when Paul has gone to the synagogue and found the God fearers and and has has connected and has been able to establish a church and be a great blessing, but Evidently This didn't go well So he tarries there a good while in verse 18 took his leave of the brethren sailed from there to Syria with him Priscilla and Aquila Having shorn his head in Cancria for he had a vow now Cancria is just down the road from Corinth and so Paul Takes a vow we don't know what the vow was, but this is because of the hair shaving We know that this is a Nazarite vow Now we're going to be talking about Nazarite vow to some extent this morning, so let's review it real quickly Turn back to Numbers chapter 6 Numbers chapter 6 we're gonna Move through this fairly quickly you can come back and visit the details at your leisure You can just put a note of Numbers chapter 6 next to any mentions.

We have this morning of a vow Lord spoke to Moses. This is from God Numbers 6 to speak to the children of Israel and say to them when either a man or a woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite to separate themselves unto the Lord and the word Nazarite they're basically means a separated one this is I am going to take a period of time and I'm going to exclude things that are normal things that are not illegitimate, but I Am going to focus. I'm

going to separate myself I'm going to create sort of a purified atmosphere around myself to focus on something Related to my spiritual life You could you could take a Nazarite vow and say no television no internet for 30 days I Really feel like I've drifted from the Lord, and I'm going to take the time I would normally spend on what's perfectly legitimate, but I'm going to plow that time into my relationship with God I want to draw closer, or maybe I've got an opportunity to be a blessing to others some sort of ministry.

I want to Pastor could do this and say I'm getting ready to start a new series I'm going to take time that I might have normally spent doing Harmless things, but I'm going to dedicate that time to preparation and be sure I can do the very best job possible It's it You're not Getting rid of things that you should have already gotten rid of these are legitimate things, so He shall separate himself verse 3 from wine and strong drink and shall drink no vinegar of wine or Vinegar of strong drink neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes nor eat moist grapes or dried This is symbolic nothing intrinsically wrong with grapes nothing intrinsically wrong with wine or Weak wine the vinegar of wine was sort of a weak wine that wasn't fully fermented, but Why wine and grapes crushed grapes dried grapes? Nothing from the vine All the days of his separation verse for yeats nothing that is made of the vine tree from the kernels even to the husk Why is this? The Symbol of prosperity that the spies brought back to Israel from their investigation of the land was Giant clusters of grapes so big that they had to bring the two guys with a pole and a great big cluster of grapes They were just it's a sign of prosperity. It's a sign of enjoyment Wine makes the heart merry it is the normal enjoyment of Pleasurable pursuits, and this is just a symbolic Reflection of that It is the Merry heart it is the normal enjoyment of pleasant pursuits. That's what the grapes Signify All the days of his separation He's going to avoid these verse 5 all the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head until the days be fulfilled When he has separated himself to the Lord He will be holy and will let the locks of the hair of his head grow all the days that he separates himself to the Lord He will come at no dead body Now people normally wouldn't do this, but there were times somebody has to When a family member passes away somebody is going to deal with that Situation and then be unclean until evening and go through purification well.

He's not allowed to do the normal Contact with things that might defile you even for the rest of the day, and then be you know He will be unclean until evening well he's Somebody else is going to have to do that the normal chores of life that might bring you anywhere near defilement He's staying away from that Again, I think TV is a good And possibly the internet is a good example of this where you know you don't know what you're going to see when you watch live television especially in the commercials So he separates himself He will not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother for his brother or his sister when they die Because the consecration of his God is upon his head Notice this is just for a time He's not going to be Gandhi and sit by the side of the road and wait for handouts. This is a set time it's special and Any man dies very suddenly all of these other provisions here? Pertain verse 12 he will consecrate to the Lord the days of his separation Then he will bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering But the days that were before shall be lost because his separation was

defiled now verse 13 This is the law of the Nazarite when the days of his separation are fulfilled He shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord a he lamb of the first year without blemish for burnt offering a you lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering and a ram without blemish for peace offering And a basket of unleavened bread cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil and their meal Offering and their drink offerings. He's basically going to do all of the first six chapters of Leviticus here And what is this? the Offerings are the normal way to worship and he is going to signify the end of his days of special dedication and special separation by Reflecting a return to standard Levitical practice.

He has been in an exceptional status He is returning to a normal status and a man normally has short hair But he's going to let his hair grow long and we assume a woman would just let her hair grow longer during that time The priest will bring the offerings before the Lord Offer the sin offering in the burnt offering and the ram for a sacrifice of peace offering with the basket of unleavened bread The meal offering and his drink offering now verse 18 The Nazarite will shave the head of his separation at the door and this is his Roche Nazir Oh His Roche Nazir and then the O on the end is his his or her So it's actually he will shave his Nazirite head the head that is marked out and is visible to others notice that there is a component of a vow that is known only to the one making the vow But that there is a vow is visible to others by these noticeable signs of separation refusing wine refusing grapes Refusing in a case where they might normally be involved in a family death Sorry, no, I have a vow that's all I have to say is I'm in a Nazirite status you can see it by my My growing hair here. I'm not doing the normal Trimming of my hair But at verse 18 the Nazirite will shave his Nazirite head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation Notice, this is a public place You're there where everyone can see Take the hair of his Nazirite Head and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. I Wish I had time to go into why the hair goes into the fire of the peace offering If you review what we learned about what the peace offering represents and that this dedication to the Nazirite is the The Nazir is Shaved after the Nazirite you should notice hair isn't even there or head and The priest will wave them for a wave offering before the Lord This is holy for the priest with the wave breast and heave shoulder after that the Nazirite may drink wine This is the law of the Nazirite who has vowed and of his offering to the Lord for his separation beside that that his hand shall get, according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation." A couple of things to note here.

First of all, this is a vow that is the status of having made some pledge before the Lord is known to others and your behavior and your appearance both reflect that. There is behavior and there is appearance. People know that you have dedicated yourself in some way, shape or form to something of the Lord.

It is for a period of time, number two, and number three, it comes to an end and it comes to an end in a very public way and, I might add, a very expensive way. It's expensive. The offerings involved here, in addition to any of the offerings that he had to offer in verse 9-13, there may have been some special offerings involved.

You saw that up in verse 12, trespass offering. But when the vow is complete, there is a he-lamb, a you-lamb and a ram without blemish. This is three animals plus you've got unleavened cakes, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil as a meal offering, and there is a drink offering.

You've got to find that which makes up the drink offering. This is substance and it is substantial. These things are very important and they are value.

That's why they were sacrifices in the first place. It was something of value. And if they are qualified as an offering, they are in a rare class of unblemished and unscarred animals and they cost.

But the Nazarite, if he is going to undertake the vow, he's got to first count the cost. I say again, if you are going to make a commitment, you need to first count the cost. You need to be prepared before you make the vow to follow through.

This is a matter of planning ahead. This is a matter of knowing in advance that you will be able to bear the cost. You don't make a frivolous vow and then when you get to the end of it, oh well I've got no lambs and I've got no ram and I've got no unleavened cakes and I can't afford any drink offering materials and so on.

If you do not have the wherewithal, if God has not given you enough provision to cover a Nazarite vow, don't take it. See what I'm saying? If God has something to say about this, you're not going to dictate God's plan to him. If you're in a position to make a special dedication, a special effort, focus for a limited time to the exclusion of other things, set aside worldly pleasures and the normal responsibilities that might be involved to your family, you've got to be able to cover the cost.

If I want to take 30 days of unpaid leave because I'm on a spiritual quest, I need to be sure my family has got money to pay the bills or guess what, God doesn't want me taking 30 unpaid days and going on a spiritual quest. Provision has to be there. Does that make sense? Oh I'll trust God like Abraham, he'll provide me a ram and the thickets.

No, you're the one voluntarily. Nazarite vow is voluntary but you've got to be intelligent and proactive about ensuring that if you make a vow, you can fulfill it. You think about Jephthah, he made a vow and he fulfilled it but because he was hasty and unthinking in making the vow, it cost somebody.

Because Paul was, in my view, hasty and unthinking in trying to preach to the Jews, he got Sosthenes beat up. Somebody else is going to suffer if you make a personal commitment that you haven't thought through and that God has not blessed with provision in advance. We do these things prayerfully.

We look for God's guidance. Lord, is it appropriate for me to make this personal dedication? I don't want to cost somebody else. Okay, that's background.

Now, why are we belaboring this? Well, we've seen plenty of application at the personal level. The illustration and the biblical support that bears out what we have observed is coming up in our second session. So we will pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to see what happens with vows related to the Apostle Paul and specifically with this Nazarite vow and the shaving of the head. How does it turn out? We'll see when we come back.