

## SELF PROTECTIVE VOWS

*(taken from Steps to Freedom in Christ, Neil Anderson, Addendum 1e)*

It is critical to understand that a vow is never made outside of the context of a prayer. Often, as either an unconscious or willful reaction to painful life events, children, adolescents, and adults make “inner vows” (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12). An inner vow is defined as:

***“An independent self-protective determination toward or away from a course of action and outside the will of God, set by the mind and heart into all of one’s being.”***

When we make inner vows we are, in ignorance, making a prayer. Self protecting vows are empty wells (Jeremiah 2:13) made outside the will of God, made unwittingly in agreement with the enemy, and destined to fail. Isaiah 28:15 says:

*“You boast, we have entered into covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.”*

Examples of self-protective vows, “empty wells” or “hiding places” are:

“I will never let anyone have my heart again.”

“I will not allow myself to need.”

“I’d rather die than be like my father (or mother)”

“I must always stay in control.”

“I will never be taken advantage of again.”

“I will never give without getting back.”

“I cannot let my deepest sins be known or I’ll be rejected.”

“I must be strong.”

“I must never completely trust.”

“I must always avoid conflict at all cost, because conflict is terrible.”

“I must always be nice.”

“I will never let a man (or woman) control me.”

“I must not show weakness.”

“I will never allow myself to be dependent on anyone.”

“I will not feel pain.” (I will not let others see my pain.)

“I will never amount to anything.”

“I will always be an outsider.”

“I will never be poor again.”

“I will never be completely transparent.”

When we make these self-protective inner vows there is an evil one who “honors” that prayer and assigns his fallen companions alongside you in allegiance to support the vow made outside the will of God. Every time you begin to jeopardize the self-protective vow through developing healthy, holy intimacy, there is one speaking in the ear saying, “Remember, you promised to never let this happen the day you made your vow!”

**Binding, unholy vows must be renounced and broken in Jesus' name. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal inner vows you had knowingly or unknowingly made. Pray with a mature Christian, renouncing all inner vows by praying the following prayer:**

**“Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing areas of fear and hurt in my life that I attempted to cover with lies. I know that You desire truth in my inner self, truth that sets me free (John 8:32). I confess the sin of being deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44), and that I have deceived myself (1 John 1:8). Father God, I recognize You as my ultimate authority and I release to you the “kingdom” of self-protection I have built, including all my “I wills,” “musts,” “nevers,” and “always.” I ask, in Jesus' name, that You, Father, will bring Your Kingdom power to heal any remaining hurts at the root of these inner vows. I repent of making these inner vows, and specifically renounce the vows:**

**\_\_\_\_\_ and declare that these inner vows are lies. I ask You, God, to rebuke all deceiving spirits by virtue of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, taking back ground given over through sin. Father God, I ask you to help me trust your protection instead of my own, and to trust Your ability to heal my hurts, past and present and future, of any pain You allow in my life.” In Jesus name, amen.**

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