

Numbers 30:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

Analysis

And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand—A husband's silence (הֶחֱרִישׁ *heche'rish*, held peace/kept silent) upon hearing his wife's vow constituted ratification—**all her vows shall stand** (וְכָל-נִדְרֶיהָ *vekamu kol-nedarei'ha*). The principle established: authority figures who know of subordinates' commitments and remain silent effectively endorse them through acquiescence. Silence implied consent.

This legal principle appears throughout Scripture: Eli's failure to restrain his sons made him culpable (1 Samuel 3:13), and Pilate's hand-washing couldn't absolve responsibility (Matthew 27:24). Leaders who know of problematic commitments and remain silent share responsibility for consequences. The verse teaches that authority includes proactive responsibility to speak up when necessary.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite husbands had same-day veto power over wives' vows (v.12) but silence after hearing the vow constituted permanent ratification. This created urgency—husbands couldn't reconsider days later and retroactively annul standing vows, preventing capricious use of authority while maintaining protection against rash commitments.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the principle that 'silence equals consent' challenge passive leadership that knows of problematic commitments but fails to speak?
2. What does the husband's same-day decision requirement teach about the urgency of exercising proper oversight?
3. How can you practice responsible oversight in relationships where you have spiritual authority, neither abdicating through silence nor abusing through control?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁמָע	אִישָׁהּ	וְהִחָרָשׁ	לֹא	לֹא	
heard	And her husband	it and held his peace	H0	H3808	
H8085	H376	H2790			
הִנּוּ יָא	אֵת הַ	יָקוּם:	כָּל	נִדְרֵי יְהוָה	וְכָל
at her and disallowed	H853	shall stand	H3605	her not then all her vows	H3605
H5106		H6965		H5088	
אֶסֶר	אֲשֶׁר	אֶסֶר הַ	עַל	נַפְשָׁהּ	יָקוּם:
and every bond	H834	wherewith she bound	H5921	her soul	shall stand
H632		H631		H5315	H6965

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