

**Numbers 30:1** ¶ And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, *This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.*  
**Numbers 30:2** If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

This chapter deals with the LORD's instruction regarding vows that are made to Him. He gave the instructions to Moses who gave it to the heads of the tribes for them to instruct the people. Note that these instructions represent a command—not a suggestion.

If a man makes a vow to the LORD or makes a promise accompanied by a sworn oath, he is bound to keep his word. Breaking one's vow is not an option.

**Numbers 30:3** ¶ If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, *being in her father's house in her youth;*  
**Numbers 30:4** And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.  
**Numbers 30:5** But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

The rest of the chapter basically deals with women that make vows to the LORD. They are held just as accountable as the men unless the man in authority over them disallows it.

This first section deals with a woman who makes a vow but is still under the authority of her father. If he hears her vow and does not forbid it, it is considered binding before the LORD. If, however, the father forbids it when he hears it, the LORD does not hold the woman accountable to her vow. She is forgiven because her father overruled her.

**Numbers 30:6** And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;  
**Numbers 30:7** And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.  
**Numbers 30:8** But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard *it*; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her.

This section deals with a woman that is under the authority of a husband. If he hears that she has made a vow to the LORD and does not speak out against it, she is bound before the LORD to keep it. However, if her husband forbids her to keep that vow, the LORD does not hold her accountable. She is forgiven because her husband overruled her.

The NIV Commentary offers some possible insight: “The comparison of this section with vv. 10-15 suggests that these verses relate to young couples who have recently married, as these are cases where the woman brings a vow into her marriage that may be heavily restrictive on her husband.”

JFB offers a bit more: “Girls only are specified; but minors of the other sex, who resided under the parental roof, were included, according to Jewish writers, who also consider the name “father” as comprehending all guardians of youth. We are also told that the age at which young people were deemed capable of vowing was thirteen for boys and twelve for girls.”

**Numbers 30:9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.**

**Numbers 30:10 And if she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath;**

**Numbers 30:11 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.**

**Numbers 30:12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; *then* whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her.**

Women who were widowed or divorced answered to no overruling authority and were held accountable for their vows.

I have read verses 10-12 several times, and they seem to be a repetition of the previous section. The commentaries seem to indicate that the difference is that it applies to a vow made by a woman that had not been fulfilled before her husband died. In that case, if he had not overruled her, she was bound by the vow; if he had overruled her, she was not held accountable.

**Numbers 30:13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.**

**Numbers 30:14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*.**

**Numbers 30:15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.**

The main difference I notice in this section is that the husband is held accountable for the fulfillment of his wife’s vow if he did not overrule it on the day he heard it. If he did anything to interfere with his wife’s ability to keep her vow, he would be held accountable for it—not her.

Point is also made that the husband’s decision to allow or disallow the vow had to be made at the time he heard it; once decided, it could not be changed. As I read back through the chapter, I believe the same applies to the father.

**Numbers 30:16 These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house.**

This ends the instructions that the LORD commanded Moses regarding vows made by a woman and the responsibility of the man in authority over her—be it husband or father.