

## INNER VOWS

Our lesson today is about another part of that wall between you and God. We are not just dismantling it; we are going to demolish it. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there was nothing left, not even any dirt, to remind you of your past, to be able to walk so free from it. As we have looked at all of the things that have made up this wall between you and God, has it surprised you? Have you thought, "Why didn't someone tell me this before now?" I was 40 years old when I learned all of this. I remember thinking, "If I could have learned this when I was younger I would not have suffered a lot of things I have suffered. I would not have made a lot of the mistakes I have made. Oh God, why wasn't there anyone there?" There were no books on it, no one knew about it, and yet God brought it at a time in my life where it set me free. I hope it does the same for you. If you feel that these lessons are setting you free, please e-mail me. Send it to [betty@bettyswann.com](mailto:betty@bettyswann.com). Tell me the specific ways that God has pulled this wall down in your life and the freedom you are feeling. By now, your life should feel lighter and lighter, and your joy should be greater. Your appreciation and gratitude to God for this wonderful thing that he has done for you has happened. So much of the time we think Jesus just died for us to get to heaven and we have to do the best we can do here. That is not right. Jesus promised abundant life here if we would totally turn everything over to him. That is what we are doing in these lessons. We are naming the junk, naming the baby, admitting we did it, asking for forgiveness, asking for healing. Our gracious, loving Jesus, our God, is setting us free. You do have to learn out to walk it out, but by now you should be saying there have been some big changes. There should be people around you saying, "What has happened to you. You are not the same. I got in a situation with you the other day and you didn't respond the way you always do. I sense a peace in you. What has happened?" God wants to use you to help them dismantle their wall. You never learn anything with God that is just for you. The whole Bible is about discipling others. He wants you to share it with the people you know. They might be people I will never know, but they know you. When Jesus does something like this for you, you can say, "Let me tell you what Jesus did for me and He will do it for you."

Today we are looking at inner vows. People today in this crazy world are looking for inner peace. Everything just gets crazier. It seems that it just gets harder and harder to find peace in this world and the world seems to get crazier and crazier. That is what Revelation says is going to happen. We are just in the end times. We are in the times when it says this is what it is going to be like. We can all attest to that. Just when we think it cannot get any worse, it does. Many, many people have come from broken homes now. There is more divorce all over the world than there has ever been. That means there are more and more hurt people, hurt children, people who feel like they are never going to be whole. There is a determination in people to try to set things straight the best way they can. They see the destruction in other people; they see it on television. They say, "God help me. I don't want this kind of life. I don't want this happening." Without realizing it, you can do something wrong. You can make a damaging inner vow. An inner vow is something you say to yourself and no one knows you have ever said it. You might not even realize you said it. There are damaging inner vows and there are good inner vows. We are going to talk about both of these.

This first one you are going to have to think about. What kind of inner vows have you made to yourself, good and bad? Look at this picture of a young man reflecting on the inner vows he has made. You can make them when you are a child; you do not have to wait until you are an adult. As a child, you have bad things happen to you and you say "When I grow up, I will never be a drunk like my dad. I will never be a gambler where we never have the money to eat. I will never be like that." Usually you have emotion with it, you have "never" or "always". You will make some vows. They are very common and it is very normal to make them. Some are good. Some people say, "I see my family and my family is not going to be like this when I grow up. We are going to be close, we are going to be kind. We are going to be loving. We are not going to always be arguing like my family. We are not going to do it." Sometimes, if you have a bad parent, maybe your dad, you say, "I am going to marry a man who is not like my dad. He is going to be a good, fine man." Another would be if you have seen nothing but failure in your whole entire family (maybe everyone has been to jail) you can say, "I am going to make something of my life when I grow up." I want to give you an example of what I am talking about. Have you read stories about kids that grew up in the projects with nothing but poverty around them, drunkenness, infidelity, drugs, violence, where everyone became a gang member. Somehow, one person ended up going to college and doing something really

great with his life. How does that happen? It happens because that person made an inner vow. He looked around, saw how it was, and deep inside himself he said, "I don't want this. When I grow up, I am going to go to college and I am going to make something of my life." When you make an inner vow, whether it is a good one or a bad one, there is something internally that sets up inside of you that you feel obligated to fulfill it. That is why we want to identify the bad ones and the good ones today.

In the second picture, we have a man thinking about his inner vows. I want to give you some examples of damaging inner vows for you to think about. I want you to write down each time you can say, "I have definitely thought that."

I will never trust anyone again.

I will never love again. I will never let anyone see what I am really like.

No one will ever hurt me again. No one will ever get close to me again.

I will never trust women ever again. I will never trust men ever again.

I am never going to be poor like my parents. (That can be a damaging inner vow because you might do things that are illegal to not be poor.)

I am never going to allow myself to ever fall in love again.

No one will ever embarrass me again. (I think I made that inner vow. While doing this show here today, the Holy Spirit just convicted me and said, "You made that one.")

I am not going to be strict with my children like my parents were.

When I grow up, no one is ever going to tell me what to do again. (This is one a lot of people make.)

When I grow up, I am never going to church ever again. (This is another one a lot of people make.)

There are a bunch of hypocrites in church and I will not ever go to church. I will get my spirituality another way.

All of those are damaging. Why are they? Because they have set you up for failure without you even realizing it. Some of the failures you have experienced that have put the wall up between you and God were because you made a damaging inner vow. I know you can think of some others. In the weeks and months to come, you will think of some more. What do you do when you think of them? You stop right there and say, "Lord that was an inner vow that was damaging. I repent of saying that; I repent of thinking it. Lord, change my heart and change my mind. Cause me to think the right way." You are going to have to ask God, "Lord what is the right way? I don't know how to think the right way. What is it? How do I do the opposite of this?" Sometimes you can sit down and figure it out yourself. Sometimes the Lord is going to have to tell you but He will be cause He does not want you damaging yourself with a damaging inner vow.

Are all inner vows bad? No, there are good inner vows. They are the kind that make you go the way that will bring the greatest happiness for you. They create determination; they create energy; they create hope; and they create victory. As I said, there are some good vows you made as a child and because of that your life is now successful. Somebody is watching this program that said, "My family is not very well educated and we don't have a lot of money, so I am going to become a reader. I am going to read a lot of books and I am going to educate myself." You never told anyone you said this, but there is someone watching this show right now who said that. Look at your life. Where are you today because you have been a reader, where you taught yourself things. That was a good inner vow you made. You had a bad situation and instead of making a bad vow you made a good vow. Look where it got you. I am going to give you examples of good inner vows and I want you to think of these for your own life. Write them down. Think of more that you have made.

"I am going to have a Godly family when I grow up. We are going to serve the Lord." You could have grown up in the most ungodly family where the only time God's name was mentioned was when it was cussing. Yet, you felt the call of God on your life, the pull of God on your life. As a child you looked around, maybe you saw a family outside of your family, and you said "That is the kind of family I wish I was

around, maybe you saw a family outside of your family, and you said "That is the kind of family I wish I was in. That is the kind of family I want to have. When I grow up, I am going to have a Godly family." You may not be able to account for the people above you that came before you. You may not be able to account for your bosses, for the people at work that are over you. You can account for you down. You can say, "From me down, it is going to be different."

Another great inner vow is to see a wonderful Christian, and to say "I am going to be that kind of Christian woman. I am going to do whatever it takes to be that kind of Christian woman. I want to be like that."

What a wonderful vow. For a Christian man, "I am going to be a Godly man. I am going to be a good dad. I am going to be a kind dad. I am going to be a dad that speaks the kinds of words to his children that they prosper, they bloom and blossom. They reach heights they never thought they could. I am going to speak good things into my children's lives."

"I am going to be a strong person. I am going to be a person who can survive great difficulty. I am going to make it." This is a great inner vow. That is what happened to me.

Another is "I am going to do something with my life. I am going to find a way to make mankind better. I am going to find a way to do something that creates something good. I am going to find a way to do that."

"I am going to work hard and succeed with my life no matter what it takes." I am not talking about the damaging inner vow that I talked about earlier, where you will do whatever it takes to get there. I am talking about the good inner vow that says, "I am not going to give up. Nothing is going to stop me. No disappointment, no heartache, no setback, nothing is going to stop me. I am not going to give up. I will . . . until. I will succeed."

"I am going to be a tither. I am going to give 10% of my income to God, no matter what. He says it; I believe it. I am doing it." This really pleases the heart of God. "I am going to be a giver; I am going to be a generous person. I am going to look around and help people in need." "I am going to be unselfish. I am going to care about others."

The best one of all is, "I am going to serve God with all my heart, all my soul, all my will, all my mind, with everything in me. I am going to serve the Lord all the days of my life." What a beautiful thing. I think this makes God and the angels shout. God can hear every thought you ever think. You might as well be saying it out loud. When He hears something like that, He rushes to your aid. If you are close to getting into trouble, God will be there, telling you, "Danger, danger. Get out." He will do whatever it takes to help.

How much will God really help you? I know some of you are wondering that. Some of you are saying, "Are you telling me that God cares so much about me and all the mess I have been through in my life, or all the mess I have made of my life, that He is really going to help me? Are you saying that I am going to change by pulling this wall down, dismantling this wall?" I am telling you that. There is a scripture that says it.

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." Does it say "I can do some things," or "I can do almost everything"? No, it says, "I can do everything," "I can do all things." You can go through anything and come out a winner, a conqueror, and successful. When things have happened that made you say the wrong kind of inner vows, all you have to do is say, "Lord help me to correct it. Let me say it with the same emotion and the same feeling, but let me say it in such a way that the imprint on the inside of me is powerfully life changing." You can do that. "I can do all things."

How do I know this? Let me tell you a little bit about my life. I have always been a happy person, but I have had a lot of hard things happen in my life. My mother had mental illness through all of her life and she struggled with manic depression and bipolar disorder in the days when there was no medication. All they had were tranquilizers and that did not do anything. There was not the knowledge that there is today, and she suffered. A lot of people in my family suffered from things like that. I had people in my family that grew up angry with each other. They could not get together without having a fight start. Within 30 minutes, they were made at each other and yelling at each other. It made me say, inside myself, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I can do this." I had to run the home by myself because my mother was gone for treatment a lot. That is hard when you are a teenager. You just want to be happy-go-lucky, and there you are behind the scenes having to do hard things. Because I kept saying, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," He did that very thing. He strengthened me. I did not even understand that verse. You do not have to understand a Bible verse for it to have power in your life. It helps if you do. I did not understand that just by speaking that verse into the atmosphere that I was making an inner vow. That Scripture was so important to me. It was an inner vow. You cannot make an inner vow any stronger than taking a Bible verse and applying it to your own life and speaking it as a bedrock in your life. As a result, I became a very strong person. I was able to handle hard things that would normally wipe a person out. I was able to handle them through Him who strengthened me. You can do that, too. It does not matter what you have gone through. I know there are those of you that have had things happen to you that I cannot comprehend. There are some watching who have been involved in

things happen to you that I cannot comprehend. There are some watching who have been involved in satanic worship and satanic ritual abuse. Once I asked a preacher, who was teaching me about satanic ritual abuse, to tell me the worst thing I will ever have to hear in my life that people can go through. He said, "It is the worst." People may have hurt you so much that you have made the inner vow, "If I have to get Satan to help me and give me power, I am going to have power over my circumstances and over people. They will not hurt me again. I will do whatever I want to to them." Can you imagine how destructive that inner vow is?" Break that thing right now. Say to the Lord, "I am sorry. I don't mean it. I take it back." If you have sold your soul to the devil, repent right now. Do you understand that the meanest, most vindictive, most horrifying, terrifying being has control over you because of your inner vow. Yet, you can break it by saying, "I want to say the right thing. I want to give my heart, my soul and my life to the right thing, to You God." Did you know you can break that in an instant. The devil has lied to you and said, "You have made all these inner vows. You are a mess. You will never be anything but a mess." God says, "No, I am stronger than all of that, I can break it."

A Scripture in Numbers says, "Like a lion they crouch and lie down like a lioness. Who dares to rouse them. May those who bless you be blest, and may those who curse you be cursed." That is the best verse I could find that says, these can feel like a lion and a lioness, but God says "Change it. Change those inner vows to blessings and you will be blest. Even those who come against you and curse you will be cursed themselves." It is all going to come back on them and you are going to be free. You just do not realize how tied you are to your past until these kinds of things are broken. You can break it. The right inner vows will help you achieve the will of God in your life. You can do it.