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QH 1.5 ARE YOU A PERSON OF YOUR WORD?

The following article by Joel Hilliker is reprinted from the April 2016 “Trumpet Magazine.” We have corrected the names of our heavenly Father and His Son but have left the rest of the article as Mr. Hilliker originally wrote it.

“I’ll do it,” you say. Then the time comes to do it. What happens? Do you keep your word?

When you tell your friend you will meet him at 6 o’clock, are you ready and waiting *at 6 o’clock*? When you say you’ll have that project ready by Wednesday morning, *is it finished* on Tuesday night? When you say you will do something, do people know it’s as good as done? Are you a man or woman of your word?

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Society today simply does not prioritize keeping one’s word. And we tend to rationalize it: *Things happen – no big deal*. Most of us thus fail to recognize just what a serious *character issue* breaking our word is.

“Only recently a prominent public man was criticized throughout the newspaper world as one not having enough character to keep his promises,” Orison Swett Marden wrote in his 1916 book *Making Life a Masterpiece*. “He had not the stamina to make good *when to do so proved difficult*” (emphasis added throughout).

That is so often the issue: You say you will do something, but then circumstances change and you realize there is inconvenience involved that you didn’t anticipate. Suddenly, what you said you would do doesn’t seem worth it. But think about the long-term cost of losing your credibility. Think about the high cost of developing a reputation for being unreliable. Think about the high cost of compromising your character.

“He hadn’t the timber, the character fiber, to stand up and do the thing he knew to be right, and that he had promised to do,” Marden continued. “The world is full of these jellyfish people who have not lime enough in their backbone to stand erect, to do the right thing. They are always stepping into the spotlight in the *good-intention stage*, and then, when the reckoning time comes, *taking the line of least resistance*, doing the thing which will cost the least effort or money, regardless of later consequences. They think they can be as unscrupulous about *breaking* promises as they were about *making* them. But sooner or later fate makes us play fair or get out of the game.”

What does Elohyim think? Well, He keeps His word (Numbers 23:19). When He says He will do something, He does it. When He gives a promise, He keeps it. We can count on Him to fulfill His every word – every time. Not one jot or tittle of YHWH’s Word will pass away before all of it is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

In the Old Testament are laws saying that if you make a vow, you’d better keep it (Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23). They tell us that it’s better not to say something than to say it and not do it. When you think about it, breaking your word is actually breaking the Ninth Commandment, which forbids bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16). When you give your word, failing to follow through makes you a LIAR.

We can say all kinds of potential lies without really thinking twice: *I’ll do it; I’ll be there; I’ll pick you up; I’ll bring it over; I’ll help you out*. Don’t say those things if you aren’t willing to do them even when it’s inconvenient. Yehoshua Hamashiach said that “*every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*” (Matthew 12:36). When you say, *I will do it*, you are signing your name to the

contract and committing your reputation and your character. Only a few decades ago, many if not most significant business transactions were sealed with a man's word and his handshake. No forms. No lawyers. No contracts. The man *saying* it was the contract. But modern society has gotten further and further from lives of honesty, uprightness, integrity, truth and trustworthiness. Now, agreements must be bound by carefully worded, signed, notarized contracts because people can't be trusted to *keep their word*! If everyone struggled and fought to keep his word, no matter the obstacles, we wouldn't *need* contracts and lawyers!

How can you become a person of your word?

1. *Be careful what you promise.* If you're not sure you can deliver, don't commit (James 4:13-14).
2. *When you can't do it, admit it.* Learn to say no.
3. *Once you've said it, do it.* Do whatever you must to remember and then fulfill what you said, without excuse or hesitation.
4. *If you blow it, admit it.* Don't lie or make up an excuse. When you make a mistake, apologize and do what you can to fix it.

"A man is already of consequence in the world when it is known that we can implicitly rely upon him," Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton said. "I have frequently seen in life a person preferred to a long list of applicants for some important charge, which lifts him at once into station and fortune, merely because he has this REPUTATION – that when he says he knows a thing, he knows it, and when he says he will DO a thing, he WILL DO IT."

Keeping your word should be as important as the Ten Commandments! Because it *is* keeping the Ten Commandments. It is actually the LOVE OF ELOHYM.