

**Becoming a Nazirite**

Passages: Num 6

*Memory Verse*

“Therefore ‘come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.’ ” (2 Corinthians 6:17–18)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The rules Nazirites followed made it clear to others and himself that he had been separated to serve the Lord.</li> <li>2. A Nazirite’s dedication was so important that they also had to undergo several actions to announce the conclusion of their vow to God.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God is holy.</li> <li>2. God is to be glorified above all others.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being a spiritual Nazirite means understanding whom our Father truly is.</li> <li>2. Separation from the world begins with our thoughts and minds.</li> <li>3. To “come out” and “be separate,” we must avoid being conformed to this world.</li> </ol>

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. The Conditions of a Nazirite
- B. The Conclusion of a Nazirite’s Vows
- C. Nazirites in the Bible

**Life Application: A Spiritual Nazirite**

1. “Come Out from Among Them”
2. “Be Separate”
3. Am I a Modern Nazirite?

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** God has separated us to Himself because He loves us and wants to give the best to us. His only requirement is that we separate ourselves from the world around us and avoid becoming entangled in its many pleasures.

### *Events and Spiritual Teachings*

---

#### **A. The Conditions of a Nazirite (Num 6:1–8)**

What do you think “Nazirite” means? (*Allow students to guess.*) “Nazirite” is translated as “consecrated or devoted one.”<sup>1</sup> In the Old Testament, anyone could become a Nazirite, man or woman. For example, Samson’s mother took the vow of a Nazirite during her pregnancy (Judg 13:4). They could be called (Judg 13:5), dedicated by their parents (1 Sam 1:11), or may choose to make the vow themselves for a short time (Acts 18:18; 21:23–24). Today we’ll be studying the life of a Nazirite in more detail. Let’s begin by reading Numbers 6:1–8. What word is repeated several times throughout this passage? How many times was it mentioned? (*‘Separate’, 5*)

A Nazirite was separated to take up the service of God and could be from any tribe. The various rules that a Nazirite had to follow made it clear to others and to himself that he had been separated to serve the Lord. From the number of times the word appears in this passage, it is clearly a core concept in the vows of a Nazirite. But what exactly are they ‘separating’ themselves from?

##### **1. Abstain from wine (vv. 1–4)**

*“All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.” (v. 4)*

Wine was a common fruit product associated with great blessing, wealth, celebrations, and feasts. To abstain from anything involving the grape – vinegar, grape juice, and even raisins – represented a Nazirite’s determination to give up the pleasures of this world to lead a simple life, free from excess and extravagance, and from the pleasures and comforts of this world. A Nazirite should take his focus away from worldly pursuits and focus wholly on the work of God.

##### **2. No razor shall touch his head (v. 5)**

*“...until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord, he shall be holy...” (v. 5)*

Even back then, haircuts were an essential aspect of one’s outward appearance! A lack of trimming would have been a visible symbol of the Nazirite’s focus on their inward, not outward, appearance. His inner, spiritual character became the focus. In the case of a Nazirite, their hair was directly linked to his vow, and was a visible representation of his keeping of it. This also would have made him stand out, possibly even causing uncomfortable attention or embarrassment. But on the other hand, it was a chance for the Nazirite to share about his life of service to God.

##### **3. No contact with dead bodies (vv. 6–7)**

*“All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body. He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head.” (vv. 6–7)*

This was an incredibly strict rule for Nazirites: do not go near a dead body. Since a Nazirite was to lead a holy life untainted by the things of the world, he needed to keep himself pure by avoiding defilement. If the deceased were a family member, tending to the needs and details associated with the funeral and burial would naturally involve close proximity with the dead body, so event attending funerals was forbidden to a Nazirite.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5139/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

We can see that the laws of a Nazirite were very strict, and considered a divine command from God. There were even consequences included if they broke their vows, such as shaving their head or making sin and burnt offerings in atonement. Why were these vows so important to God? Let's read verse 8 again: "All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the Lord." (v. 8). Everything that they had to do or avoid doing were signs of his or her dedication to God, and breaking any of these vows meant that they had allowed themselves to fall prey to lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, or the pride of life, and were no longer separate or holy to God.

### **B. The Conclusion of a Nazirite's Vows (Num 6:13–21)**

A Nazirite's dedication was so important that they also had to undergo several actions to announce the conclusion of their vow to God.

#### **1. Offerings (vv. 13–17)**

The offering of the sin, burnt, and peace offerings was a reminder that despite his special service to God, his acceptance was still based on God's forgiveness and blessings. Service to God is a divine privilege accepted by the will of God, not according to the will of man. No matter how much we offer to God, our acceptance, and even our salvation, is still based on God's mercy.

#### **2. Shaving of the head (v. 18)**

With the conclusion of his vow, the Nazirite was to shave off all his hair and burn it on the fire used for the peace offering. Burning all his hair was not only a physical sign of the conclusion of his vow. It was also a reminder not to hold on to any past achievements that may arouse pride in his heart. Burning it as an offering to God meant that all his service, no matter how great or small, was for God's glory, not his own. As workers of God, we should resume our "normal service" and not dwell on past works, or we might start to glorify ourselves. Instead, we should quietly go about our business, knowing that God will reward us for our good deeds in His own time and way.

#### **3. Whatever else his hand is able to provide (v. 21)**

If there were any additional personal vows that the Nazirite had made, he wasn't to forget about them, but to continue to fulfill them. OAO1s spiritual Nazirites, apart from what we initially set out to offer to the Lord, we shouldn't place limitations or restrictions on whatever other good services we can render to the Lord. Since all we have has come from God, we should use the abilities He has given us to serve Him whenever an opportunity arises.

### **C. Nazirites in the Bible**

#### **1. Samson**

One of the most well-known Nazirites in the Bible is Samson. He was an unusual case because the vow of a Nazirite was normally voluntary and temporary. Samson, however, was set aside by the Lord to be a Nazirite for his entire life (Judg 13:6–7). Even more unusual was that God commanded his mother to observe the same restrictions until his birth (vv. 13–14). Samson's case is also unusual in the unfortunate fact that he eventually broke all three requirements of a Nazirite.

#### **2. Samuel**

When Hannah, Samuel's mother, begged the Lord for a son, "she made a vow, and said, 'O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of my life, and no razor shall come upon his head'" (1 Sam 1:11). Like Samson,

Samuel was unusual in that he was set aside to be a Nazirite his entire life, except this vow was placed upon him by his mother: if God gave her a son, she would give her son to God. In exchange for his very birth and life, which would not have occurred without God's intervention, Samuel would dedicate his life to serving the Lord. Unlike Samson, Samuel was a lifelong Nazirite who kept his vows and faithfully served God his entire life.

### 3. John the Baptist

When an angel of the Lord announced the impending birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias, he said that John "will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15). Like Samson and Samuel, John was an unusual case in that he was a Nazirite for his entire life.

### 4. Paul

Paul took the Nazirite vow at least twice in his life. The Bible records Paul concluding his vow by cutting off his hair at Cenchrea before setting sail for Syria (Acts 18:18). Later, the Bible records that there were rumors that Paul had been teaching Jews to abandon the Mosaic laws. These rumors interfered with his ability to spread the gospel and shepherd the church (1 Tim 3:7). Paul had never taught the Jews to give up the Mosaic laws, only that Gentiles should not be forced to follow them. So, the apostles advised Paul to join some other brethren who had taken up the Nazirite vow. By following this Mosaic tradition, he would rebuff any reports that he had abandoned the laws (Acts 21:18–26).

As a Nazirite, Samson broke every rule. Yet, God still set Samson aside, used him for His purpose, and answered Samson's prayers. This teaches us that God may use us up to a point, but our own salvation is in jeopardy when our focus is not on God. We cannot let our own self-centered desires hinder His work. Samuel, John the Baptist, and Paul gave up their own wills and followed God's instead. Whatever gifts God has given us, and however we serve Him, we must do our best to draw closer to God and focus on His will instead of our own desires. When we do so, we can become a true spiritual Nazirite, holy and set apart for God's purpose.

### *Check for Understanding*

---

1. **What were the three restrictions that a Nazirite followed?** (1) Abstain from wine; (2) Must not cut their hair; (3) No contact with dead bodies.
2. **Explain the significance of each restriction.** (1) Abstinence from alcohol represented giving up the pleasures of this world; (2) A lack of trimming would have been a visible symbol of the Nazirite's focus on their inward, not outward, appearance; and (3) Not being distracted by worldly details would allow the Nazirite to focus wholeheartedly on his service to God.
3. **How did a Nazirite conclude their vows?** By making offerings, shaving their hair, and fulfilling any additional personal vows they had made.
4. **Who were the Nazirites studied in this lesson?** Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Paul.
5. **Why were the cases of Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist unusual?** The Nazirite vow was normally voluntary and temporary, but theirs was lifelong.

### *Life Application*

---

#### **A Spiritual Nazirite**

The Nazirite vow was taken by any individual who wanted to dedicate themselves to God. The vow was a decision that included a lot of actions that they had to live out in their everyday lives, but the main

idea was to yield themselves to God completely. This was an Old Testament concept, but still teaches us something important in the New Testament. Let's read the memory verse, 2 Corinthians 6:17–18. Why is it so important for us to “come out” from the world? What does it mean to “be separate”? What are we “coming out” from? What are we “separating” from? These words sound like an action, but we first have to understand what it means to do so. If we are living in this world, how do we “come out” from it? And why is it so important to do so?

1. **“Come Out from Among Them”**

One of the interesting vows that a Nazirite had to take was to never cut their hair. We learned earlier that not only was this a visual representation of their vows, but a Nazirite also very likely stood out from the rest because of their uncut hair! Do we stand out from the world? Is it a clear and unquestionable fact to those around us that we are spiritual Nazirites?

Let's read verse 18 once more. It might seem restrictive or confining to be a Christian. In fact, many people do not want to be Christian because of all the “rules” that come with our faith. But why is it that we want to avoid contact with the world? Why are so many things forbidden to us as children of God? This is because we are God's temple - the Holy Spirit resides in us! We are already baptized, and are already God's sons and daughters. This means that we do not belong to the world - we belong to our heavenly Father. We have a very special status, and a very special inheritance awaiting us. So to “come out” from among the world isn't just a matter of following rules - it means knowing who our Father truly is, and developing a loyal affection for Him.

2. **“Be Separate”**

Why was it so important that a Nazirite abstain not only from wine, but from even grapes, raisins, and their seeds? At the time, grapevines were likely associated with wealth and riches. In other words, they were a representation of worldly pleasures. While it is not a sin to enjoy something or to be good at it, it is easy for us to slip into worldly obsessions, or find ourselves tempted again and again by unclean or immoral thoughts and actions.

To be separate, we have to first start with our innermost selves. It starts with our thoughts and minds: we need to want to be holy! In this verse, Paul was calling the church of Corinth to be separate from the world around them. He was urging believers to separate themselves from any activities involving the worship of idols. In this passage, he quoted Isaiah 52:11: “Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the Lord.”

Let's read Ephesians 5:3–4 and list some of the things that we can separate ourselves from. (*Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, coarse jesting.*) Have you seen any of these, or associated yourselves with any of these? (*Allow students to share; use supplementary portion below for reference.*)

**Supplementary portion for teachers**

- Sexual immorality: anything that is sexually inappropriate (eg sexting), physical sexual behavior, premarital sex, adultery.

- Uncleaness: Impure motives (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g167/kjv/tr/0-1/>). Any kind of unclean or unholy living. Things that lead to corruption. Debauchery.
- Covetousness: Ten commandments (Ex 20:17). A passionate desire or even love for something that belongs to another person. Greed.
- Filthiness: Obscenity, anything associated with shame or disgrace (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g151/kjv/tr/0-1/>)
- Foolish talk: Trash talk, tomfoolery, clowning around, speaking without self-control, speaking without thinking.
- Coarse jesting: Inappropriate humor, rude or dirty jokes, bullying.

### 3. Am I a Modern Nazirite?

Avoiding dead bodies as a rule meant that a Nazirite also could not even attend a funeral of a loved one. Why was this such a strict requirement? For a Nazirite of the Old Testament, this meant that they had to distance themselves from the traditions of the world. As a modern Nazirite, we also need to avoid being distracted by worldly entanglements so that we can focus entirely on our service to God.

Let's read Romans 12:1–2. To “come out” and to “be separate” means that we must avoid being conformed to this world. It is important for us to understand the lines which we should not cross, and to transform ourselves every day so that we can become living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable to God. Of course, it isn't easy to change ourselves - that's why we need to have the Holy Spirit to help us! But as children of God, we are all already spiritual Nazirites. Like the Nazirites of the Old Testament, it is important for us to avoid being corrupted by the world, and to keep ourselves separate by thinking differently and having a thorough understanding of our status as Christians.

Do we live a lifestyle that gives others no room for debate in the matter that we are a child of God? This is how evident it needs to be that we are children of God. We have a choice in everything in our lives. Who do we associate with? How do we speak? What do we agree to do or adamantly refuse to do?

It may seem like too much effort, or even unfair that we need to give up the things we like. But as spiritual Nazirites, we ought to understand that it is a joy and a rare privilege to be chosen by God. And in exchange for our faith, God has promised us “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:4–5).

#### *Memory Verse*

“Therefore ‘come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.’ ” (2 Corinthians 6:17–18)

#### **Meaning**

God has called us to be separate from the unclean things of the world, so that we can enjoy the privilege of being His children and receive all the blessings that He has intended for us.

*Conclusion*

---

As spiritual Nazirites, God has separated us to Himself because He loves us and wants to give the best to us. His only requirement is that we separate ourselves from the world around us and avoid becoming entangled in its many pleasures. When we strive to be holy and to seek out what God wants instead of what we want, then He will bless us and reward us with treasures in heaven.

Lesson 3 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What has God promised us if we remain separate from the world?  
*We can enjoy the privilege of being His children and receive all the blessings that He has intended for us.*
2. “He shall \_\_\_\_\_ himself from \_\_\_\_\_ and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from \_\_\_\_\_ nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins.” (Numbers 6:3)  
*separate, wine, wine*
3. Explain the teachings that we can learn from the three vows of a Nazirite.  
*See Spiritual Teachings, Section A.*
4. What in your life can you “abstain” from to improve your relationship with God?  
*Personal answers.*
5. What things can we do less of to make more time for our spiritual cultivation?  
*Personal answers.*