

Deuteronomy 24:5

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-24/deuteronomy-245/>

Moses proclaimed that every newly married man was exempt from going to war for one full year in order to establish his home and give happiness to his wife.

The law in v. 5 served to complement a previous law in which a *man that is engaged to a woman* was exempt from military duty (Deuteronomy 20:7). Here, Moses addressed *when a man takes a new wife* (v. 5). As with the engaged man, this man *shall not go out with the army*. To *go out with the army* implies that the man would be going into combat and would be in danger of losing his life. If he were killed in battle, he would have no descendants. So, to provide an opportunity for him to build a strong home and produce his descendants, the newly-married man was not allowed to go into combat.

Along with being exempt from combat, he was not to *be charged with any duty*, whether it be government or community services. Such duties could be time-consuming, thus taking away his time being at home. The apparent concern was for any newly established household to be strong and healthy. This objective would clearly be enhanced if the couple spent significant time together.

The man was to *be free at home one year*. His priority during this time was to *give happiness to his wife whom he has taken*. He was not to be burdened with any public obligations so that he might dedicate his time to his family. Such a period would yield at least two crucial benefits. First, it would allow enough time for the couple to learn to love one another. Second, it would give the newly established couple time to have children. This would prevent the couple from being childless in the event the husband would die in the battlefield.

One possible exception to this principle appears to have been when there was an extreme national emergency. An example of this can be found in the book of 1 Kings, when Baasha, king of Israel was fighting against Asa, king of Judah, "Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah—none was exempt" to go to war (1 Kings 15:22).

The eighth commandment that forbids stealing reflects a broader concept of honoring the personal sovereignty of another person, honoring their agency to make choices. This elevates the human dignity of each person, while protecting them from exploitation. This freedom to make choices could be limited, and one allowed limited military service. But this exemption from military service places a priority on family, and of care for women.

Biblical Text:

⁵When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.