

What to Do When God Says “No”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Deut. 3:23-28 - Moses pleads with God
 - 1. Rejection is a part of life. It is something we have to learn to deal with.
 - 2. No one gets everything they want out of life.
 - a. Parents don't have the ability to give children all they desire.
 - b. When there is only one job available and six people want it, five are going to be disappointed.
- B. The ability to accept disappointment is a mark of maturity.
 - 1. Children must be taught not to throw tantrums when they don't get what they want.
 - 2. Adults may not throw tantrums, but they often answer their disappointment with drugs, alcohol, sex, entertainment, backbiting, or evil speaking in the social media
 - 3. Examine examples of how four great Bible characters reacted when God answered their sincere pleas with “No.”

I. GOD SAID NO TO MOSES

- A. Moses relationship with God was unique - Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10-12
- B. Moses was a very special person in Israel - Ex. 32:10-14
 - 1. Moses interceded to God on Israel's behalf 20 times - Num. 12:3
- C. For forty years Moses was patient and forbearing with obstinate people.
 - 1. Num. 12 - Miriam and Aaron
 - 2. Num. 16 - Korah
- D. In 40 years Moses lost his patience one time and it cost him his future.
 - 1. Struck the rock - Num. 20:1-13 - Immediately after the death of Miriam
 - 2. There are consequences for sin. Successive good works don't mitigate the consequences of the offense. Only one blemish in 40 year service
 - 3. God is no respecter of persons, even for Moses, who was the first one referred to as “The man of God.” - Deut. 33:1
 - a. Stricter judgment for leaders - James 3:1
- E. Moses accepted God's refusal without a negative reaction.
 - 1. Moses had to have been disappointed, but he did not argue.
 - 2. He faithfully trained his replacement, Joshua, who would lead the people to where Moses was originally destined to lead, and where he likely spent 40 years anticipating doing so
 - 3. He accepted the loss of his earthly ambitions, but gained Heaven
 - a. Matt. 17:1-3
 - 4. Moses left us an inspired example of how we should accept God's “no” in answer to our prayers.

II. DAVID WAS FORBIDDEN TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

- A. 1Chron. 17:1-12 - God told David that someone else would build it

- B. 1Chron. 22:1-10 - David graciously accepted it and made preparations for Solomon to do the work.
- C. 1Chron. 29 - Before David died he supplied the building materials, commissioned Solomon to the task, and commended him to the whole nation, and prayed that God would bless the work

III. APOSTLE PAUL WAS TOLD TO KEEP HIS THORN IN THE FLESH

- A. 2Cor. 12:7-10
- B. The irony is that God had used Paul to heal many people - Acts 28:8-9
 - 1. Paul was asking to be done for him what he had done for others.
 - 2. When God said no, Paul chose to make the best of it

IV. JESUS PRAYED TO BE SPARED FROM THE CROSS

- A. Jesus knew that God heard and answered His prayers - John 11:42
- B. Jesus prayed with great intensity - Luke 22:41-44
- C. Jesus accepted God's denial of His request because He knew it was necessary to accomplish God's plan to save humankind.

V. HOW WILL WE REACT WHEN GOD TELLS US "NO"?

- A. God answers every prayer.
 - 1. He says yes or no or have patience until later
 - 2. It is acceptable to ask again, frequently - Luke 18:1-8
 - 3. However, some requests are denied.
- B. How should we respond when God says "No" to our requests?
 - 1. It is never appropriate to respond with rebellion.
 - a. God is sovereign and has the authority to say no.
 - b. Pouting and whining reflects spiritual immaturity.
 - 2. We often don't know why God says no, but we do know God.
 - a. God is love and He loves us so much He gave His Only Begotten Son. He has a fully proven track record of doing what is in our best interests according to His wisdom and not according to our wants and whims
 - b. We must trust our Heavenly Father to have our salvation and spiritual well-being at heart - Rom. 8:31-32
 - 3. A person of faith will humble himself before the sovereign God of the universe.
 - a. God has a purpose for every soul He has created, and that includes you.
 - b. God has not given us access to His purpose and plans for our lives, nor is it necessary that He does
 - c. 1Peter 5:6-7

Conclusion:

A. "A "no" from God really is a "no." It is not a "yes cached in a "wait" or something like that. In fact, a "no" is quite a useful answer in the growth process if we receive it honestly." (Thomas R. Hauff, Reshaping Prayer and Learning to Listen)

B. God said “no” to His greatest, most faithful, and beloved children. He did not play favorites when their prayers were for things other than His higher plans and purposes. Therefore, when He says no to us, He has a better reason and a higher purpose than our requests. We must trust Him and respond as well as did Moses, David, Paul, and Jesus.