

## 6. When God says, "No."

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None of us wants to hear 'No' to any of our plans. As a matter of fact, we don't want to hear any 'Nos' from anyone, period. Our idea is "As long as I get my way right away, all the time, everything will be fine."

However, to our surprise, our heavenly Father reserves the right to say, 'No' to anything we plan and pray for. Because we are His and the whole universe belongs to Him, He brought us into life. Most of all, He is more merciful and gracious than we can possibly imagine.

We are going to see how David took God's 'No' and let's learn from this great man of God.

### A. PERSONAL DESIRE

*2 Samuel 7:1-3 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." 3 Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you."*

What do you see here?

God's covenant with David, a.k.a. "Davidic Covenant" makes this one of the greatest chapters of the Bible. The message of the Bible from this point rests upon this promise.

Cedarwood was especially valued in that region. This means that David lived in an expensive and beautiful palace. When he remembered that the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains, the contrast bothered him. David was troubled by the thought that he resided in a nicer place than the ark of the covenant. David wanted to show his gratitude and thankful heart toward God by doing something for Him.

Now I want to emphasize, from everything we know about him, David had no ulterior motive here. He had no selfish ambition. He had no desire to make a name for himself or his family. As a matter of fact, he wanted to exalt no other name but God in building this temple.

Even if we know that doing a certain thing would glorify the Lord, it doesn't mean that it's OK for us to do it without our God's approval.

In our last study, we learned that David tried to move the Ark of the Covenant without a prayer. Trying to do the right thing in the wrong way. Here again, we see neither king David or prophet Nathan is seeking the Lord first.

### B. A DIVINE RESPONSE

*2 Samuel 7:4-11 But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, 5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word*

*to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" 8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house.*

What kind of interpretation are you getting from this paragraph?

In wanting to build God a temple, David's heart was in the right place. Yet, just because David's plan was noble and his friend was applauding, it didn't mean it was God's will. It's a good idea to remember that every plan we may come up with for God isn't necessarily His.

Most of us are so stuck in the thinking, "What can God do for me? After all, He is God," that we never really want to do more than God commands. But David wanted to do more than God commands. This is a wonderful place to be in our relationship with God.

The tabernacle was a big tent where God had met with His people. In other words, God identified Himself with His people. That is why 2,000 years ago Jesus Christ came to earth and took upon Himself our humanity. The apostle John says about this:

*John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

That word 'dwelt' means 'tabernacled'. Instead of 'meeting' man in a flimsy tent made of linen, God met mankind in a flimsy tent made of flesh. He came to earth and identified Himself with us. God has always identified Himself with His people.

The Lord willing, we are going to study more in-depth about the tabernacle and learn how it portrays Jesus Christ from our next study.

Throughout the history of God's dealings with the Israelites, never once did He reprove them for failing to build Him a permanent sanctuary. Building the temple was David's idea – not God's commandment. Being as generous as He is, God gives him credit for David's willingness to build a temple.

There is a parallel verse that shows why the Lord refused David's good intention:

*1 Chronicles 22:8 but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.'*

God's refusal wasn't a rejection of His faithful king rather a redirection. He had a different plan for him that neither Nathan nor David would ever have dreamed of.

Can you imagine how David felt when he was told 'No' by God for his plan to build a holy temple for His glory? Can you imagine how Moses felt when he was told

'No' by God right at the edge of the Promised Land? When over two million people were allowed to enter into the land that God promised 40 years ago, Moses was not allowed to enter because of his one-time disobedience.

The late pastor Chuck Smith who started Calvary Chapel wanted to be an evangelist when he was young. But God had a different plan. He said, "No" to pastor Chuck and made him be one of the most profound Bible expositors in the world. Through that man, we now have great evangelists like Greg Laurie, Mike MacIntosh, and Raul Ries who bring many people to Christ around the world.

It is not a question of being wrong. It's a question of accepting God's "no" and living with the mystery of His will. We people on this earth package everything. And we expect God to package His plan for us just like we would. We want the logic that we use to be His logic. And when it isn't, we wonder what's wrong because it's not working out like we would have worked it out.

God took away David's dream, it's true, and for an instant, the king's heart must have sunk. However, when the Lord told David 'No,' He had a much greater 'Yes' behind it. The Lord gave David a covenant that far outshined the privilege of building a temple.

### **C. GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID**

*2 Samuel 7:12-17 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." 17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.*

Please give me your interpretation of this portion.

The family of David did rule over Israel for more than 4 centuries but was eventually removed by the nations which God had sent because of their never-ending idolatry. This descendant of David will enjoy a special relationship with God. If he sins, God will not reject him. Instead, God will chasten him without rejecting him.

God promises David that the reign of his dynasty will last forever because it will turn into the Messianic Kingdom through Jesus Christ. The prophets foretold a greater fulfillment of these promises in Isaiah 9:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:5.

Jesus is building the Father a magnificent house in the sense that we are God's temples:

*1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

### **D. A GRATEFUL AND TRIUMPHANT PRAYER**

*2 Samuel 7:18-29 Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought*

*me this far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? 20 Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord God, know Your servant. 21 For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. 22 Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God. 25 Now, O Lord God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said. 26 So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 27 For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You. 28 And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. 29 Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."*

What is your interpretation of this?

David's rhetorical question in v18 reflected his sense of unworthiness to have been extended such a gracious promise from God.

David prayed for the fulfillment of the promise. As David undoubtedly knew, God's will would be accomplished whether he prayed for it or not. But like David, when we pray in God's will for God's will, we become a part of His will. We also become an expectant people, ready to respond to God with great praise when He had accomplished His will.

David would spend the rest of his reign gathering materials, organizing workers, and drawing plans for a temple he would never build, so Solomon could build a glorious one for God. How he must have longed to stroll through the majestic halls and admire the immense columns, to run his fingers along with the intricately carved stone and sing praises to His Lord in the golden sanctuary. Still, he was content. His son would build his Lord's temple and worship within its walls.

Had David been the "right-here-and-right-now" type, the disappointment of God's 'No' might have blinded him to the preciousness of God's promise. He might have become disillusioned and bitter – even jealous of his own future son, who would accomplish what he couldn't.

Sometimes we focus so much on the privileges that God has given others that we overlook the priceless inheritance that He's laid in our laps. David didn't make that mistake. Overflowing with gratitude, he praised the God who had given him so much.

David's prayer boldly asks God to do what He promised. This isn't passive prayer, nor arrogant prayer. This is a bold prayer that says, "God, here is Your promise – now I trust You to fulfill it completely and to be faithful to Your Word." God is pleased to see us coming to Him with His promises for us.

It's important that every once in a while we need to sit down, take a long look at our short lives, and count our blessings – who are we to have been protected from the rains, strong winds, earthquakes, or fires that destroyed other regions, leaving hundreds homeless? And who are we that He has blessed our house and kept it safe? Warm in the winter, cool in the summer. There are so many things that we should be grateful to our Lord.

### **E. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) Let's ask ourselves if there is anything we can do for God. If there is and it is from the Lord, let's make ourselves available to do it.
- 2) When God says, "No" to our plan or prayer, let's remember that it is not a rejection, rather re-direction.
- 3) When God says 'No', our best reaction should be humility and obedience.