

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Yes, No, Yes

Overview: Taking on more than we can handle is viewed somewhere between a badge of honor and absurdity. Where do you tend to fall? Can you say “no” to things? As a believer, saying “no” becomes even harder – it does not seem very Christlike. But what if I told you that Jesus did say “no.” In this session we will look at the idea of how to use a “yes-no-yes” approach as a response to the requests that come our way.

Segment Questions:

- What is the last thing that you said “no” to? How hard was it to think of something? What does that say about your ability to say “no?”
- Why is it important to be able to say “no?” Why is it hard to say “no?”
- Of the three illustrations where Jesus said no, which surprised you the most and why?
- How does knowing that Jesus said “no” help change your perspective?
- In what ways do you think the “Yes-No-Yes” approach can be helpful?
- Use this example for the next two questions:
Requestor: Will you help organize a car wash to raise money for new soccer team uniforms?
Responder: *I think the idea of uniforms is fantastic. I do not have the time to organize this at the maximum level it needs. But I would love to offer my office parking lot on a Saturday as a place where you can host the car wash.*

How does the “yes-no-yes” response make the requestor feel better?

How would this help the responder feel better?

Action Questions:

- In the sermon on the mount, while talking about making vows, Jesus said, “Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.” (Matthew 5:37). So how is this “yes-no-yes” approach not a violation of that?
- Can you give a personal example for how “yes-no-yes” could have helped you in a recent situation where you had to say “no?”
- How would you respond to the potential criticism of someone saying that your “no” response was not very Christlike?

Personal Prayer:

In a world where we are asked to do so much, help us to respond in the right way. May our response encourage people, and may we come along side where we can. But help us to know our limitations and that we cannot do it all. May people be drawn to Christ by our response rather than pushed away.

Introduction

As men we tend to be doers. We love to accomplish things. It brings great satisfaction to check off things on a to do list. There is also a bit of a built-in competitive spirit. In a sense we are often asking the question, "Do I have what it takes?" We are looking for opportunities to prove that we do. As a result, we often take on more than we should. We have a hard time saying "no."

As a Christian we have the added aspect that we are to model our lives after Christ. That does not work well with saying "no" - it seems that Jesus was always saying "yes" to people. So, when you combine all these aspects together, it is a recipe for taking on more than we can handle.

Over the years we have often addressed aspects of this at Men's Life. Most recently we had two lessons: 1) Busy, Hurried or Harried and 2) The Margin Challenge. These lessons gave some great insight into the motivation for using our time wisely and making sure we are focusing on the right priorities. What was implied in those lessons is that sometimes we just need to say "no" to very good things. But how do we do that? And how do we say "no" when we are trying to be Christ-like and Jesus never said "no"... or did He?

Three Times Jesus Said No

1: No to the Sick. Early in the book of Mark we read that Jesus has been helping a lot of people. Crowds were gathering to see him heal people and cast out demons. After a very busy day, Jesus got up early to pray.

Mark 1:35-38 Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. Later Simon and the others went out to find him. When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came."

There were a bunch of people gathering again in the Galilean village where Jesus had just spent the night. The needs were great. There was a lot of people who needed help. But what does Jesus do... he says, "no, we must go to other towns."

2: No to Social Justice. On another occasion Jesus was preaching and someone called out to Jesus from the crowd.

Luke 12:13-15 "Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father's estate with me." Jesus replied, "Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?" Then he said, "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."

In this case the man wanted Jesus to get involved in a family matter. Jesus did not use the word "no" but it is implied by the way He said, "who made me a judge." He instead used this request as a teaching moment to call out the man's greed.

3: No to the Hungry. Jesus is back up on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He just fed the 5000 and the crowds are growing. He slips away to pray, and he sends the disciples across the lake in a boat. He later walks on the water to get past them. The crowd sees that the disciples have left and so they too got in boats (or may have even gone around the lake on land... it isn't that big) to greet Him on the other side. The dialog that ensues sounds spiritual but at the heart of it is the crowd looking to be fed.

John 6:26-27. Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

The dialog continues to the point of them reminding Jesus that the nation of Israel received manna in the desert. Jesus starts talking about spiritual food and they say they want that. But as Jesus explains what it is, they murmur, complain and get into arguments about what He means. This whole dialog comes to a startling end.

John 6:66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.

Did you catch the last verse? Jesus said "no" to feeding them and many disciples left. Wow... saying "no" can have consequences.

How to Say No

In a recent podcast, author and motivational speaker Michael Hyatt gave a great suggestion for how to say "no." You do it by remembering the phrase and three-part action step: **Yes-No-Yes**.

Yes: I affirm that what you are doing is a good thing (*Make a positive statement about their request*).

No: I am unable to help in the way you are asking (*No excuses, just simply say that you cannot*).

Yes: Here is what I can do (*Then offer to help in some tangible way that reinforces your first yes*).

SOURCES: <http://blog.adw.org/2011/05/even-jesus-sometimes-said-no/> || <https://www.entreleadership.com/blog/podcasts/michael-hyatt>