



## Saying No to God

Some people feel the love and grace of God means that we can live as we \_\_\_\_\_ and even say no to God. Is it \_\_\_\_\_ to say no to God? We're grateful to God for His word that \_\_\_\_\_ us understand Him and His character. From the very beginning God has wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ mankind and to dwell with us, but God wants us to draw close to Him. God promises, "What agreement has the temple of God with \_\_\_\_\_? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my \_\_\_\_\_ among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be \_\_\_\_\_ from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me,' says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

There's nothing in this world \_\_\_\_\_ than a newborn baby. I love the thought of something so \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven. Jackie and I had four daughters of our own, and we're blessed with twelve grandchildren. When a little one gets to be about 18 months they \_\_\_\_\_ to say the word "no!" They're telling their parents "no" and beginning a lifelong \_\_\_\_\_ of wills.

Will we do our own will or will we accept God's \_\_\_\_\_, is another question. The first authority is our parents, but ultimately God is the \_\_\_\_\_ authority. The Bible urges us to be \_\_\_\_\_ how we deal with the inner person. Our \_\_\_\_\_ are important. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of \_\_\_\_\_." If we let our hearts grow selfish and indulgent, we can \_\_\_\_\_ our lives by a moment's foolish choice.

### **Our reading comes from Joshua 24:14-18.**

Rebellion is an \_\_\_\_\_ of the heart and will; it's an act of defiance or resistance to one in authority. God gives us all \_\_\_\_\_, and we can say yes or no to God. We can do God's will or we can follow our \_\_\_\_\_ desires; God won't rob us of our free will. You can choose to do what you \_\_\_\_\_. You can say yes to God and enjoy all of His \_\_\_\_\_, or you can say no to God, but you've got to pay the \_\_\_\_\_. God is gracious to the penitent and the willing; but when people \_\_\_\_\_ against him, there's a price to pay. That price is always \_\_\_\_\_ than you think.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel often \_\_\_\_\_ away from God and began living lives that pleased themselves. The Bible says, "'Come now, and let us \_\_\_\_\_ together,' Says the LORD, 'Though your \_\_\_\_\_ are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and \_\_\_\_\_, You'll eat of the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword'" (Isaiah 1:18-20). Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken. We're all still making decisions whether we will refuse and rebel against God or whether we will \_\_\_\_\_ the blessing of God.

The history of the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ that people said "no" to God, shut Him out of their lives and paid a very high price for it. God gave Adam and Eve only \_\_\_\_\_ boundary in the days that they were in the Garden of Eden. They couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." God said, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely \_\_\_\_\_." But they listened to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the devil and were cast out of the garden, where there was no eternal life and no fellowship with God. The woman

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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bore children with \_\_\_\_\_, and the man would eat his bread by the \_\_\_\_\_ of his brow “till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). Saying no to God didn’t bless anyone.

In Noah’s day people \_\_\_\_\_ rebelled against God. The Bible says: “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was \_\_\_\_\_ on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was \_\_\_\_\_ that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, ‘I will \_\_\_\_\_ out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them’” (Genesis 6:5-7). God sent a great \_\_\_\_\_ and destroyed every person except those on the ark—eight souls in all. Saying no to God didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ anyone.

Then, Bible students will remember what happened to \_\_\_\_\_ as the people came into Palestine. In Joshua and Caleb’s day, the people refused to do God’s \_\_\_\_\_. In Numbers 13:1-2 the Bible says: “Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Send out for yourself men so that they may \_\_\_\_\_ out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; and you shall send a man from each of their fathers’ tribes, every one a leader among them.’” God wanted them to see all the blessings of Canaan and to trust in His \_\_\_\_\_ to be with them.

The ten spies brought back a \_\_\_\_\_ report, and said, “We went in to the land where you \_\_\_\_\_ us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are \_\_\_\_\_, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there” (Numbers 13:27-28). They were afraid and counseled the people \_\_\_\_\_ to go in to Canaan. Numbers 13:32-33 says: “So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad \_\_\_\_\_ of the land which they spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great \_\_\_\_\_. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our \_\_\_\_\_ sight, and so we were in their sight.’”

Numbers 14:1-4 says: “All the congregation lifted up their \_\_\_\_\_ and cried, and the people wept that night. All the sons of Israel \_\_\_\_\_ against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, ‘Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this \_\_\_\_\_, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be \_\_\_\_\_ for us to return to Egypt?’ So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and \_\_\_\_\_ to Egypt.’” Such lack of faith, such grumbling, and such rebellion!

Numbers 14:5-9 says: “Then Moses and Aaron fell on their \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they \_\_\_\_\_ to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, ‘The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly \_\_\_\_\_ land. If the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_ with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not \_\_\_\_\_ against the LORD; and do not \_\_\_\_\_ the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.’”

Verse 10 says, “But all the congregation said to \_\_\_\_\_ them with stones. And then the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.” The Lord was \_\_\_\_\_ with Israel and thought about smiting them all with pestilence. Moses interceded for the people, asking for their \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord pardoned the people, but they had a \_\_\_\_\_ to pay.

In Numbers 14:21-23 the Lord God says, “Indeed, as I live, all the \_\_\_\_\_ will be filled with the glory of the LORD. Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the \_\_\_\_\_ these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.” Everyone in that generation twenty years old and upward \_\_\_\_\_ in the wilderness and never saw the Promised Land. Saying no to God didn’t bless anyone and cost them the \_\_\_\_\_.

In Jesus’ day there were a group of disciples who had \_\_\_\_\_ many miracles. When they heard Jesus teach something that they didn’t understand or embrace, they \_\_\_\_\_ away from the Lord. The Bible says: “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not \_\_\_\_\_ with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, ‘You do not want to go away \_\_\_\_\_, do you?’ And Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to \_\_\_\_\_ shall we go? You have the \_\_\_\_\_ of eternal life. We have \_\_\_\_\_ and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God’” (John 6:66-69). Saying no to God never brought anyone a blessing.

People lose \_\_\_\_\_ than they imagine when they say no to God. They may think they’ve gained their \_\_\_\_\_ to do as they please, but what is the cost? Adam and Eve did as they \_\_\_\_\_ and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. The people in Noah’s day \_\_\_\_\_ their lives. The people in Caleb’s day \_\_\_\_\_ young and lost their inheritance. The people in Jesus’ day lost “eternal life.” You can say no to God, but you’ve got to realize the cost is great.

Let’s say “yes” to God. Let’s be \_\_\_\_\_ to God’s will. We need to be like Moses. The Bible says, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, \_\_\_\_\_ to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing \_\_\_\_\_ of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the \_\_\_\_\_” (Hebrews 11:24-26).

We need an \_\_\_\_\_ like the generation who entered the Promised Land after forty years in the wilderness. The Bible says: “They [that is, that younger generation that was under twenty at the time of the bad report] answered Joshua, saying, ‘All that you have commanded us we will \_\_\_\_\_, and wherever you send us we will \_\_\_\_\_. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses. And anyone who rebels against your command and does not \_\_\_\_\_ your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:16).

Isaiah also showed a marvelous \_\_\_\_\_ when he said to God, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8). We need the \_\_\_\_\_ and love for God that says, Tell me what to do and I’ll do it. Tell me what is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’ll believe it. We’re not going to give any “ifs,” “ands” or “buts.” We’re simply going to \_\_\_\_\_ God enough to obey whatever He instructs us. We’re not going to \_\_\_\_\_ with Him or try to change His Word and become an editor of God.

The church began on the first Pentecost after the resurrection, fifty days after Jesus was crucified. Peter \_\_\_\_\_ a compelling sermon to the people proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and how the Father in heaven has made him both Lord and Christ. When the people \_\_\_\_\_ it they were pierced to the heart, because they realized the crucified Jesus was indeed the Lord and Christ. They were \_\_\_\_\_ and they cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” In Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The Bible says, “So then, those who had received his \_\_\_\_\_ [King James says “gladly received it”] were baptized; and that day were added about three

thousand souls. They were continually \_\_\_\_\_ themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:41-42).

The people in the early church began working to \_\_\_\_\_ others with the gospel and to bring them to the Lord Jesus. If you love the Lord, if you love your soul, and you love the souls of other people, you'll want them to be \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord just as you are. Knowing the Lord, being saved, and having eternal life are the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ that anyone can enjoy. If you have these blessings, you have everything. But if you don't know the Lord, you aren't saved, and you don't have eternal life, and you're missing out and robbing yourself of the most necessary, and most important \_\_\_\_\_ blessings of all. When you say no to God, God will one day say no to you. When you say yes to God, and you do it in love and you do it in obedience, God will one day say yes to you. Are you saying yes or are you saying no to God? Are you \_\_\_\_\_ Him, or walking in your own ways? Are you loving him, or ignoring Him? Are you with Him, or against Him? Don't ever, ever, ever, say no to God. Say yes, "Here am I, send me."

If we want the forgiveness of our \_\_\_\_\_, we ought to do the same thing the people did at Pentecost. Having heard of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we should believe, repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. When we realize that we've sinned, and the burden of sin is on our souls, we ought to repent and be baptized. No "ifs," "ands," or "buts" about it. No substituting what we'd like to do for what God asks us to do. Obedience is doing God's will in God's way. Let's say with our hearts and lives, "yes, Lord! We'll come to you and serve you by obeying what You have taught us to do."

Repentance is the turning away from sin and turning to the way of the Lord. Baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of sin. Saying no to God or changing the instructions would be the worst thing that we could do, and saying yes and obeying them is the best thing that we can do. Let's say yes to God, and God will keep His promise. He'll wash away our sins, He'll add us to the church, He'll give us newness of life.

Let's also say yes to assembling for worship with the church, yes to supporting the church, and yes to serving and teaching others. The Bible says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Let's get involved in being God's people doing God's will in God's way. Let's give God our hearts, our obedience, and our lives. Saying yes to God is always right!