



The Reflector

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What Part of 'No' Don't You Understand?

David Hicks

"Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God." (3 John 11)

To many Christians today, one of the most misused words in our language is YES! One of most useful words is NO!

It has been awhile, but I remember Nancy Reagan's "Just Say NO to Drugs" campaign. I also remember the ridicule it received! These were the same scoffers that derided the abstinence programs.

A Biblical truth, that will make itself perfectly clear, is that no one will amount to anything in their service to God, who cannot use the word NO properly.

It is a small word in any language! This is probably due to the fact that it must be said quickly and emphatically, before we, by procrastination, say maybe or yes. It is one of the first words a child learns, and one they seem to forget first as they grow older.

Men have lost all, for the simple fact that NO could not be said to this activity or that. One of the most precious gifts of all, time; slips away if we cannot say NO! Some may give into a little temptation and miss out on great things that God has offered to those who can learn to say NO.

Conformity, getting along, and going with the flow (all forms of saying yes!), are highly valued in our misguided society. Thus to say NO, is often difficult. Only the most independent minds can do it, and it requires great courage.

To be able to say NO is vital to the righteousness of God, as well as nonconformance to the things of this world. The essence of righteousness is to be able to say NO to temptation. It should not surprise us that the word NO is used over 1,500 times in the scriptures (not counting various other ways to say it, such as: reject, refuse, abhor, do not consent, do not be deceived, do not be conformed, abstain, etc...).

Non-conformance to the world is demanded of the child of God!

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

As a demonstration of the power of NO over temptation, our Lord illustrated the effect of NO on Satan himself. In Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; He said NO three times.

Sometimes I don't think we appreciate the magnitude of this example (especially those of us who often say yes the first time!). Does Satan have to take us up to a mountain, or just show us the view out of our front window?

Samson, who is known in God's word as the strongest man, demonstrated that his strength was true as long as he said NO! However, when he could not refuse a woman's seduction, he became

weak and was lost to a final demonstration of godly power (Judges 13-16).

In the 39 th chapter of Genesis; an example of the power of NO, stands as a testament of this tool, for all time. We find Joseph, who is sold into slavery by his envious brothers, and is bought by an Egyptian named Potiphar. Joseph was appointed by God's blessing over all that Potiphar possessed, except his wife, note:

“And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he refused and said to his master's wife, ‘Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.” (Genesis 39:7-10)

There are several lessons that exist in this example of Joseph –

First, is that saying NO once, and then giving in, is not acceptable. NO must be used every time evil and temptation presents itself. What a terrible underestimation of our adversary, to think that he will go away after the first failed attempt.

Second, is that Joseph was acutely aware that to give in to wickedness in any form, was to sin against God. By this we learn that saying NO to temptation, without uttering a single word, is saying yes to God!

Third, we learn that saying NO can have consequences in an unjust world and among the societies of men. Just as Joseph would be cast in prison by Potiphar and would know suffering and persecution for not giving in to evil, God would still be with Joseph and ultimately bless him, just as He will all who find this same strength.

“My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.” (Proverbs 1:10)

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ (1 Corinthians 15:33)

NO is a word that says, just because everyone else is doing it, doesn't make it right! Remember, if Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?

It is a word that says just because it seems right to men, doesn't make it right! Truth is the sole purview of God, thus righteousness is established by Him alone!

NO is the definition of strength of character. It is easy to say yes and go along! It is far more difficult to say NO and take a stand to be different. There is strength and honor in being able to say NO!

NO is something a child should learn to say, away from its parents! We want our children to be independent as long as they do everything we as godly parents say!!! I think that until I was about thirteen years old, I thought my name was NO!

NO is a word that says we should choose our friends and associates with great care!

NO is a word that says, preserve us from evil, Almighty God; but failing that, give us the strength to say NO!

Learn to say NO! Say it emphatically! It will protect your honor. It will protect us from violating God's word! Let us not forget to say yes at the proper times; but, understand that ‘yes’ has meaning only in the presence of NO!

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25)

We cannot really and truly say yes to Him, until we say NO to the world!

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

What Part of NO don't We Understand!

Thoughts about the Difference Between Character and Reputation

Tim Nichols

Reputation isn't everything. Character is much more important. A reputation that is gained without character is hypocrisy. A reputation that grows out of a good character is simply giving honor to whom honor is due.

Character is within your power. Reputation is a thing over which you have little control.

Character cannot be taken away from you by any man. Reputation can be stolen from you by liars.

Striving for character is strength. Aiming solely at reputation is weakness. Character endures difficulty.

Reputation seekers are confused when difficulty arises. Character seeks to do what is right.

Reputation seekers seek to do what is acceptable to the most mortals.

Integrity, honesty, clarity, and honor are valued by men and women of Character. Vagueness, indistinct communication, and craftiness are hallmarks of reputation-seekers.

The man with character can stand alone when duty calls upon him to do so. The reputation seeker will not stand alone under any circumstances.

The man with character tries to clearly and honestly speak the truth and openly invites others to examine it. The reputation seeker aims at acceptance and therefore makes vague statements that can be interpreted in ways acceptable to the hearer.

The man of character speaks the truth as clearly and kindly as he is able at all times and under all circumstances. The reputation seeker speaks the truth with boldness only when he is assured that those who are significant to him will applaud.

The man of character is often out in front, regardless of who is following. The reputation seeker cannot lead the way because he cannot

move in any direction until he is assured that the army is already headed that way.

The reputation seeker is confused by the man of character. He tends to assume that all men are motivated as he is and he attempts to manipulate others by dangling before them the golden carrot of approval and by goading them on with the spear of disapproval. His arguments are often shallow and when he cannot convince others with reasonable discussion he attempts to intimidate with threats of harming the reputation of the man of character. He is shocked, perturbed, and disgusted when his petty attempts at coercion are ignored by the one who is examining his own heart and his own Bible rather than opinion polls.

The godly man of character has a genuine light that shines for all the world to see. When right-thinking men see it they glorify God (Matthew 5:16). The reputation seeker has no real light, but he works very hard at giving the impression that he does. His artificial light changes color as it radiates in different directions. It is adjusted so that men who see it will glorify him.

Sometimes men of character deservedly own a fine reputation among men. This is desirable above great physical wealth (Proverbs 22:1). But a fine reputation is not to be desired above character. False teachers have always enjoyed fine reputations among some segment of the people (Luke 6:26). They, along with other hypocrites of their stripe, have traded character for reputation and have received the only reward they will ever see (Matthew 6:1-21). Only a man of character can "rejoice and be exceedingly glad" when he is wrongly persecuted and when men say all kinds of evil against him falsely because of his practice of Christianity (Matthew 5:10-12). The reputation seeker will fall apart at such times.

Only the man of character can truly teach and practice the truth without partiality (1 Timothy 5:21, James 3:17). He is not moved by the potential influence of his hearers upon the opinions of others. He does not challenge the sins of those without influence while ignoring those of opinion leaders. All are treated equally by him. The reputation seeker “pets the big dogs” and kicks the helpless ones if doing so will please the “big dogs.”

Reputation seekers tend to, sometimes subtly, point at their degrees and awards hanging on the walls and suggest that you ought to respect their opinions because they have been respected by influential men in high places. Men of character point at the Bible and suggest that God’s word is alone worthy of your trust and that all opinions ought to be weighed upon God’s scales.

Men of character are able to say, “I was mistaken” when they are able to discover errors in themselves. They clearly defend what they have said or done when they are accused of errors that they, themselves, cannot detect. Reputation seekers, on the other hand, are quick to say that they have been “taken out of context” even when their words clearly mean what they appear to mean when placed in their context. Their “clarifications” are often very imprecise and unclear. Since many approved of them for what they did say they cannot retreat from it. Since some disapprove of what they said they cannot directly own it. Their fence-straddling seldom wins for them the approval of both sides and it often backfires and causes them to earn the displeasure of both. Honesty and consistency go out the window when reputation is the goal. They are obvious and apparent when character is the objective.

Work to become a man or woman of character. Begin on the inside. The outside will follow. Those who love truth and right, though they be few, will love you. God will love and reward you. When you look in the mirror you will be able to approve of what you see. The transient applause of men

cannot match the authentic approval of heaven or that of your own conscience

Measuring the Strength of the Church

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29 KJV)

Until folks quit thinking of the strength of the local church in terms of large numbers, showcase buildings, and grabbing community attention with such things and begin thinking of strength in spiritual terms, the Lord’s cause will not really prosper. Things like a spiritually growing membership, simple scriptural spiritual public worship and spiritually oriented work, will not be seen as strength by the carnally minded in or out of the church. The measuring of strength in spiritual terms will truly confound the wise and mighty of this world. But, it will impress God. Remember that God has so designed his plan for man so that “no flesh should glory in his presence.”

A spiritually strong church will be busy worshiping God and “seeking and saving the lost” rather than trying to get into a position to impress the world with its “strength.”

What’s in the Bible?

Preacher: Do you know what's in the Bible?

Little Girl: Yes. I think I know everything that's in it.

Preacher: You do? Tell me.

Little Girl: OK. There's a picture of my brother's girl friend, a ticket from the dry cleaners, one of my curls, and a pizza coupon.