

Just Say "No"

By Min. Gerry Hickman

"Just Say No" was an advertising campaign created by First Lady Nancy Reagan, during the 1980s and 1990s and was part of the U.S. "War on Drugs", to discourage children from engaging in illegal recreational drug use by offering various ways of saying **No**.

This slogan can be applied in almost any area—especially in the area of time management. In fact, "NO" is one of the most effective time management, time-saving techniques you can use in your everyday life.

Why is "No" so effective?

It protects your priorities (*those that are important and urgent*)
Put's less pressure on yourself (*helps you set boundaries*)
Saves you more time (*frees up your schedule*)

"No" can mean "Wait!"

Let's look at the life of Jesus and when His "No" was really "Wait!"
Jesus did not heal *every person* he encountered (only those who God desired Him to);
Jesus did sometimes "Wait" to respond to some people and circumstances. Sometimes your "No" might mean "Wait!"

An example of Jesus initially saying "No" was when He waited to go to see Lazarus (John 11:1-44)! Jesus waited to respond to Mary and her sister Martha's request for Him to visit their brother Lazarus who was sick. As soon as Jesus received the request He realized that Lazarus' sickness was not unto death, but to the Glory of God, so He waited 2 more days before He departed to see Lazarus (John 11:4-6). Lazarus was in the grave for 4 days before Jesus finally arrived at Mary and Martha's town of Bethany—leaving them distraught and grief stricken. Martha even said to Jesus that Lazarus would not had died if He would had arrived earlier (John 11:21). Jesus, however, waited because he wanted God to be glorified in the end. By waiting and saying no to Mary's initial request, Jesus was able to demonstrate to the disciples, Mary and Martha, and the other witnesses, the awesome power of God by resurrecting Lazarus from the dead. Jesus knew his priorities and although the request was important and urgent to Mary and Martha, Jesus arrived to see Lazarus at the perfect time.

Waiting can be the perfect response instead of quickly responding and regretting it later. When you have a clear understanding of your priorities and wait for God's perfect timing, you put less pressure and stress on your life.

How should you say No?

Being a good steward of time involves, learning to prioritize your time, setting boundaries, and focusing on the things that are important in your life.

Say "No" tactfully and without guilt

Always use the medium that's right for you (*in person, phone, Face book, email, etc.*)

Your boundaries should be clear (*know what you will say "Yes" or "No" to*)

No is okay! (make sure your intentions are not "Yes") (Matthew 5:37)

Only provide an alternative to "No" if you want to (*you don't owe anyone explanations*)

If you learn to tactfully decline every request that does not contribute to your goals, you will protect your priorities, put less pressure on yourself and save more time. When you start saying "No", you'll find less people requesting and more time to do the things that are important to you and God!

Personal Experience: During my prayer time, God spoke to my heart about learning to say "No." I was so busy responding to other's requests and helping them that I wasn't focusing on the things that were priorities in my life. Although many of the things I found myself doing were "good," they were taking up so much of my time that I had little time to complete what God wanted me to do. I love helping and serving others and saying "No" was difficult for me. I am, however, learning to say "No" and not over-commit myself--but I am realizing that doing so is an ongoing and challenging process. I recently said "No" to a request that I could have easily said "Yes" to because it was something that I could do. The person was a little surprised at my response because I usually volunteer or say "Yes" to many requests or tasks. I was, however, able to respond without guilt because I remembered what God had spoken to me.