

When Jesus Said "NO"

Jesus Christ was not alternately "yes" and "no", He was never anything but "yes." So wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:19). If it is true that Jesus was always "yes", does that mean that we must be prepared to answer "yes" to every demand, every request, and every situation no matter what? Must a person feel selfish or lazy or inadequate with each "no" she or he says? Is the alternative to self-destruct on work or to "O.D." on "yes"?

Jesus did say "no", and not only to Satan three times in the desert. Jesus said "no" or its equivalent *when a "yes" did not fit in with His "yes" to the Father*. The instances are many. First of all, Jesus said "no" to ordinary human requests:

- Let me bury my father before I follow you --- **NO** (Mt.8);
- Tell my sister to help me with the housework --- **NO** (Lk.10);
- Tell my brother to be fair with me about our inheritance --- **NO** (Lk.10);
- Stay in our town a little longer --- **NO** (Lk.4);
- (to the cured Gerasene demoniac) let me follow you --- **NO** (Mk.5);

Close, loving friends, with apparently the strongest personal claims on him, also asked favors:

- Give my sons a special privileged place next to you --- **NO** (Mk.10);
- Stop talking about your death like that --- **NO** (Mk.8);
- Tell us when the last things will occur --- **NO** (Acts 1);
- Call down fire from heaven to destroy those towns that reject you --- **NO** (Lk.9)

Also, there were the demands of the crowds:

- Work a sign for us right here and now --- **NO** (Mt. 12);
- Do here in your own town the things we have heard you did in Capernaum --- **NO** (Lk.4);
- Give us again today the bread you gave us yesterday --- **NO** (Jn.6).

Finally, Jesus received many common-sense, law-and-order, respectable-citizen kinds of requests:

- Send the crowd away, they're getting hungry --- **NO** (Lk.9);
- Keep this crowd quiet --- **NO** (Lk.19);
- Make your followers fast like those of John the Baptizer --- **NO** (Mk.2);
- Surely you have some answer to these accusations against you --- **NO** (Mk.15).

(Excerpted from, *When Jesus Said "NO"*, by
Rev. George Niederauer)