



DEVOTION

When God Says No

By Greg Laurie on Mar 18, 2025

"But God said to me, 'You must not build a Temple to honor my name, for you are a warrior and have shed much blood.'"

-1 Chronicles 28:3

What is your purpose in life? I think for some people it's just long life. That's not a bad thing to aspire to, but long life is not the objective. Fulfilling God's purpose for your life is the objective. Life isn't measured by duration but by donation. What have you donated? What have you done with your life?

There must come a moment when we pass from money to meaning, from possessions to purpose, from success to significance. For David, that moment came when he decided to build a temple for the Lord. In those days, God's Spirit dwelled among His people in the ark of the covenant. The ark was kept in the tabernacle, which was a tent.

David had trouble reconciling the fact that God's Spirit dwelled in a tent while he lived in a palace. David wanted to build a house for the Lord. He set aside the necessary funds and gathered the necessary building supplies.

David's request was valid. His heart was in the right place. He was a man after God's own heart. He wanted to give back to God for all that God had given him. But there was just one hitch: God said no.

He answered David through the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:1–7. God reminded David that He had never asked for a house. He didn't need to be protected from the elements; He controlled the elements!

David's timing was off. The temple would be built, but not during his lifetime. His perspective was off, as well. He saw himself as the right person for the job. He didn't see himself as God saw him. Look again at the passage above from 1 Chronicles 28. David was a warrior king. He had too much blood on his hands.

David learned a hard, valuable lesson. Sometimes God says go. Sometimes God says grow. Sometimes God says slow. Sometimes God says no.

God revealed His reason for saying no to David. He always has His reasons—and they’re always perfect—but He doesn’t always reveal them. Maybe you’ve discovered that yourself. Maybe you had dreams that you didn’t realize. Maybe you dreamed of a successful ministry, and it didn’t happen. Maybe you dreamed of greater success in business, and it didn’t happen. Maybe you dreamed of romance and marriage, and it didn’t happen.

Maybe you feel God has let you down. If so, look at what David did in his situation. Instead of sulking or pleading with God, he wisely pivoted to what God had done for him. “Yet the Lord, the God of Israel, has chosen me from among all my father’s family to be king over Israel forever” (1 Chronicles 28:4 NLT). In other words, “I want to talk about what God said yes to, not what He said no to.”

Have you ever said to the Lord, “Here is the way I think You ought to work. But not my will, but Yours, be done”? Some might say, “I am not saying that to God. If I say that, He will make me do something I don’t want to do.” I believe a person who believes that has a warped concept of God, a misconception that His will is always going to be something undesirable.

God may be saying “no” to something you have asked Him for because He wants to give you something far better than what you could ask or think. Don’t be afraid to let your Father choose for you.

Reflection Question: How can you stay faithful to God after He says no to a prayer request? *Discuss this with believers like you on Harvest Discipleship!*