

Lesson 8 presented the incidents that were bittersweet. We learned from David's disastrous experiences that we can certainly do the right thing wrongly. There was nothing at all wrong in his desires or motives, but he failed to pray and seek what God revealed as to how to transport the Ark. This led them to the next step, doing the wrong thing!

As they failed to move the Ark properly, it began tipping. Uzzah reached out to steady it and was instantly killed. David failed to fully respect the holiness of God. As a result, things that should not be ignored resulted in the death of this man. It led David to react emotionally, essentially blaming God for not being able to move the Ark and ruining his plans. David became fearful and reluctant to carry out the right actions. But eventually he did the right thing rightly. He brought in the Ark safely with much worship and rejoicing. He brought blessings to all the people, but sadly faced criticism from Michal, the wife he had gone to great lengths to restore to his home. Her reaction mocked the way he rejoiced and worshipped the Lord. She would pay the price for this, remaining barren the rest of her life!

This week, we will see David have another godly desire and how he learned from past events when making future decisions. Let's now turn to this important and vital passage of Scripture, and see what God will teach us in how to respond when He says no to our desires.

DAY 1

David's Desire to Build God's House

2 SAMUEL 7:1-6

Please Read 2 Samuel 7:1-6 and answer the following questions.

[1] David was at last settling into ruling over Israel. The Lord in turn gave him rest from all the enemies around him for the time. What was David's desire at this point (v. 2)?

Note: Nathan is first mentioned here. He was a prophet in David's court. Nathan will play an important role in a future study as well. The name Nathan means "a gift."¹ This is fitting because Nathan was truly a gift from the Lord in David's life.

[2] What was Nathan's logical response to this desire of David's heart (v. 3)?

[3] That night, the Lord appeared to Nathan in a vision. What message did God have about this desire (vv. 5-6)? How does 1 Chronicles 17:4 directly clarify what God was saying here?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

This week, our primary focus is how to respond when God says no to the desires, burdens, or perhaps prayer requests we thought were His will. David's desire to have a permanent structure as a focal point of worship was in no means wrong. All great works begin with a burden or vision, and David certainly had a godly desire. Some are called to be visionaries, while others may get to carry out the vision.

[1] Like his greater descendant, Jesus Christ, David had a zeal for the house of the Lord (John 2:17). David's desire was perhaps premature, but his heart was right. Nehemiah set a great example of seeking God's will for the burden placed on his heart, as he systematically prayed about and scoped out the situation that concerned him. He did all of this before taking action in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls (Nehemiah 1–2).

What must we first do with any burden or desire that we have?

Psalm 37:3–6

John 15:7

[2] David wasn't allowed to build the temple. The reason for this was because he had "shed much blood" (1 Chronicles 22:8). "His idea was excellent, but his hands were dirty!"² It would be his son, Solomon who would build the temple. But God made clear that He doesn't dwell in a fixed location, but did want a place to fellowship with His people.

What did Solomon realize when he completed the work of the temple, as Stephen later commented on (2 Chronicles 2:5–6)?

What important thing did Paul later say about the temple God now chooses to dwell in (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20)?

Daily Life Point: This brings up two truths to remember when God says no. First, realize there is nothing wrong in wanting to have our desires fulfilled as long as they glorify God. Secondly, we must never assume that something is God's will, even if it seems to be an obvious conclusion or decision. Likewise, don't assume that God's no means you are being disciplined or punished. It may be the first step in redirection to a better plan.³

What experiences have you had with God saying no to something you really desired or thought was His perfect will for your life? How did you react to this? How does what we've read so far encourage you in future situations where your desires don't match up with God's? How does knowing that you are the living temple of God affect how you will choose to walk with God today? Please record and share some thoughts.

MEMORY PASSAGE

This week we will memorize 2 Samuel 7:22. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (2

Samuel 7:22 NKJV)

DAY 2

God's Desire to Build David's House
2 SAMUEL 7:7-11

Please Read 2 Samuel 7:7-11 and answer the following questions

[1] Of what did God continue to remind David (v. 7)?

[2] What else did God remind David concerning all He had done for David and Israel (vv. 8-10)?

[3] What unexpected thing did God add about His plans for David (v. 11)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] In today's passage, we find two more important principles of dealing with the times when God says no. First, we must not forget all the great things that God has done for us—things that are far beyond what we ever deserve. As Alan Redpath well observed, "I think that sometimes He has more to teach us from His denials than from His permissions."⁴ How do these passages exhort us to not forget the awesome, yet undeserved, things He has done for us?

Psalm 68:19–20; 103:1–5

Ephesians 2:1–10

[2] God dropped quite a shocker on David in that He desired to build him a house (or lasting royal dynasty)⁵! The second principle we then see is that God always has a better plan for us than we could ever imagine. That means we can rest confidently in it.

How does Isaiah 40:10–11, 27–31 bring God's to rest and renewal? What strong encouragement does Ephesians 3:20 add when considering why God says no to some of our desires?

Daily Life Point: God doesn't call everyone to build temples, but He does have other purposes for us.⁶ The purpose He is about to set out before David was far more significant than he would have ever dreamed. "Next to the promise given to Abraham must rank the word of blessing poured out on David."⁷ The length of God's statements (197 words) recorded here are the longest since the days of Moses. As Robert Bergen points out, "The prodigious size of the pronouncement suggests that the writer intended it to be interpreted as centrally important—perhaps on a plane of the Torah itself."⁸

God's plan for us may not be quite as dramatic, but it is still very important to Him. His thoughts are not ours, and He does have a better plan than we can come up with on our own—giving us hope (Isaiah 55:8–9; Jeremiah 29:11).

So how does this help you personally in understanding why at times God has said, "No" to you? How does remembering that God has done so much for you—even though we don't deserve it—help you understand that He has your best at heart when He says, "No" to your desires?

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Therefore You are _____, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God _____ You, according to all that we have _____ with our ears. (2 Samuel 7:22 NKJV).

DAY 3

An Eternal Purpose
2 SAMUEL 7:12-17

Please Read 2 Samuel 7:12-17 and answer the following questions

[1] What was God's long-term plan for David's household (vv. 12-13)?

[2] How will God deal with his descendents in a unique way (vv. 14-15)?

[3] How did the long-term plan for David compare with a temporary structure that would only decay (v. 16)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

David's desire to build the temple of the Lord "set the stage for one of the key passages in Scripture relating to the coming Messiah,"⁹ clarifying and expanding on the promise God gave to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 15.

We see in this passage a contrast between the earthly kingdom established by Solomon and the kingdom totally accomplished by God, a dynasty that would endure, culminating in Christ.¹⁰ "The significance of the eternal covenant between the Lord and David for the New Testament writers cannot be overemphasized. These words played an essential preparatory role in developing the messianic expectations that were fulfilled in Jesus."¹¹

[1] This Davidic Covenant clearly pictured the coming kingdom of Christ. Solomon's throne would continue, but was fulfilled in Christ through both the lines of Mary and Joseph (Matthew 1; Luke 3)¹² and will continue eternally (Revelation 3:7; 5:5; 22:16). What are just a few of the important things the following passages record about His fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant?

Psalm 2:7–8

Isaiah 9:6–7

Hebrews 1:5, 8

[2] God's no to David in fact opened up a yes of eternal importance, one that David, no doubt, had even considered. God has our best interests in mind, but also the interests of more eternal things than we comprehend with our limited understanding. What does Ecclesiastes 3:11 tell us about the conflict that arises from our limited understanding of when God says no? How can we gain comfort when burdened by not being able to understand the eternal purposes of God (Matthew 11:27–30; Romans 11:33–36)?

Daily Life Point: The important point is that when God says no to us, it is for a much greater purpose. We must be content in that knowledge. He has a better way and wants you to walk in support of this, humbly accepting it.¹³ Will you choose to accept God's best plans, trusting Him by faith to know what is best—without trying to be "God's counselor?" Read this following statement and think about how disappointments can be used in your life, as you maintain an eternal perspective:

Do we know the assurance of trust that takes the sting out of disappointment and turns it rather to "His appointment" . . . There is the discipline of disappointment that would destroy us, unless we cause it to lift us into a new sphere of usefulness and devotion. Turn from the pain, and find the gain of thankfulness and assurance that will make of your life "a constant pageant of triumph in Christ."¹⁴

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

**Therefore You are _____, O Lord God. For there is none
_____ You, nor is there any God _____ You,
according to all that we have _____ with our _____.
(2 Samuel 7:22 NKJV)**

DAY 4

A Humble Prayer
2 SAMUEL 7:18-23

Please read 2 Samuel 7:18-23 and answer the following questions.

[1] David's reaction to all this is just as amazing as the revelation that God gave through Nathan. What humble way did David react to this (vv. 18-20)?

[2] What crucial thing did this reveal (vv. 21-22)?

[3] Whom did God's plan benefit (v. 23)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

David's reaction was amazingly humble. He sat and worshipped before the Lord, much like Job did when he suffered through his many trials (Job 1:20). The cultural implications of this humility of David are all the more amazing, as Near Eastern culture usually considered the building of a temple to reflect the extent of a king's success.¹⁵

[1] When God says no, He truly knows our hearts and motives, and acts accordingly. David's humility in respecting this is seen by calling himself God's "servant" ten times in vv. 19–21 and 25–29.¹⁶ The Hebrew word for *servant* didn't just mean a slave, but also a worshipper or an ambassador to accomplish some specific mission. It is used several times to refer to David's lineage (Jeremiah 33; Ezekiel 34, 37; Haggai 2) as well as 31 times in Isaiah 39–66 to refer to the Messiah.¹⁷ David referred to God in vv. 18–20 as Lord God, "Jehovah Adonai," the Sovereign Lord.¹⁸ He knows whether or not our hearts are truly humbled and submitted to His sovereignty in our lives.

What do these passages tell us about the servant's heart seen in other important Bible characters?

Numbers 12:3

Daniel 10:12

Luke 22:27

[2] Importantly, David realized that God's purposes are not always about us. They are about God and His glory! He redeemed us, just like he redeemed Israel from their oppressors. To "redeem" means to purchase something by paying a price or ransom, and transfer the ownership to someone else.¹⁹ We too have been bought with a price, which means we are not our own anymore. In vv. 22 and 25, David calls God "Jehovah Elohim", the God of power,²⁰ showing he respected that power and right of God to say no to him, because his desires didn't match up exactly to His perfect will at the time.

How do the following passages reflect the importance of seeking His glory, even if it means refusing our own desires?

Psalms 115:1

2 Corinthians 5:15

Ephesians 1:7–13; 2:10

Daily Life Point: When God has said no to you, did you respond with humble worship before the throne of God? Earlier, David responded with a spiritual temper tantrum, but he now responded appropriately, humbly entrusting himself to God. The hardest lesson for believers to learn is that we aren't the center of the universe. God certainly has a great plan for us, and wishes to use us, but He is almighty God and will do what He knows is just and right. As Warren Wiersbe asks, "Have you learned that there can be blessing in unanswered prayer?"²¹

How does the following statement by Dave Dravecky, a man who knows what it is to have dreams shattered by something he couldn't understand, help to you submit to God's sovereignty over your life: "I have learned that God's silence to my questions is not a door slammed in my face. I may not have the answers—but I do have Him."²²

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Therefore You are _____, O Lord God. For _____ is
none _____ You, nor is there any God _____ You,
_____ to all that we have _____ with our
_____. (2 Samuel 7:22 NKJV)

DAY 5

A Humble Acceptance
2 SAMUEL 7:24–29

Please read 2 Samuel 7:24–29 and answer the following questions.

[1] What are some further things that David praised God for about Israel, the nation he now ruled (vv. 24–25)?

[2] How did all this spur on more faith on David's part to pray and seek the Lord anew (vv. 26–27)?

[3] How did David close out his prayer and acceptance of God's perfect will about this (vv. 28–29)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] God established an eternal covenant with Israel, and subsequently with us through Christ. The Hebrew idea behind the word *established* is to make it firm and steadfast. "The main idea is to bring something into an incontrovertible existence."²³ So in view of this, in humble acceptance, David prayed that God would establish the things He had promised. "David's simple acceptance of the Lord's word mirrors Abraham's (cf. Gen 15:6) and confirms that David was indeed a man after God's own heart."²⁴ We can, like David, take it to heart that God is indeed God, that His words are true, and that when He says no, it is for the best. The promise of God gave David the confidence to trust Him all the more.

How do the following passages strengthen us to trust His promises despite our feelings, even if He should say no to something we desired?

Joshua 21:45

John 17:17

Romans 10:17

Daily Life Point: We must realize experiencing God saying no to our desires is designed to drive us to embrace and seek Him all the more. Faith is built through hearing God's Word and putting it into practice. How have you been doing in getting the Word of God into your heart and mind? What are some ways you can recommit yourself to get God's Word for the rest of this year, so you can better face the triumphs and the trials that will still come your way? Please record and share your thoughts and goals with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

From memory, write out this week's passage below. Then review the passage throughout the day.

2 Samuel 7:22 NKJV

DAY 6

Pursuing God's Heart

David went away from the devastating news of having his heart's desire turned down by the Lord, not in bitterness, depression, or spiritual tantrums. He came away with renewed confidence in God and sought to build toward God's eternal purpose. Once David did so, he still had the opportunity to take part in preparations for the temple, making contributions toward it. Much of the record of David's reign in 1 Chronicles emphasizes the preparations he made for the building of the temple.²⁵ Nothing is wrong with this, nor is it wrong to have a burden or vision to seek after, even though God may say no to these desires from time to time. As F. B. Meyer well said,

Never surrender your ideal or act unworthily of it or disobey the heavenly vision. Above all, when you come as David did to the house of cedar and God has given you rest, be more than ever careful to protect yourselves and to remember the purpose that visited you when you kept your father's sheep.²⁶

It's much better to spend our time seeking ways we can serve and glorify God, even if our desires aren't perfectly in line with His, rather than neglecting it as we let such a condition choke out the fruitful growth God desires to accomplish in our lives.²⁷

Summarized here are the nine principles we examined this week about handling times of seeming disappointment in our lives. Mark those points that have especially helped you and record how this has or can make a real difference in your life:

1. There is nothing wrong in having the desire to glorify God and seek His will about those desires.

2. We must never assume that something is God's will, even if it seems like an obvious conclusion or decision.

3. When God does say no to our desires, we must remember to focus in on all the undeserved things He has already done for us.

4. When God says no, it is because He has a better plan than we do.

5. We must realize that God has an eternal purpose in mind when He says yes, no, or wait to our desires.

6. Our reaction to God's response should be one of worship and prayer, not a spiritual pity party.

7. God truly knows our hearts and motives and will respond accordingly.

8. God's purposes are not necessarily about us; they are all about His purposes done in His way for His glory, and we are blessed to take part in His plans.

9. Every time God says no, it is to drive us to embrace Him and His Word all the more.

<i>MEMORY PASSAGE</i>	You are now able to write out this week's passage by memory. Do so now, and then review it and be ready to share it with others in your group time.
2 Samuel 7:22 NKJV	

PARTING THOUGHTS

Although David didn't write Psalm 89, it is a psalm celebrating the Davidic Covenant. In fact, the most detailed commentary on 2 Samuel 7 in the Bible is Psalm 89.²⁸ The theme of this psalm is God's eternal faithfulness.²⁹ Let's close out by thinking about some of the things it says about this covenant with David in view of the later coming of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 89:1–29

A Contemplation of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever;
With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.
For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever;
Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.
I have made a covenant with My chosen,
I have sworn to My servant David:
Your seed I will establish forever,
And build up your throne to all generations.' " Selah

And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord;
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.
For who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord?
Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord?
God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,
And to be held in reverence by all those around Him.
O Lord God of hosts,
Who is mighty like You, O Lord?
Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
You rule the raging of the sea;
When its waves rise, You still them.
You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain;
You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm.

The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours;
The world and all its fullness, You have founded them.
The north and the south, You have created them;
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name.
You have a mighty arm;
Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face.
Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!
They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.
In Your name they rejoice all day long,
And in Your righteousness they are exalted.
For You are the glory of their strength,
And in Your favor our horn is exalted.
For our shield belongs to the Lord,
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one,
And said: "I have given help to one who is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
I have found My servant David;
With My holy oil I have anointed him,
With whom My hand shall be established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.
The enemy shall not outwit him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague those who hate him.

"But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him,
And in My name his horn shall be exalted.
Also I will set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
He shall cry to Me, 'You are my Father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation.'
Also I will make him My firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.
My mercy I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall stand firm with him.
His seed also I will make to endure forever,
And his throne as the days of heaven."

NOTES

- 1 "Biblical Cyclopedic Index" in *The Open Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), p. 225.
- 2 Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1990), p. 210.
- 3 Charles R. Swindoll, *David, Man of Passion and Destiny* (Dallas: Word, 1997), p. 162.
- 4 Alan Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1962), p. 167.
- 5 *The New Scofield Study Bible*, NKJV (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), p. 375.
- 6 Swindoll, *David*, p. 163.
- 7 Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1978), p. 149.
- 8 Robert D. Bergen, "1, 2 Samuel!" *The New American Commentary*, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), p. 336.
- 9 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG, 1994), p. 824.
- 10 Kaiser, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 150.
- 11 Bergen, "1, 2 Samuel", p. 337.
- 12 *The New Scofield Study Bible*, p. 376.
- 13 Swindoll, *David*, p. 166.
- 14 V. Raymond Edman, *The Disciplines of Life* (Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest, 1982), p. 165.
- 15 Richard L. Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (Ross-Shire, Great Britain: Mentor/Christian Focus, 1998), p. 155.
- 16 Eugene H. Merrill, "1 and 2 Samuel" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*. Ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1985), p. 465.
- 17 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 2346.
- 18 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2002), p. 52.
- 19 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 2383.
- 20 Wiersbe, *Be Restored*, p. 52.
- 21 Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), p. 392.
- 22 John Blanchard, *Sifted Silver* (Darlington, England: Evangelical, 1995), p. 231.
- 23 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 2325.
- 24 Bergen, "1, 2 Samuel", p. 345.
- 25 Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 148.
- 26 F. B Meyer, *The Life of David* (Lynwood, Wash.: Emerald, 1995), p. 155.
- 27 Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, p. 168.
- 28 Kaiser, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 161.
- 29 James M. Boice, *Psalms*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1996), p. 724.

