

NO IS NEVER EASY

Jeremiah 33:3 ³ *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. (NIV)*

Job 42:7 ⁷ *After the Lord had finished speaking with Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and with your two friends, for you have not been right in what you have said about me, as my servant Job was. (TLB)*

1 Peter 4:17 ¹⁷ *For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God’s household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God’s Good News? (NLT)*

Three possible reasons why God sometimes says (no).

1. God says ‘no’ when he has a bigger perspective.

Hebrews 4:13 ¹³ *He knows about everyone, everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from him to whom we must explain all that we have done. (TLB)*

Proverbs 2:8 ⁸ *(God) guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. (NIV)*

2. God says ‘no’ when he has a better plan.

Isaiah 55:8-9 ⁸ *This plan of mine is not what you would work out, neither are my thoughts the same as yours!* ⁹ *For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours. (TLB)*

Hebrews 11:39-40 ³⁹ *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,* ⁴⁰ *since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (NIV)*

3. God says ‘no’ when he has a greater purpose.

Psalms 57:2 ² *I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me. (NLT)*

1 Peter 1:7 ⁷ *These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (NLT)*

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 ¹⁷ *For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!* ¹⁸ *So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. (NLT)*

- a. Some things you’re not going to understand until you get to heaven.
- b. Some things you’re not going to change until you get to heaven.
- c. Sometimes we suffer for the benefit of other people.

What do I do when God says ‘no’?

1. Trust that God does everything in goodness and love.

Psalm 25:10 ¹⁰ All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant. (NIV)

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NIV)

- a. I don't have to understand God's answer to know it's motivated by love.

2. When in pain, pray what Jesus prayed facing the cross.

Mark 14:35-36 ³⁵ He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. ³⁶ "Abba, Father," he cried out, "everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." (NLT)

- a. Affirm God's power.
- b. Ask with passion.
- c. Accept God's plan.

3. Expect God to give grace to handle his answer.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ⁸ Three different times I begged God to make me well again. ⁹ Each time he said, "No. But I am with you; that is all you need. My power shows up best in weak people." Now I am glad to boast about how weak I am; I am glad to be a living demonstration of Christ's power, instead of showing off my own power and abilities. ¹⁰ Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite happy about "the thorn," and about insults and hardships, persecutions and difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am strong—the less I have, the more I depend on him. (TLB)

Job 13:15a ¹⁵ God may kill me, but still I will trust him. (CEV)

Psalm 9:10 ¹⁰ All those who know your mercy, Lord, will count on you for help. For you have never yet forsaken those who trust in you. (TLB)