

Saying no and setting boundaries: By Erica Jermanus

Many of us have a hard time when it comes to saying “no” to others. We allow people to walk all over us. We allow people to take advantage of us and our kindness. People see our kindness as weakness. The devil knows our weaknesses, and so he will use the people in our lives to carry out His will, plan, and purpose. We also allow others to dictate our lives and tell us what to do or where to go. We have a hard time saying no to certain people. But when it comes to the authority in our lives, it is different. We cannot say no to a police officer, or we will be in trouble with the law. But we do need to obey God rather than man. There may be times when man tells us not to do something that goes against the Bible. Or there may be times when man tells us to do something that is not the will of God for our lives.

For example, a parent may try to set you up with a job or a relationship. But you know that job and that person or relationship is not the will of God. You do not want to settle for less than what God has for you. You want to be in the will of God for your life. Being in the will of God means walking the straight and narrow path to life. That is why few find that path of life, because it means

forsaking certain things and people in your life who may be leading you to destruction.

Many people in the world expect you to go out and work a job and earn a living. But God may be calling us to serve Him and His kingdom. That goes against what the world expects of you. Certain people in your life may be doing things the world's way, and they put that expectation on you. But God wants you to go against the ways of this world. That is why so many Christians stand out from the crowd. That is why so many Christians are different and peculiar. It is because they are walking in holiness and walking the straight and narrow path. That path is doing God's will and following Christ and walking in obedience to His perfect will, plan and purpose for your life.

Matthew 7:13-14 says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Luke 22:42 says, "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Deuteronomy 14:2 says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

There may be people in your life that do not agree with what you do. People may want to try to change you or get you to follow their pattern of lifestyle. They may try to get you to follow the devil and his will for your life. There may be pressure from others to conform to the world and its standards. There may be others trying to get you to fit in with this world. But as Christians, we cannot do everything that the world is doing. We cannot go to the places that the world is going to. We are set apart from this world because this world is not our home. It is not where we belong. We are just passing through to get to where we belong, which is heaven.

1 Chronicles 29:15 says, "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

2 Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

So, if there is an authority figure in your life that is telling you to do something, and it aligns with scripture in the Bible, then yes, obey them and submit to their authority. But if the authority figure is telling you to do something that goes against the word of God and the US Constitution, then you need to obey God and not the authority figure. An example of this would be if an authority figure tells you that you cannot preach the gospel on public property, but the Bible commands us to do so. Then, we would need to obey God. But if the property where we are preaching the gospel requires a permit or a license, then we would need to obey the rules of the land.

In some cases, if you preach the gospel through a microphone or a speaker, you will need a permit or a license in certain areas or states. Every city or state is different. But if you were to go up to a person and share the gospel with them, that is legal. If the person is unwilling to listen to the gospel, then we should not force it on them. We should just let them because we do not want to throw our pearls before swine. Not everyone is ready to hear the gospel or to accept Christ and be saved. So, we need to respect people and their beliefs and just let God do what He needs to do for that person.

Matthew 7:6 says, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

There may be times when God is leading us to set boundaries with certain people in our lives because they may be toxic, or they may be unequally yoked with us. Or these people may have already served their purpose in our lives. So, now it may be time to move on from a certain person or people because they cannot go with you to where God is taking you. Some people

in your life will only stop you or block you from going where God wants to take you. You may be on a different level than that person. So, God may be elevating you to another place of purpose and fulfillment. That person may just get in the way of your purpose or may try to hinder your progress. So, God may have us cut ties with certain people in our lives. These people may do us more harm than good.

So, we may need to set boundaries and close doors in our lives to people from our past. You may not understand why this is needed or necessary. But it is for your good. If you do not let go of a certain person that you love, then you are going to keep getting your heart broken. If you do not let go of certain people, then you are going to keep going through the same hurt and pain. You may need to let go of any bitterness or unforgiveness that you may have with that person or people. You can love them and pray for them at a distance. You do not need to keep that door open for you to forgive them.

You may even need to block that person on your phone so that you do not talk to them. You may need to unfriend them on your social media pages. Because if

you keep company with this person, it is only going to hurt you in the long run. This person has served their purpose in your life. God has already used this person to do what they needed to do in their life. That person may have been used for refinement and for the upbuilding of your character. But now that that season is over, He wants you to move forward. God will send in people who will help you to grow in your faith and relationship with Christ. He will send people who will help you to align with His purpose for you and your life.