

A Thousand Times...NO!

Ever notice that you can say "no" a thousand times, but all those no's are canceled by one "yes"? "No, you can't have a cookie, can't have a cookie, can't have a cookie! Okay, yes!" The cookie will be eaten! To concede and fail you don't have to say yes as many times as you must say no to remain steadfast and succeed.

A thousand no's to fornication are deleted by one yes that robs one of his virtue and virginity. A thousand no's to adultery are swept away by a yes that destroys family, home and soul. A thousand no's to drugs are erased by a yes that opens the door to all kinds of destruction and excess. A thousand no's to stealing are forgotten by a yes on our record when we stand before the law. A thousand no's to pornography are overwhelmed by a yes that writes indelible images in the mind. It applies across the board to all sin.

While it is certainly true that forgiveness in Christ is available for any sinful yes decision we make, this must not be seen as license to make that errant decision even once. We are called to completely die to sin (Rom. 6) -- it is to have no part in us, or us in it.

Parents often tire of the "May I have a cookie?" question and finally concede with a yes. Kids know this. Satan knows this. We tire of saying no and looking different from others. We tire of our "no" answer causing abstinence from activities that appear pleasurable and fun. We tire of always being the one to say no. In time, sin nags us to the point where we finally want to say, "Okay, yes just this time." How much more can God expect us to resist -- how many more times must we say no?

The Hebrew writer reminds us, "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4). We're not just talking about saying no to the point of alienation and missing out on some of life's pleasures. Resisting "to bloodshed, striving against sin" means saying no to sin until it kills us! That means a thousand times no to the sin that tempts us from within and from without. And when we have said no a thousand times it is then time to say it a thousand and one times, and more!

- by David Diestelkamp

Seek and Ye Shall Find

"Many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1 Jno. 4:1,2. One should not be blinded to the existence of error, but should seek TRUTH. Jesus promised that "the truth will make you free." Jno. 8:32. Truth is the only antidote for error. This truth is accessible to all men alike. Yet there are certain basic considerations which are essential for the sincere truth seeker. Let us notice some of them.

1. THE INITIAL BATTLE IS WITH YOUR OWN WILL. If you really want the truth, you can find it. Jno. 7:17. The desire of the Holy Spirit is that you "be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5:17. But you must first make up your mind that your DESIRE is to know. Then you will be ready to begin the search. A "good and honest heart" is first.

2. YOU MUST HAVE A WHOLESOME, RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRUTH. To search for it will be a waste of your time if you do not plan to accept the truth -- whatever it may be. One must LOVE and BELIEVE the truth to avoid God's condemnation. (Be sure to read 2 Thes. 2:10-12).

3. BE SURE THAT YOUR SOURCE OF INFORMATION IS RELIABLE. God's revealed Word is the only infallible source of religious truth. The Bible writers were inspired of God. They could not err, therefore, in what they spoke by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are God-breathed, perfect, and all-sufficient as a guide for man in his search for forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

4. RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS NOT YOUR PEROGATIVE TO CHANGE THAT WHICH THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES. Be content with what you find in the BIBLE. It is possible for parents to be wrong. Remember, too, that even men who are called "preachers" and "rabbis" have NO AUTHORITY at all to bind upon you any tradition or commandment of men. They are just men--

and nothing more. BUT, the Author of the Bible is GOD. The Holy Spirit simply revealed to humanity what was in the mind of God. The Bible alone makes know the will of God for you. Steer clear, then, of any disposition to prevent this divine revelation. It is perfect; you are not.

5. DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO HINDER YOUR OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH. A soul (yours) is too valuable. The gospel of Christ is God's power to save. Rom. 1:16,17. Your concern must be, "What does CHRIST teach me to do to have remission of sins?" Read carefully these passages: Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3,4. The simple requirements of Jesus are FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION and IMMERSION for the remission of sins.

BELIEVE the truth, OBEY it to have your soul purified. 1 Pet. 1:22. Let no one dissuade you from obeying the Author of eternal salvation. Heb. 5:8,9. All who seek salvation in this way WILL find it. THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE.

- by *Barney Keith*

Questions about Church Benevolence

We received the following questions about church benevolence . . .

1) How do you argue that Galatians 6:10 is talking about an individual (other than the argument that the context is talking about an individual)?

*** Well, that's really the only way you can ever tell who a passage is talking to -- you have to look at the context and make that determination. Beginning at verse 1 of Galatians 6, it is clear that the text is addressing individuals. Read it and see that it repeatedly says things like "a man", "every man", "his own", "let him". Look at verses 7-9 which talk about individual accountability and judgment. This leads right up to verse 10 which says, "as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men. . ." There's no way it could be discussing congregational activity.

2) Also, where do you prove that the church is only to help Christians in physical need?

*** It's the whole question about how we establish Bible authority. If the church is authorized to help non-Christians from the collective treasury, then there must be one of these methods of proving it: 1) a direct command for the church to do it, 2) an approved example of a church doing it, or 3) something implied in the New Testament which would force us to the inescapable conclusion that the church must do this. Of course, none of those three things is present in the New Testament. There is no direct command for the church to do it (remember that there is a difference between what individuals are commanded to do and what the church as a collective body is commanded to do -- that's why Gal. 6:10 is a point of contention). There is no example of any New Testament congregation ever helping a non-saint from their collective treasury. And, there is nothing implied that would force the conclusion that the church should do this. Bottom line: there is no authority for it.

But in discussing this, we want to be sure to point out that as individual Christians we believe that we can and should "do good unto all men" as Galatians 6:10 says.

- by *Greg Gwin*