



RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY. LEAD WITH PASSION. PROSPER WITH PURPOSE.

Three Powerful, Pleasant Ways to Say No Episode #179

Sean: Welcome to the Ray Edwards show, where we help you start, run, and grow your own Internet based business, so you can enjoy more freedom in your life. My name is Sean Edwards and I am your host. Is there really a pleasant way?

Ray: Well, I think there is and that it's important that you learn how to do it and do it with grace, and that's what we're going to talk about on today's show.

Sean: No!

Ray: I take your point.

Spiritual Foundations

Ray: Our last episode we talked about how to recover from stupid mistakes and I made a statement toward the end of the episode that God has already forgiven you for your stupid mistakes, that He knew what they were beforehand. That's true, which was the inspiration for this Spiritual Foundations actually, because I realized for a lot of people that it's news to them that not only did God forgive you in advance for your sins, not just the ones you've already done but the ones you haven't even dreamed up yet, he's already forgiven them. He doesn't remember them.

I know. For some of you that is scandalous. Right now I've thrown a monkey wrench into your whole day, like what?! This dumb guy on the Internet doesn't know what he's talking about. I know God remembers my sins. He has a movie He's going to show me when I get up there. He's going to make me watch every one of them and make everyone else in existence watch them too and show me, this is everything you did. That is not going to happen. That did not come from the Bible that came from one of those goofy little comic strips that was handed out in the 1970s.

You know what I'm talking about? You never seen the little black comic strip booklets that were handed out?

Sean: No.

Ray: Oh, I can't remember the name of the publications. There was one with a guy named Holy Joe, a guy in the Army who was a Christian and was made fun of by other guys in the Army. In the end Holy Joe won out because they all died in the attack and Holy Joe went to Heaven and the other guys burned in hell. I'll show you, I'm Holy Joe.

Sean: That's awesome.

Ray: There was also another one where the person thought he could get away with all of his sins, but he was shocked to discover that once he got to Heaven that everyone who'd ever existed stood in front of a big movie screen and God showed all the bad things he did in his life to everyone else.

Sean: Wow! So you mean when I get to Heaven, I have to watch a movie of everyone else's sins?

Ray: Apparently, according to this doctrine, which didn't come from the Bible.

Sean: That is...

Ray: There are people who believe this.

So God actually doesn't remember your sins and He doesn't have a VCR tape with them on it either, or a DVD, mp3 or mp4. He doesn't have a recording of your sins, because in Hebrews 10:17 it says, *'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'* That's pretty clear.

We have a hard time figuring this out. We think God is omniscient, He knows everything so He must remember our sins. So how can an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God not remember our sins? He's all powerful, all knowing and all present, so He should be able to remember every detail of every sin we ever committed, right? But that's not what the word of God says. God declares, *'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'*

I think that many believers are afraid to get close to God today, because they think that if they do, He'll see what they've been up to, as if them getting closer to him could somehow make it easier for them to see. I don't know how these things work in our heads, but we come up with these stories. All you have to do is believe God's word and the word says, *'Through the provision of sacrifice of Jesus, God doesn't remember your sins anymore.'* Just keep thinking about this it's true.

Picture it in your mind. Read the scriptures that say these things and you can see that cloud of guilt, all that shame, condemnation and judgment is gone. It's not over your head, it's not hanging over you and isn't going to be shown on a movie screen in Heaven, God remembers your sins and lawless deeds no more and you are righteous in Christ and you can expect to receive his best. Because, through him you are worthy to receive all of God's best and that is the truth.

Feature Presentation

Sean: All right, this is the main topic, the feature presentation if you will is, three powerful, pleasant ways to say no. How do you do that?

Ray: Well, I'm going to tell you how and we should probably talk about why as well, it's important to learn to say no. I think one of the most underutilized loving words that we could speak, that don't get spoken is no. Because we say yes to far too many things and everything we say yes to means we're saying no to something else, we're just not acknowledging it.

We end up saying yes because we want people to like us.

Yes, I will go to that meeting.

Yes, I will go to that party.

Yes, I will participate in that betting pool at the office.

Yes, I will come have coffee with you.

Then we talk about how stressed out and overwhelmed we are and how we have too much to do. We get crabby and short with people and we say nasty things and then do stupid things like send out emails we should never send out. All these things happen because we said yes too many times, because we filled our schedule up with too many things, so we need to learn to say no to more things and say yes to only the important things. It would be nice if we lived in a world if we only said yes to the important things and didn't have to say no to anybody, but we don't live in that world.

The world we live in is the real one, where people make requests of us directly and we have to directly give an answer or, lie. I'm sad to say, most people, to some extent or another lie. Like if someone wants to have supper with you next week and you say let me think about it, I'll check my calendar and get back with you and you know you're not really going to check your calendar, you're just trying to avoid the conversation. You are, in fact, lying. A much kinder and more graceful thing you could do is say no, right up front. How do you say it pleasantly?

I think there's a simple way to do this. You honor the person. You give a brief reason why you're saying no and then you give a firm no. That's as elegant as it can get and it's important that you give a firm no and not a wishy-washy maybe. For example, I really wish I could say yes, but to honor my existing commitments my answer has to be no. They may not like that answer, but it's not mean spirited, it's not a lie and it doesn't leave you open.

One thing that drives me nuts is when people say maybe another time. That just leaves the door open for a continual revolving door of a request you're never going to say no to, and they're never going to get a yes to and both of you will become frustrated.

Here's another way to say no.

If you're new to this and you've said yes to everything up till now, you probably need to let people know you're handling things differently now. You could say, I'm in a season of my life, of my career, of my business where I'm totally focused on and committed to whatever your one thing is, so I have to say no to requests like this. For instance, if you contacted me right now or any time in the next few weeks and said hey, can we get together and have coffee, I'd like to talk to you about marketing? I might say well, I'm in a season right now with my career where I'm totally focused on writing a new book. I have to say no to requests like this. Again, people maybe not like to hear it but they'll understand it and most people will respect you for being honest, because they don't get honest answers like this from anyone else.

Here's a third, which I borrowed partly from Michael Hyatt.

Let me explain where I use this.

Sean: I just want to know how you borrow a statement, do you give it back when you're done with it?

Ray: Yes, I do. Every time I'm finished with it I send it back to him by email. I say Mike, you can have this now. I used it today, but now you can have it back.

I use this in cases where it's a good hearted request from an innocent good-hearted person that in any other circumstance I really would want to say yes to, but I know that I don't have the bandwidth (time/energy/ability) to honor their request. I will say in an email, voicemail or conversation on the phone, look... my heart wants to say yes, but because of other commitments my answer has to be no. I'm sorry to disappoint you, please know that the fact that you even asked is a gift. Thank you.

Michael uses a variation of that in some replies. It's a very respectful way of saying no and it leaves the person feeling good, because you've told them that the very fact that they would request a meeting with you is a gift and you thank them for it. So, it leaves them with you expressing gratitude instead of you just saying no, I don't have time for you. And that's another way to do it but I don't recommend that one.

So that's how you say no powerfully and pleasantly.

1. Honor the person,
2. Give a brief reason why,
3. Give a firm no

Sean: Okay, I can think of a few counter points that I may have experienced or you may have experienced that maybe one might need help with.

Ray: For example?

Sean: Maybe the first one is that you go through one of these really cool, clear, firm and honoring statements and they say... okay, can you do it later?

Ray: That's the one you'll hear the most often and it's the one that trips people up, because usually what people say then is oh, maybe check back with me and you don't want to do that. How I would recommend answering this obstacle is by saying something like, I'm sorry but for the reasons I just explained, no has to mean no.

Sean: That brings up another point. What if someone does say hey, can I check back with you at another time?

Ray: That's a good question to ask, because that is what people say, especially like a lot of sales people and I encounter my fair share who have these questions loaded up.

Sean: They have the training.

Ray: Right, they're ready to go. They have arrows in their quiver and they're ready to fire, so they will say, when can I check back? The best salespeople say, would it be better if I check back with you next week or the week after? They don't even give you a chance to say no.

Sean: Right.

Ray: In that case, I would say something like look, I would never want to mislead you. Checking back won't change anything.

Sean: I can think, because I've said no to some people firmly and I know one of the things they'll say is, will you at least think about it or at least pray about it?

Ray: Oh, the will you pray about it.

Sean: That's bad too because it's almost manipulative, it's like well...

Ray: I think God wants you to do this.

Sean: It's not even that it's like, you can't just say no. If you're a good Christian than you need to go pray about it. It makes you feel slimy for sticking to your no.

Ray: You're right. I'm laughing because it's true. If I can say the following with integrity... for many of these kinds of questions it is true and I've already prayed through this and thought about it, which is why I have these answers prepared, because I already know where I stand on this spiritually as well as mentally. I will say, I've already thought about it. I've already prayed about how I can respond to these kinds of requests with integrity.

So, as a result of thinking and praying about it, the answer has to be no. When you've been pushed to this point I think you have to plant a flag in the sand and say look, I'm done with this. I have something I call **the brave tie down** and that is to say what I just said and end it by saying this... can you respect that?

Sean: Oooh.

Ray: It's hard to say, but if you've gone through and said your powerful and pleasant no and they've countered with, can you do it later, and you gave them an answer by saying I'm sorry but for the reasons I've explained no means no. And then they say when can I check back? You say I don't want to mislead you, checking back isn't going to change anything. And they say but would you at least think about it or pray about it? You may get the really persistent individual that fires all three of those at you.

I think you have to bring in the more forceful answer that requires them to acknowledge you've said no and that's when I think it's appropriate to say, I've already thought about it, prayed about it and how I can respond to these requests and do it with integrity, so as a result of praying and thinking about it, the answer has to be no, can you respect that? Again, they may not like it. In fact, if you get to this point in the conversation they probably won't like it, but it's an answer you can speak in love, speak with integrity without compromising your values and without being mean. If they respond in a weird way that is their problem to figure out it's not your responsibility.

Sean: So remember, you can get the show notes, the links and the transcript of this episode at RayEdwards.com/179. And if you get value from these shows and think others would as well, the best way to help spread the word is to subscribe to the show in iTunes, and give us a rating and review. That causes the show to be more visible in iTunes and that way more people find out about it.

Any final thoughts?

Ray: I do. Don't ever answer one of these requests with maybe. Maybe is worse than yes or no. It is decision purgatory. It's a little like being in hell and you put both of you in there by saying it.

Sean: I like it.

Ray: Until the next time may God continue to bless you, that He always says yes to you and does more for you than you could possibly ask or even possibly imagine.

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