

# Saying “No” to a friend...



By Stephanie Kardia

Personally, I prefer saying “Yes!” to a friend. Saying “Yes” to a friend indicates my agreement, my willingness to participate, and my excitement for something wonderful she has suggested. My “Yes” lifts her up and binds us closer to each other.

Conversely, saying “No” to a friend is like throwing a wet bath towel on a dry bath towel — it makes both bath towels wet, as I’ve told my kids a thousand times...

Still, humming in the back of my mind is Ado Annie’s lyric line from the musical *Oklahoma*: “I’m just a girl who can’t say no, I’m in a terrible fix!” The person who can’t say “No” may take on more than she can handle, which is irresponsible. Or, she may agree to something she does not actually like — then silently stew about it. Worse, she may agree to something sinful simply to go along with the crowd.

Agreeing with God may mean saying “No” to a friend. We remember the parable in Matthew 25 of the wise virgins who refused the request from their foolish friends to share their oil, lest they all run out. We are called to say “No” to ungodliness and foolishness.

We also remember the surprising parable in Matthew 13, when the servants who are eager to root out the wicked weeds are told “No” by their master, lest they pull up the wheat with the weeds. Sometimes, we must say “No” to a friend — or to ourselves — even when we have the best intentions in mind. But when?

Titus 2:12 says that the grace of God *teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...*

We live in a world full of contradictions and conflicting advice. But our message from Scripture is clear: Since God has already said “Yes” to us through Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:18-22), we have been given the gift to say “No” to ungodliness and “Yes” to the Gospel.

Lord, let our response be quick, our yes be yes, and our no be no! Amen!