

DEFOREST B. SOARIES, JR

SAY
YES

WHEN LIFE

SAYS

NO

DAVID COOK™

transforming lives together

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[The blind man] replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

John 9:25

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INTRODUCTION

When life says no to you, what could make you say yes?

I was not expecting my life to take a drastic turn. Just before Thanksgiving in 2010, a round of medical tests revealed I had prostate cancer. That diagnosis translated into one great big *no!* After deciding to allow the doctor (actually, the robot the doctor controlled) to remove my prostate, I took my otherwise very healthy body to our local hospital, and my life has never been the same.

After receiving that diagnosis, I started reading John 9 to review the miraculous power of God to heal the sick. I have been familiar with this chapter of the Bible since I was a child. The entire gospel according to John has been one of the books I have regularly reviewed all my life. It is the gospel that makes it clear that Jesus is the Savior of the world—that He existed in the beginning, that He is God become flesh, that He died to pay the penalty for all my sins, and that He rose from the grave.

I love all the Gospels. But in the gospel of John, Jesus turned water into wine (see ch. 2), He introduced the concept of being born again (see ch. 3), He fed thousands of people by expanding a little boy's lunch (see ch. 6), He rescued a woman who was about to be stoned for committing adultery (see ch. 8), He raised Lazarus from the dead (see ch. 11), He washed His disciples' feet (see ch. 13), and He prayed for His disciples (see ch. 17). If you had time to read only one book of the Bible, I would recommend the gospel of John.

The more I engage in conversations with people who have experienced life's many nos, the more it is evident that people need help in finding their yes when their no becomes overwhelming.

A young man recently left an excellent job to take what he thought was a better offer, only to be laid off after two weeks when the company canceled his project. The parents of a twelve-year-old gave up on their child because he was so different from anything they had expected a twelve-year-old to be. The mother wept as she told me she was sorry she ever gave birth.

When your finances have gone past their breaking point and you just can't see your way out of a personal quagmire, when your relationships with your family or friends or your church get so strained that you can no longer envision how they can get better, when you can't afford essential medication or healthcare—it seems as if life is saying no to you, and it is difficult to get to the yes side of life. Moving forward can be hard to imagine because you're struggling just to get a grip on your present circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

My passion is to be used by God to inspire and instruct people by teaching them the value and vision of life as revealed in the Bible. This book seeks to share what God did for my life through John 9. And by sharing my testimony, I believe God can change your life.

This book is for three types of people.

1. You're in the middle of dealing with a major no. You may be experiencing problems physically—as I did—or perhaps your struggle is financial, relational, vocational, political, or educational. And it seems insurmountable and undefeatable.
2. You're doing fine, but there is a no on your horizon. You are happy just holding on to what you have. You are not trying to get anywhere new or do anything innovative; you're content with your present status and with trying to stay out of everyone else's way. Complacency! However, if you stay as you are, you will be ill prepared for the moment when life says no. And believe me, it will eventually say no. Nobody is exempt from this experience.
3. You have worked your way through a no, and now you want to keep making progress. You are not driven by greed, but you realize you can still achieve more. And you want to achieve the right way and for the right reasons.

INTRODUCTION

My grandmother used to tell me stories about black people not being allowed to eat at diners between New Jersey and her home state of Virginia when she would travel there for family events. She always ended her story with, “But it won’t always be that way.”

There was hope. We always expected things to improve. There was also a strategy. Bold visionaries like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who had “a dream” in 1963 that his children could live in a country where they could enjoy the rights and opportunities we have today.¹

My grandmother’s generation believed in saying yes even though racial injustice seemed to say no constantly. The difference between that period and our present generation is that too many of us seem incapable of even dreaming. We seem to be stuck in life’s no without a vision of how to achieve our yes! “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18 KJV). That applies not only to leaders needing a vision for their followers but also to us having a vision for ourselves. My prayer is that this book will help you establish or expand the vision you have for yourself.

Life says no to us. Since the fall in the garden of Eden, life has been a series of nos said to men and women. Neither does God always say yes to us, and we respect His will. But I believe there are many times when a divine yes is available to us, but we leave it on the table because we have not heeded the example of Mr. Blind Man. Turn the page, and let’s see what yeses will come to you.