

THAT ONE
TIME WHEN
God said no
TO DAVID

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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It was an ordinary evening following an extraordinary event. David had built a tabernacle to bring the ark of God back to His people for the first time in 92 years. It was set in the midst of that newly erected transitional housing. Offerings were offered. Blessings were spoken. And the priests were immediately put to work. As the bustle of activity commenced, David sang in psalms. And all the people praised the LORD in response. With trumpets and cymbals and musical instruments and voices. And then everyone departed. Every single person. They all went home. As did David.

It was later that evening as David was sitting at home in the afterglow of the holy euphoria, that he chatted with a friend. Musing about what had just transpired. Still thinking about that golden ark now safely in its transitional housing. And something began stirring in him. Although what had just happened was overwhelming and glorious and Spirit-filled, something didn't sit right.

He looked around at his palatial cedar walls. The walls erected for a king. And began thinking out loud. "Look at this place. The palace that I live in. Built from the most prized cedar trees that were imported from over 100 miles away," he said, shaking his head. "And the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under tent curtains."

Isn't that when the biggest ideas hit? Out of nowhere? When you're talking about nothing with a close friend? David had a dream come out of left field. A huge, multi-faceted, over the top kind of dream. One for which there was no precedent.

he wanted to build a house for God

The tabernacle of the LORD had been transitory for nearly 500 years. And David wanted to build something permanent. Nathan, who was sitting there with him, happened to be a prophet. And he gave his gut reaction: "Go do it. God is with you!" Because, really, why wouldn't God be part of that dream? It was pure. Born out of the best of intentions. For His glory.

But that night, God corrected Nathan. And put him in the uncomfortable and very necessary position of clarifying a misspoken word. And, in doing so, he had the holy privilege of speaking one of the chief Messianic prophecies in the entire Old Testament. Nathan had to go back and tell David, "Hey, remember earlier when we were talking and that idea you had and I was stoked and told you that God fully supported it? Well really..."

God said no

God. Said. No. And He could have just said no. And left it at that. That happens sometimes. When prayers go unanswered and there's not any one reason why. Sometimes His no's are

silent for awhile. And it's not until some time goes by that you begin to recognize the glory in it. Like Paul did when he begged God over and over to remove the thorn from his flesh. It wasn't until after a few fervent prayer-conversations that God spoke to him. Gently delivering the most powerful promise: that His grace is sufficient.* Or Joseph. He begged God over and over for reprieve. Reprieve from the pit he was thrown into and left for dead. Reprieve from being sold into slavery in Egypt. Reprieve from false allegations that led to false imprisonment. And all the while, God didn't answer Him directly. Yes, he spoke through Joseph. And the story repeatedly describes God being with Joseph. But all that Joseph had to go on was a dream he had as a little boy that seemed impossible.**

Sometimes God says no without a word. Or an explanation. And sometimes He attaches an incredible prophecy to it. Even though it's nothing that you had hoped for. Or dreamed of. Or planned for.

Nathan spoke powerfully into David's no. Promises of goodness and truth that lasted for ten incredible verses. Words that would be a profound influence on the Messianic hope until Jesus came. And David took His Words. And sat before the LORD. And began to verbally process everything that was just spoken to him to the One that really knew the full significance of it all.

He didn't get angry.
He didn't get frustrated.
He didn't get confused.

He was humbled. And overwhelmed in the best possible way. And he prayed the same exact words that Mary did when she was told of an unexpected and very holy pregnancy that was coming her way as a fulfillment to the promise that Nathan had just spoken:

let it be, exactly as You have said

David heard God's no. He accepted it. And then, he turned around and prayed it.

David had it in his heart to do something incredible for God. And God said no, but then shared what He would do for David. And David prayed it. LORD, may I be so quick to hear when You speak. To recognize when You shift the rudder. And to have the strength to make the same shift in my own heart. To not focus on what I want. But to pray what You have promised.

REFERENCES:

1 Chronicles 17

* 2 Corinthians 12:7-8

** Genesis 37, 39-45