



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Words That Will Change Your Life – “Yes”

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Main Idea – Saying “yes” to Jesus means more than simply accepting Him as your Savior; it is also saying “yes” to an eternal perspective that is free from the distractions of self-serving and short-term thinking.

Each day matters

- The beginning of a new calendar year is a good time to make resolutions that will help you live a better life.
- Don’t let failures hold you back. Even if you are not able to maintain a resolution, start over again the next day.
- Does God have a new word for you? If He does, you will want to have a strategy for hearing it and then following through with right decisions.
- You might have to eliminate something you are currently doing in order to have space for God’s new thing.

Answer “yes” to the resurrected life Jesus offers

- Lazarus was a friend of Jesus, and the brother of some of Jesus’ followers. When Lazarus became sick, Jesus purposefully delayed going to him in order to later demonstrate His divine power and resurrection quality.
- **John 11: 3-6, 11-17, and 20-27 – Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. . . These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. . . Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was**

coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. *He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.* Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” (NKJV)

- Jesus was about to demonstrate a profound truth. Lazarus had died, and was soon to be resurrected; which was a good thing. However, Martha was in even a better place because she was still alive and was going to receive a spiritual resurrection through her expressed belief in Jesus. Therefore, she would never experience death as had Lazarus.
- Martha said “yes” even though she was in the middle of a traumatic, personal trial.

How to live a life of saying “yes” to Jesus

- God will speak to you in many ways. However, the devil – and the natural world – will also speak to you in ways that can divert you from a meaningful life.
- You need a strategy to filter out life’s distractions so you can stay attentive to what God will show you.
- When faced with a decision, following are three filters you can use to make sure you are on God’s path.

1. Now, later, and forever

- When faced with a decision, ask yourself, “Does this matter now? Is it going to matter later? Is it doing anything for my forever?”
- The objective is to focus on eternal satisfaction, not instant gratification. Daily disciplines compound to greater successes.
- There are benefits to delaying your rewards. Research has shown that those who resist instant gratification live better lives. Develop an eternal mindset that controls temporal desires.
- Temporary “yesses” often do not leave room in one’s life for the more important eternal “yesses”.

2. Destiny vs. distraction

- God will always open doors for you. If you are obedient and observant, you will also

recognize when He is closing doors that would lead you to distraction.

- **Revelation 3:8** – I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. (NKJV)
- **Romans 8:28** – And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJV)
- In your life, let the Holy Spirit teach you how to recognize doors God is opening for you. Likewise, pray that He will also close doors that He did not open. What initially appears to be a good opportunity may not be God’s plan. With practice, the Holy Spirit will teach you how to discern these things.
- The Apostle Paul lived with the same challenges. Apparently, he occasionally was faced with decisions of where to travel with his ministry work. **1 Corinthians 16:9** – For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (NKJV)
- In the above verse, Paul did not necessarily regard opposition as a bad thing. Oftentimes, God uses opposition to actually propel you forward on your path.
- The Apostle James explained it as being like a sailboat sailing into the wind. Those who know how to sail know how to position the sails and rudder so that a direct wind will actually propel the boat forward into the wind. **James 3:4** – Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. (NKJV)
- James also taught that your words, like a ship’s rudder, have a great influence on your ability to follow God’s path. **James 3:5** – Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. (NKJV)
- Your personal practices - and *how you present yourself to others* – can be likened to a big beautiful sail. Your words – and *how you express yourself* – can be likened to the rudder that points and guides the boat.
- To activate God’s involvement in your life, it is necessary to know His Word, to believe it, and to express it. **Isaiah 53:1** – Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (NKJV)

3. Self-service vs. self-sacrifice

- Consider others’ needs before you consider your own needs. This is not a martyr complex where you will deny yourself and cause yourself pain. Rather, it’s a resurrected identity where you experience the richness of a blessed life.
- **Matthew 20: 26-28** – “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first

among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (NKJV)

- Because Jesus laid down his life, you are able to pick up your own life with an eternal meaningfulness.

A resurrected lifestyle today

- In the **John 11** verses (above), Jesus’ and Martha’s interaction shows that you can live a resurrected lifestyle every day: **v. 25 “I am the resurrection and the life.”**
- Not only do you have the promise of a *resurrected eternal life*, but also a *resurrected current life* where your thoughts, words, and actions have eternal meaningfulness. **Acts 17:28 – for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ (NKJV)**
- Jesus has always been here, and has always been available to you. Trust His timing, be observant for the doors He has opened for your next steps, and express your appreciation for His blessings as you help others. Live a resurrected life right here on Earth.

Reflective Questions for Words That Will Change Your Life – “Yes”

1. Like many Christians, perhaps you have wondered what it must have been like to be Lazarus: to have died and then come back to life. However, John 11:26 (above) says those who are living - and also believe in Jesus - will never die. Knowing that, take a moment to contemplate what you will experience as you move from this life to the life that comes next. What will you likely experience and observe during that transition?
2. According to the Bible verses of this lesson – and others you may know of – why is opposition often a good thing?
3. Do you occasionally struggle with having a temporal - rather than an eternal - mindset? If you do, don’t beat yourself up. Rather, as Pastor Stephen suggested, work to do better the next time. Which of his three filters (above) might help you the most?