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“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission
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Daily Devotional

“Saying No” – Betty Coon

ANNCR: April 18th, “Saying No.” Are you familiar with the philosophy that says, “To live your best life, do what makes you happy?” Of course you are. This idea has become the very structure of our thinking in the free world. It’s branded on almost every message we receive, whether from advertisements, motivational speakers, film, art, and even secular education. The belief that saying “no,” just might be the best thing, to ourselves and to others, is counter-cultural. In a society where love is believed to be equivalent to acceptance, denial is nothing short of hatred. But today we’re going to pull back the curtain and take a look at how harmful saying yes can really be, through the real-life experiences of Betty Coon. She’s here now to share with us her true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

BETTY: Mom taught us to believe in God, but she also believed in reincarnation. A church camp counselor led me in a sinner’s prayer when I was nine, but I really didn’t understand. Then Dad got mad at the church and we quit going. When I was twelve, he and Mom divorced and I lost my protector. Mom worked nights, leaving us

kids unsupervised and, before long, I was shoplifting and drinking. My older brother's friend seduced me when I was thirteen.

From then on I couldn't say "no." Pregnant at fifteen, I kept my baby, stayed in school and made the honor roll. I wanted to be a good girl again, but I was vulnerable to one guy after another.

When I got pregnant at seventeen, I had an abortion. I would promise God never to sleep with a man again, but I had no will to follow through.

I left college, pregnant a third time, and went home where I joined my brother's Bible study. Reading the New Testament, I realized what a sinner I was, but I also saw God's love that sent Jesus to die for my sins. The Word of God changed me, and I was able to say "no" from then on. God is so good! He gave me a wonderful husband who loves my two daughters. We've been married 17 years and have ten children. I'm Betty Coon.

ANNCR: At the start of it all, we see this example, in Genesis chapter 2, verses 16 and 17, "*And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die'.*" Friend, from the very beginning, humans have had a

hard time saying “no.” The forbidden always looks so tantalizing. But what God already knows and what we will soon learn is it only delivers death. So spare yourself the pain, and next time godless thinking and behavior calls after you, say “no.” And in that way, we can learn the better plan God has for us. Will you receive this truth today?

CREDITS: Unshackled Daily Devotionals are produced by Pacific Garden Mission along with our Unshackled Audio Dramas. To find even more true stories of God’s saving, transforming power, visit our website, unshackled.org.

This episode was written by Kennetha Gaebler and Elizabeth Kupfershmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Lisa Keefe.

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