MONDAY MANNA
March 9, 2026

THE POWER OF 'NO'

By C.C. Simpson

What did you say *"No"* to today?

Most of us rush to count our "Yesses" – new projects, new clients, new commitments, new opportunities. We stack them high like trophies, convinced that activity equals value. But it is not the things we say "yes" to that define us. It is the things we say "no" to that make the difference. Ronald Rolheiser once wrote, "Every choice is a thousand renunciations." To say yes to one thing is to say no to a thousand others. You cannot avoid it. The question is not *if* you will say no; it is *what* you will say no to.

We find the perfect example in the Bible: Jesus lived with that kind of clarity. After a long night of healing in Capernaum, His disciples came searching. "Everyone is looking for you," they said, as if that were reason enough to stay where they were. But Jesus said no. *"Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out"* (Mark 1:38). He was not being callous or careless. He simply knew His "yes" was already spoken for. That freed Him to say no, even to good and urgent things.

Saying "yes" out of fear. That is where many of us fall apart. We keep saying yes out of fear – fear of missing out, fear of disappointing people, fear of being left behind. But endless yesses are not signs of strength. *They are symptoms of slavery.* A yes to everything eventually becomes a no to what matters most. It is exhaustion dressed up as importance.

A season for everything that matters. The writer of Ecclesiastes puts it simply: *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"* (3:1). That is not a sentimental verse to print on a coffee mug. It is a line of spiritual defiance against the tyranny of the urgent. You cannot do everything at once and call it obedience. There is a season for what God has assigned to you right now; having the courage to guard it with a "no" is what keeps it holy.

Discernment over drive. The apostle Paul gets more direct with followers of Jesus in ancient Ephesus: *"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:15-16). Wisdom is not about squeezing more into your calendar; it is about naming what matters most and refusing what does not. The wise do not run faster. They run truer. They understand that discernment is more powerful than drive.

Understanding your essentials. Think about your week. Every yes costs you something: time with your spouse, being present with your kids, attention to your soul, and a deepening friendship with God. If your life feels packed and thin, it is not because you are too important. *It is because you have stopped protecting the essentials.* The marketplace will never do that for you. Your company will always ask for more. Your industry will always push harder. You have to be on guard; protect what is sacred yourself.

Faith. Marriage. Family. Fellowship. Calling from God. These are the load-bearing walls of your life. If they collapse, everything else caves in. So, pause. Take time to breathe. Ask the question again: What did you say "No" to today? Not out of laziness. Not out of fear. But because your "Yes" was already spoken for, already committed in the presence of God.

© 2026. C.C. Simpson is dedicated to fostering a bold and triumphant Christian faith within the global marketplace. Before becoming President of CBMC International, Chris dedicated 28 years to a distinguished career in the public sector – as a Commanding Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, and serving in the U. S. Secret Service, responsible for

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What drives most of your yesses right now – faith and purpose, or fear of missing out, falling behind, or disappointing someone?

2. Which relationships or spiritual habits have quietly suffered because your schedule is too full to protect them?

3. Where is God inviting you to draw a boundary at work or in ministry – not to quit, but to make space for what actually sustains your soul?

4. If someone looked at your calendar this week, would they see evidence that your "yes" belongs to Jesus – or that it is already been sold to something else?

NOTE: If you would like to explore more on endurance in the Christian life and workplace, consider these Bible passages: Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:2-6; Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12;

Challenge for This Week

As you have read this Monday Manna, have you realized you have become a "yes man" or "yes woman"? If you find yourself agreeing to do something simply to please others or out of fear that they might think less of you, this week might be a good time for a "reset" on your commitments.

Discuss this with someone else – a trusted friend or advisor, mentor, or a small group in which you can confide. Perhaps they also are struggling to say "No" at times. Oswald Chambers has said, "Good is the enemy of the best." Talk about how saying "No" to the good can enable you to say "Yes" to the best.