

Lessons I Learned at Wal-Mart (2)

When I was a child, I enjoyed going to the store. But I had a motive behind my own madness. I would always try to see what I could whether it was candy, a toy, or a certain food I wanted. I remember when we were living in West Virginia we would go the Kroger grocery store on Southside. We would go in and we would all hit our own spots getting some things. I remember every week I would first go down the aisle where the toys were. I would pick up this soccer ball. It was a hard foam ball like the ones we used in gym class to play dodge ball. I would pick it up every week. The price of it was \$4.99. I would take it to mom, and she would say no. I would move on to dad and he would say no. Then I would produce different ways of trying to get it and still the answer was no.

It is a life lesson that I remember. My parents sometimes said yes to things and sometimes they said no. Sometimes they would further explain "you can't get everything". Sometimes I earned things and sometimes I got things as a gift. But I did not get stuff all the time nor did I expect to get things.

Yet when I go to Wal-Mart there are some not all that just give in to kids demands. Kids will start throwing tantrums until they get what they want. I tried this before and let me say that this did not work and still does not work. Yet some kids continue to seem to get what they want at times. Parents always say yes to everything. Sometimes the excuse is that well I do not want them mad at me, or I do not want to see them sad or even cry.

Let me say that it is in fact okay to tell your children no. This is a conclusion that I have learned from my experiences at Wal-Mart!

I think we can relate to this in many ways and in different measures. Speaking of a more literal situation of being in these same shoes and in a spiritual manner.

Our Father in Heaven is looking out for us. He does in fact want us to be saved. But it is on matters of conditions being met. Sometimes the answer is no!

Consider with me what happens to Moses in **Numbers 20:1-13**. Here the people were complaining yet again. These were the people that God brought out of Egypt and preparing them for entering the promised land. Yet they were thirsty. God gave Moses commands on how to give the water to the people. Yet Moses chose not to for various other reasons. There were consequences for these actions. God said no to these people, Moses, and Aaron entering the promised land. They could see the land from afar but never enter the land that God promised.

What about Paul and the thorn of the flesh in **II Corinthians 12:7**. Here we see Paul asking God about this thorn in the flesh. We do not have the exact details, but it was enough that Paul prayed to God to have this removed. Yet God responded in **II Corinthians 12:9** that it was in fact a no. His grace was sufficient for him to get by with this thorn in the flesh. The answer was no. Even though he was battling with this God knew he could manage this.

What about us? I mean as we look in the world today there are billions who believe that they will be entering the promised land. There are some that believe in a universalism doctrine where all will be saved. There are some that even believe in once saved always saved doctrines. We could continue to list many more things.

However, let us consider a few passages. In **Matthew 7:13-14** Jesus spoke about there being two ways for a man to follow. You have the broad way first and many find that way. That way is easy,

and many that way and it leads to a path of destruction. Then there is a narrow way. A way that is difficult and few go in this way, but it is the way that leads to life. What we realize here is that Jesus said few would enter life. That means some will have the answer of no before God!

Now let us continue in **Matthew 7:21-23**. This really drives it home. Jesus says that not everyone who calls Him Lord will not enter life. There are many that that will profess to do many great and awesome things in the name of the Lord. Yet one has forgotten the basic principles and commands from God. Jesus goes on to say for those that do not obey God will be told "I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." Again, Jesus says the answer will be no to those not obeying God.

As I stand and watch so many saying yes to everything their children want, I notice that it does not teach them anything. We need to understand that we cannot have everything in life. We have responsibility to answer God's will. Sometimes the answer will be no with things. But for us to enter life and hear yes, we must obey God and His will to what God has revealed!

Daniel N. Sanders