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THEME

*Do not despise these small beginnings,
for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin ...*

Zechariah 4:10 NLT



Have you ever gotten to the end of a week, month or year and thought, "How did I get here? Where has the time gone?" It happens in our parenting, friendships, marriage and work- we get caught up in the urgent demands of the day-to-day, and then years go by, and we realize we haven't been making the small choices that will get us where we actually wanted to be. So this is the year to make some moves.

SAY "YES."

It's amazing how one little word can change your life. But too often, our 'yeses' are reserved for default decisions we aren't even intentionally making or the stuff we feel obligated to do. What if we started saying 'yes' to the important things? Yes, to parenting on purpose. Yes, to significant challenges and out-of-your-comfort-zone opportunities. Yes, to your marriage. Invitations to connect with others? Yes, please. Saying yes opens us up to new ways of thinking and helps cultivate a growth mindset.

To clarify, we're not talking about people-pleasing or over-extending yourself. In fact, it's the opposite. Developing a 'yes' mindset is living intentionally, focused on your goals for yourself and your family. It's about listening to God's still, small voice and doing the brave things rather than the easy things.

SAYING YES MEANS WE WILL ...



Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4 NIV

You have this one life. How do you want to spend it? Regretting the things you didn't do? Avoiding potentially awkward situations? Hating your body? What if the way forward is to befriend discomfort? Discomfort is a life hack that can improve every area of our lives. Tackling challenging things helps us become more rooted- we start to feel less fragile and less stressed. Don't wait until you feel 'ready' or qualified or when all the details come together perfectly. Now is your opportunity to develop a spirit of adventure and make new memories. Open your hands to release old dreams and receive new ones, or take the brave first step to get help. Now is your chance to invite your kids along for the thrill that comes with doing hard things. You are wildly capable. Grow your capacity to endure. Show absurd courage. Get uncomfortable. Persevere and say yes to the next small brave step God asks you to take.



He brought me out into a spacious place. He rescued me because He delighted in me.

Psalms 18:19 NIV

It's been said that if you just went to the supermarket and experienced it fully without the goggles of habit and categories, you would go crazy with pure joy and astonishment. We are declaring this our year of delight. Can you believe how beautiful the world is and how delicious food can taste? How kind people are. It's all so good. Yet sometimes, fun is the first thing to go between parenting, paying bills, and worrying about doing things right. All of that changes this year. Because God delights in us, we will delight in the life we've been given. We'll exude passion. We'll learn to love what must be done and be captivated by the smell of our kids' hair and our husband's glances across the room. It's all decadent when we stop and really notice. God, help us be easily delighted with the small things because the small things are the big things.



Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

Matthew 6:26-27 NIV

This is the year to uproot our anxiety, worry and hurry. Hustle culture tells us that it's all up to us. But spacious living reminds us that God's got us, and a deeply formed life starts with courageous faith. This year we will remember that our direction is more important than our speed. We will stay inside our commitments and thrive within our constraints. Our longing for control will be replaced with a humble surrender to the fact we don't have to death-grip every possible outcome. We will choose integrity over image and people over pressure. We won't let worry rob us of time. Instead, this is the season of trusting that God is providing for our every need, and that means we can tend to the home, kids, marriage, friendships, neighborhood, and work that God has given us and have the time of our lives doing it.

THIS IS THE YEAR OF YES! YES, TO GOD. YES, TO THE THING THAT GIVES YOU BUTTERFLIES. YES, TO THIS MOMENT, THESE PEOPLE, THIS LIFE. GET READY TO SAY YES.





EXEGESIS

When the people returned to Israel after being exiled, one of their first undertakings was to rebuild the temple. Years before, Solomon's temple stood as an impressive achievement, but now it was destroyed and the idea of having to start over again made some of the Israelites weep. Zerubbabel was the civic leader of Jerusalem who had the responsibility of rebuilding the temple. Early into the work of laying the foundation; the progress had stalled, people were weeping, and Zerubbabel needed encouragement to carry on the work.

It was at this time that God spoke to the prophet Zechariah. There were three things God told Zechariah to pass on to Zerubbabel about his work.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING ENOUGH.

The job of rebuilding the temple was more than Zerubbabel could handle, and he knew it. Most of us are well aware of our limitations, but what God wanted Zerubbabel to know is that while it's good for us to know our strengths and weaknesses, it's much more important to be aware of the unlimited power of God.

'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

Zechariah 4:6 NIV





Apathy is the absence of passion, emotion or excitement. Somewhere along the way Zerubbabel got distracted by other projects, discouraged by the process, frustrated by the sacrifice required and irritated by a lack of support from others. He failed to see how his actions in this moment, with these people, in this place were impacting the future. That is where Zerubbabel was, until Zachariah reminded him why he had started this project in the first place.



We can sometimes get stuck in small thinking, our vision obstructed by the obstacles of today. But, what does it look like to follow a God who makes big promises? A God who is faithful? It will mean praying for the big, longing for the big, and working for the big — all while faithfully and contentedly devoting ourselves to what is in front of us. Pray for revival, and then prepare breakfast for your kids.

As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you...was not yes and no, but in Him, it is always yes. For all the promises of God find their yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20 ESV



THIS IS THE YEAR THAT YOUR YES, IS WHERE IT ALL BEGINS.

**YES TO BEING ENOUGH.
YES TO STARTING SMALL AND THINKING BIG.
YES TO PASSION.
YES TO GOD.**



Amen, and let it be so.