

What Will You Do If God Says, “No?”**Inky Johnson****6-23-19****Open in Prayer.**

Read Romans 8:28: *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

Read James 1:2-4: *“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.”*

Inky began his sermon with a video about his life story. He grew up in poverty and hardship. His mom worked two shifts at Wendy’s and barely made ends meet. His family slept on pallets on the floor. He hoped that one day they could have their own beds. He wanted a better life for his family. His dream was to play in the NFL. From the age of 7 to 20, it seemed like his dream was going to come true. Then in 2006, a few games from the end of his college career, one tackle shattered the dream.

As a child, while playing tackle football in the streets of Atlanta, a man in a blue pick-up truck stopped and asked Inky if he would like to play tackle football on grass? That invitation started Inky on the path to living out his dream. The man was wealthy and invested his time, himself, and his money in kids. Inky, a worrier by heart, wondered what this guy was all about. So, he asked him, “Why do you do what you do?” “Why do you live life like you do?” The man said, “...because I love you.” This was the first man to tell Inky that he loved him. The man then added, “If you make sure another’s life is okay, God will make sure your life is okay.”

- As we love God completely (Upward) and ourselves correctly (Inward) we will love our others compassionately (Outward). How does loving upward and inward change how we love outward?
- Who is your first love? Why?

We can see God moving in Inky’s life as he entered college. He met with the team chaplain who began to disciple Inky. Looking back, Inky could see that the seeds were being planted for future events. He became blinded by his OWN ambition rather than GOD’S purposes. He said our talent and skill can overtake our character when we trust ourselves more than Jesus. *“My hand and my mindset BOTH got paralyzed.”*

- What did he mean by this?
- Have you been paralyzed when a dream ended?
- How did God carry you through it?

Inky realized he was actually saying to God: “God, here is my plan...bless it.”

Read Isaiah 55: 8-9: *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

- Why is it so easy to plan something and then ask God to bless it, rather than asking God to lead us in our planning so it's then blessed?
- In what ways can our view of being "blessed" be different than God's view of blessing us?
- What will you do if God says, "No"?

"What if we got what we prayed for?"

- Inky said he got exactly what he prayed for. In the final season of his college career, the last play of a game, he had asked God to send to him the tackle that would end the game; and He did.
- "I wouldn't be on this stage, and wouldn't be the man or husband I am without that trial." God didn't give him what he wanted, but rather what God wanted for him.
- Think back and share about a time you asked for something from God and now you're glad He didn't give it to you?
- How has this "looking in the rear-view mirror" helped you trust Jesus more today?

His friend/coach asked: "Did we do what we did so you could get to the NFL? NO – it was so you could become a great father and husband."

Read again James 1:2-4: *"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."*

- What happens when things don't work out the way you wanted? Do you still praise Him? Do you worship Him?
- How have your trials matured you?

While in the hospital, Inky's mom and dad, who had been enemies, came together and rallied around their son they almost lost. His dad told him, "I'll stay with you for 30 days to help you," but thinking "How could God allow this to happen to you?"

- Have you ever had this response to God?

Yet, his dad moves in with them and started taking Inky to his Christian events. One day he says to Inky, "You know that God you pray to and worship? If that God can help you handle your situation the way you do, I want to give my life to Him too."

- What was God's plan for Inky?
- Can we see God working all things for his good?

Soul Tattoo: Every door seemed to be closed until Inky got on his knees and asked God to lead and "I'll submit and be obedient to your will." Are you ready to do the same? Define your hard moments through God's redemptive power and see that what was once a trial is now a victory.

To learn more about Inky go to his website: <http://www.inkyjohnson.com/>