



# Leslie Vernick

Author ▪ Speaker ▪ Coach ▪ Counselor

*Enriching the relationships that matter most!*

## The High Price of Being Too Nice

Do you find yourself saying "yes" when you want to (or should) say "no"? For example, a graduate student once asked me if I thought he'd make a good counselor. I knew his gifts weren't in that area, but I let him believe that I thought he was capable.

We all do it. We want to be nice. So, we acquiesce, or we aren't really honest with how we feel or think, because we don't want anyone to be upset. But, let's take a look at the cost of being too nice.

### We hurt people

It amazes me how unaware we are of how we hurt people by being too nice. That's why we're nice to begin with? We *don't* want to hurt people? Yet, I hurt this young student when I wasn't honest with him. He spent time, energy, and money pursuing a career that didn't reflect his true calling.

We also hurt people when we give too much. Debbie asked Nancy, her Bible study teacher, to mentor her. Debbie phoned Nancy several times a day at all hours. Debbie always took Nancy's calls, but soon grew weary. Instead of discussing this with Debbie, Nancy used her caller ID to screen her calls.

Debbie caught on and felt hurt and abandoned. Nancy's niceness gave Debbie the impression that she was always available any time night or day. When we fail to set appropriate boundaries, we hurt people. The only person who can be that available without getting crabby is God. Don't try to do his job. You will fail every time and the other person will get hurt.

### We hurt ourselves

We hurt ourselves when we aren't honest with our own limitations, needs, feelings, thoughts, or desires.



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There is nothing unbiblical about being wise with who you give yourself to. We all have limited resources of time, energy, and money. So, if we allow others to take too much from us without limits, or we give too much without counting the cost, then we're too nice.

Jesus tells a story about five women who refused to share their lamp oil with five others who did not bring enough for themselves. Jesus didn't rebuke them for being stingy. He called them wise (Mathew 25:1-13).

## **We miss God's best**

There are endless things that clamor for our attention. Many of them are good things, yet Oswald Chambers reminds that "the great enemy of the life of faith is the good that is not good enough."

People often asked Jesus to do things for them, but Jesus always looked for what God wanted first - even if it meant disappointing people. (See Mark 1:29-38 or John 11:1-6 for examples.) When we are too nice and passively accommodate others, we could very well miss what God has for us.

## **Stop Being Too Nice**

1. Nice is not one of the fruits of the Spirit. Being kind doesn't mean you always say "yes," it means that you learn to say "no" kindly.
2. Before you say "yes," stop and say, "Let me think about that, and I'll get back to you." That will give you some time to think through whether you are being too nice, or you really want to or feel led to do it.
3. Let go of guilt. You cannot be all things to all people or do everything people want. Jesus was perfect, and He still disappointed people.