

Never Give Up – 5

To live the life that God has set us apart for we have got to be people that never quit. People that are resolute, persistent, and unyielding to the attacks of the enemy of our faith

- Simply put we must be relentless
- Relentless in our pursuit of God and His promises

Relentless Definition: adamant, rigorous, severe, uncompromising, unstoppable, tenacious, constant, gritty single-minded, steadfast, persistent and stringent

Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

2 Timothy 4:7 (NLT)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.

How to eliminate Strongholds

- Strongholds are hidden traps set by the enemy
- Land mines, booby traps, bunkers and bases
- The most difficult are the evil mindsets the enemy instills in those he has taken captive

2 Corinthians 10:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴For the weapons of our warfare **are not carnal but mighty** in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

The psychological patterns and mindsets of the devil are contrary to the will of God for our lives

- Jealousy, greed, selfishness
- Manipulation, lust, hatred
- Strife, seduction, and envy
- Our obedience empowers us to stomp out these forms of disobedience

1 Peter 4:1–2 (NLT)

So then, since **Christ** suffered physical pain, you must **arm yourselves with the same attitude he had**, and be ready to suffer, too. For **if you have suffered physically for Christ**, you have finished with sin. * ² You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but **you will be anxious to do the will of God**.

- As we successfully handle adversity our level of authority and power increases
- We evolve, or grow into the “authority” that God has for us
- It's extremely important we learn how to arm ourselves

Peter is speaking of attaining spiritual maturity
– ceasing from sin

- Becoming “full grown” in Christ
- We no longer live for the desires of men but are committed to the will of God
- We no longer give in to the pressure of the worlds system
- What you feed grows

1 Peter 2:2 (NLT)

² Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment.

- Just as there are different stages naturally so we grow spiritually
- Babyhood, childhood, and adulthood
- My heart and flesh cry out – Psalm 84:2

1 Corinthians 3:1 (NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, * when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. * I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ.

- Carnal, babes in Christ – NKJV
- You can be an adult yet be a babe
- A sad place for us to remain

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NLT)

²⁰ Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind.

- A baby will respond to whatever training he or she receives
- Children are also vulnerable and easily influenced
- An adult knows where they stand and is harder to sway
- When we grow in Christ we learn to effectively push back or punish disobedience
- It takes understanding to mature in Christ

How do we grow spiritually?

Physical growth is limited to time

- Have you ever seen a six-foot-tall, sixth month old baby?

Mental growth is not as limited to time

- It is a function of learning
- Many times a teenager of 15 years old can graduate from High School and advance to college
- You must still advance from 1st to second, to third grade
- But you can do that as fast or slow as you desire

Ephesians 4:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

Spiritual growth is determined by suffering

- Just because you've been a Christian for 30 years means nothing
- If we fail to grow past our last offense or failure, we will just repeat it
- Some repeat the same year over and over
 - don't be that guy

1 Peter 4:1 (NKJV)

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

- When we cease from sin we reach spiritual maturity
- This has nothing to do with salvation but maturity
- A baby is still a child of the King
- A mature adult gains responsibility

Suffering in itself is not enough – obedience is part of the equation

Hebrews 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Spiritual growth doesn't occur when the sun shines bright on our lives or when everyone speaks well of us

I have grown the most through extreme trials where people who were once close to me said very negative, hurtful things

- Remember the key is our attitude
- If we become bitter, we only suffered
- If we remain obedient we grow through the trial

Whatever hardship you are facing today that seems to be to your disadvantage choose to resist the devil and obey God's word

The Story of Joseph

- He was Jacob's favorite son
- His older brothers despised him

Genesis 37:2, 5 (NLT)

² This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing.

⁵ One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever.

- He was a tattletale and a bit of a braggart

God gives Joseph 2 dreams and shows his brother and fathers bowing to him – this didn't help

One day Jacob sends him to see how his brothers were doing in their search for fresh fields for grazing

When they saw Joseph coming they plotted

- Here comes that dreamer
- Let's kill him
- They toss him into a pit
- A few hours later they sell him to a caravan of Ishmaelite's
- Their wicked thinking, envy and hatred fueled their actions to rob Joseph of his inheritance and family
- Erased his name and completely stripped him of his identity

In those days if you were sold as a slave to another country you would remain a slave until death

- The caravan sells him to a man named Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh
- He was a slave in Egypt
- He couldn't leave
- He would never again see his friends, family of homeland

Joseph serves for 10 years

- In time he was placed in charge of Potiphar's house
- Potiphar's wife accuses him of attacking her
- He's thrown into prison

Can you imagine the thoughts?

What about you?

- If it weren't for my boss, I would have been promoted instead of fired
- If it weren't for my ex-husband, we wouldn't be in this financial mess
- If it weren't for the man who slandered me at work, I wouldn't have lost my job and faced this threat of eviction from my apartment
- If my parents had not divorced my life would have been normal

It's easy to blame everyone else for our adversity

- The truth is thoughts like this weaken our resistance to what will ultimately harm us
- The real threat is not the circumstance but our wrong beliefs that try to slip in during the trial
- The word needs to be firmly established in our hearts if we are going to gain victory

*No man, woman, or devil can ever get us out of the will of God!
No one but God holds our destiny.*

Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

If Joseph would have given in to the thoughts of the enemy, he would have rotted in the dungeon

- The butler and the baker had dreams
- They wanted Joseph to interpret them
- He could have said “I had a dream once – forget you”
- God used Joseph’s gift to catapult him to 2nd in command in all the land!

It’s not God who aborts our dream, it’s us!

Joseph waited 21 years, but God was faithful!

Proverbs 13:12 (NLT)

¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.

1 Peter 5:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

- Perfect – to restore or complete through repair, adjusting or mending
- Establish – to set fast, to turn resolutely in a certain direction, to fix, establish, steadfastly set
- Strengthen – to confirm or strengthen in spiritual knowledge and power
- Settle – to lay a basis for, i.e., to literally erect