

Never Give Up – 6

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 is 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.

- 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

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
- 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!

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

Passionate, Persistent Prayer

John 16:23 (NKJV)

²³ “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

- Most assuredly
- Should we expect a large, medium or small percentage of our prayers to be answered?
- If we pray with no conviction or passion?
- Does God hear our mundane prayers?
- Should our prayers be specific?
- Does God answer shallow prayers?
- How real is the spirit realm to me?
- The answer to this question is answered in the previous questions

We are invited by God to come boldly into His presence

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Bold: Confident, courageous, forward, strong and firm
- The opposite: Timid, hesitant and bashful
- God’s desire is for us to come to Him with confidence, strength and firmness to receive our needs from Him

James 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- Fervent: to have or show great intensity of spirit, feeling enthusiasm
- Passionate, heartfelt – Webster's

Ineffective prayer would be...

- Subdued, impassionate, and not heartfelt

James 5:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

- Elijah prayed earnestly and relentlessly and experienced miraculous results
- Earnest is a synonym for Fervent
- Fervent: serious in intention, purpose, or effort; to be sincerely zealous
- God is looking for heartfelt, relentless passion when we approach Him with our needs and requests

Elijah prayed it wouldn't rain and it ceased for 3.5 years

He then prayed that rain would return

1 Kings 18:42 (NKJV)

⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees.

- NLT – Fell to the ground and prayed
- He's in a kneeling or sitting position
- Rocking back and forth with his head between his knees
- God, you spoke to me that your desire was to bring the rain
- I call upon you to bring clouds and rain
- So your people can once again rejoice in your goodness

He then puts action to his words

1 Kings 18:43 (NKJV)

⁴³ and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "*There is nothing.*" And seven times he said, "Go again."

- Tells his servant to look to the west
- Where the rains once came from
- His servant sees nothing
- Most of us would stop
- God must have changed His mind

Elijah knows the will of God and will not be denied

- He sends his servant a second time to the summit of Carmel
- To be fervent in prayer means your heart, soul, mind and body are determined to receive, and you act accordingly

“Prayer and faith without corresponding action is nothing other than religious exercise and a waste of time”

– John Bevere, Relentless

When you are confident and acting on God’s will, you refuse to take no for an answer

Elijah’s servant returns again – “Nothing”

Elijah storms the throne room of heaven again and sends his servant to look – Nothing

- A forth
- A fifth
- A sixth time!
- Finally, on the seventh time

1 Kings 18:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ Then it came to pass the seventh *time*, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!”

A small cloud is all Elijah needs to go into action

1 Kings 18:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare *your chariot*, and go down before the rain stops you.’ ”

This small cloud is a foreshadow of a release in our spirit when we know we have “prayed through” a specific issue

- The Holy Spirit bears a witness
- Might be a sense of joy
- Might be an awareness in our heart

Share the story of cleaning the house in Ionia – preparing to move

Share the story of Salina flipping over in the womb

- *Walking the halls all day*
- *“I’m going home” – Trish*
- *The baby is facing face up – pray!*

Luke 11:9 (NKJV)

⁹ “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- Jesus is encouraging us to relentlessly ask, seek and knock
- Why?
- Is God hard of hearing
- No, it’s a matter of our faith

Luke 11:9-10 Amplified Bible (AMP)

⁹ “So I say to you, ask *and* keep on asking, and it will be given to you; seek *and* keep on seeking, and you will find; knock *and* keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who ^[a]keeps on asking [persistently], receives; and he who keeps on seeking [persistently], finds; and to him who keeps on knocking [persistently], the door will be opened.

There is a difference between being *determined* to receive and *aspiring* to receive

- When we are completely determined we will not give up easily
- We will not come away empty handed
- We will continue to ask and become more intense the longer it takes

Luke 18:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

- God will avenge us when we cry out day and night
- Jesus is talking about prayer and asks the question
- Will the Son of Man find faith?
- Faith and prayer are synonymous

Parable of the Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1–6 (NLT)

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. ² “There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. ³ A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ ⁴ The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, ⁵ but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!’ ” ⁶ Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge.

- Jesus said – Never give up!
- It’s God’s will that we never quit
- In this story the women wear’s out the judge because of her persistence
- Jesus says – learn a lesson from this
- God is not unjust
- He is for us
- When we are determined God will grant our requests

This is not mere recital and repetition, but passionate, meaningful persistence

Matthew 6:7 (NLT)

⁷ “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.