

Never Give Up – 8

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

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.

Passionate, Persistent Prayer

James 5:16-18 (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. 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 knows the will of God and will not be denied

- 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, to have or show great intensity of spirit, feeling enthusiasm
- Passionate, heartfelt – Webster's
- He sends his servant a seven times 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

Ineffective prayer would be...

- Subdued, impassionate, and not heartfelt

“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

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! 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 11:9-10 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

Parable of the Persistent Widow

No Slide: Luke 18:1–8 (NLT)

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

Run for the Prize

1 Corinthians 9:24 (AMP)

²⁴ ^[a] Do you not know that in a race all the runners run [their very best to win], but only one receives the prize? Run [your race] in such a way that you may seize the prize *and* make it yours!

- We are in a challenging race
- It's personal
- It's your race
- It's my race

We are not competing with each other but forces that are trying to hinder us in finishing well

- Run in such a way
- In what way?
- Relentlessly

Hebrews 12:1 Amplified Bible (AMP)

“Let us run with endurance *and* active persistence the race that is set before us”

A serious athlete is one who practices hard, perseveres through adversity and endures grueling training

- Why?
- To win a prize

1 Corinthians 9:25 (NLT)

²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

Payton Manning just won his second Super Bowl

- For a golfer it's the Masters
- The hockey player the Stanley Cup
- An Olympic athlete a gold medal

Those who fix their eyes firmly on the prize will train more relentlessly and endure extreme adversity

Vision: it's what they see that motivates them

- What do you see?
- What you see will make you stand out above the others

Starting well is important but how we finish has greater significance

- It requires relentless persistence and endurance

2 John 8 (NLT)

⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what we* have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward.

- What is the reward we are working for?
- The prize we are warned not to lose?
- I believe it is on two levels
 - The first is specific to the work we have done
 - We do not all get the same reward
 - The second is the reward of a closer relationship with Him

God is building Himself a House

When you are building your “Dream House” there is a great deal of anticipation and excitement

I don’t believe it is much different for God

Here on earth we name prominent homes

- The Queen of England has Buckingham Palace
- The President the White House
- Actor Michael Douglas’s the Longlands in Bermuda
- The late George Harrison’s Friar Park
- Nicolas Cage’s Midford Castle

God refers to His house as Zion

Psalm 132:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired *it* for His dwelling place: ¹⁴ “This *is* My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

- God desires His house
- He is eagerly anticipating it
- It has been in His heart for untold generations

Psalm 102:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.

Psalm 9:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people.

Psalm 50:2 (NKJV)

² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.

When you build a house you start with a sure foundation

Isaiah 28:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

Jesus is the cornerstone of God's foundation

1 Corinthians 3:11 (NLT)

¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

You and I are important stones in the foundation of Zion as well

1 Peter 2:5 (NLT)

⁵ And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple.

Together we are the materials that make up God's house, which He will dwell in forever

Ephesians 2:19–22 (The Message)

God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.

Not only are we the material but we are also referred to as fellow workers or **Sub-Contractors**

1 Corinthians 3:9 (ESV)

⁹For we are God's **fellow workers**. You are God's field, God's building.

You and I are the plumbers, electricians, framers, dry-wallers, roofers, tile layers, brick layers and carpet layers.....

If we build the House what does the builder do?

First: He designs it

Hebrews 11:10 (NLT)

¹⁰Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, **a city designed and built by God**.

- God is the great architect
- The eternal artist and creator

Second: The builder orders the materials

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

⁴Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

Jeremiah 1:5 (NLT)

⁵ “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”

Third: He schedules the subs

On large commercial projects there is a Site Manager or Construction manager

- Their responsibility is to make sure all the other subs are communicating and working on schedule together
- They make sure the job is done safely, on time and under budget
- Jesus and Holy Spirit are the Site Managers of God’s House

John 17:4 (NLT)

⁴ I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

John 16:13 (NLT)

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

Jesus has finished His work and now the Holy Spirit delivers the plans to complete the building of Zion

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

- Not only are we created to “be someone” we are also created to “do something”
- Recently there has been an emphasis on us “Being” who Christ made us to be
- The problem is there has been a lack of emphasis on doing
- This has created a lethargic Church in western culture
- As a result, we are concerned with “life” and less concerned with participating in the building project – God's Building
- It's not only those in “full time” ministry that have a genuine calling
 - It's for all of us
- It's not a building of brick and mortar the bricks are people

1 Peter 2:5, 7 (NLT)

⁵ And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests.* Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

⁷ Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him.* But for those who reject him, “The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.”*

1 Corinthians 3:8–9 (NLT)

⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. ⁹ For we are both God’s workers. And you are God’s field. You are God’s building.

- Am I building for the eternal or the temporal?
- Am I building the kingdom of God or my personal kingdom?

Matthew 20:23, 25-27 (NLT)

²³ Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”

²⁵ But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave.