



Wisdom Worksheet: Never Give Up (Three Secrets to Endurance)

Introduction

Whether we are overextended or just plain bored, how do we *never give up*? Amidst life's challenges or even lack of them, we often say, "I give up." These words weighted with finality flow from the heart. Just like the physical heart is comprised of four chambers, so the spiritual heart contains four chambers. They can be remembered in the acronym, *WISE*: the *will*, *intellect*, *spirit*, and *emotions*. The chamber of the *will* represents our *choices*. The *intellect* is the mind containing our *thoughts*. The *spirit* houses our *prayers*. The *emotions* include our *feelings*. Before we ever speak the words, "I give up," a crack is formed in one of the hardened chambers of our inner beings. The crack is *discouragement*, and it leads to *disconnectedness*.

Courage stems from the Latin word for *heart*, which is *cor*. Consequently, to be *discouraged* is literally "to lose heart." On the inside, the *will* says, "I will not;" the *mind* says, "I think not;" the *spirit* says, "I pray not;" or the *emotions* say, "I want not." Unfortunately, when one chamber cracks, the other three follow suite. The result is a three-dimensional disconnectedness: (1) from who we were designed to be, (2) from God, and (3) from others. Much like the case with concrete, a crack separates what once was connected. In order to *never give up*, each of us must first reconnect in our hearts and say, "I will, I think, I pray, and I want surrender to God's design for my life."

When faced with an obstacle, we either *give up* or *live up* to God's design for our lives—the unique expression of Christ in us. If we ever give up, we will never live up to who God designed us to be. The Bible calls us to never give up in three contexts that



provide us the secret to *endure* life's challenges. *Never give up* on: (1) *yourself*, (2) *God*, or (3) *each other*.

(1) Never give up on yourself (2 Chronicles 15:7). This means that we have the *courage* to *commit* all of the heart to *finish what we start*. After describing a season in which God's leaders gave up, Azariah son of Oded said to King Asa of Judah, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded" (2 Chronicles 15:7). King Asa's response to the call to not give up was clearly stated in the following verse: "He took courage" (2 Chronicles 15:8). The writer went on to describe Asa's heart as "fully committed to the LORD" (2 Chronicles 15:17).

"*Do not give up*" is *raphah* in Hebrew, meaning "to sink or to relax, to lose courage." Interestingly, we tend to *sink* when we *lose* or *relax* when we *win*. Our perspective of a challenge can appear either too big when we are defeated or too small when we are victorious. In either event, we *lose courage*. When we lose severely, we often *sink* because the challenge seems too big, or too hard. One of the four chambers of the heart begins to crack in *discouragement*. We say on the inside, "I will not, I think not, I pray not, or I want not." Conversely, when we win a great deal, achievement can appear too easy. We often *relax* due to the lack of challenges in our lives, similar to victorious King David's sin with Bathsheba that stemmed from him not going to war in the spring as was customary for kings.

Jesus never gave up on Himself. In His high priestly prayer, Jesus said to His heavenly Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). On the cross, Jesus confirmed that He had indeed finished what He



had started (John 19:30). The writer of Hebrews called believers to model His endurance, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1-3). These verses paint a picture of a runner, who prior to a race, would throw off the training weights that were hooked in his uniform so that he would be free to endure the upcoming challenge.

Sin trusts in our own design, rather than God’s. Consequently, it is a heavy burden that hinders us from persevering toward the unique expression of Christ in us. Because it begins in the heart, sin entangles itself into the fabric of our lives, discouraging and disconnecting us from who we were designed to be. Therefore, never giving up on ourselves means never giving up on humbling our hearts to God’s design for our lives, as was the pattern of Jesus. Paul challenged Timothy, “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3).

In order to endure, *or never give up* on ourselves, we *forever live up* to God’s design. When *discouraged enough to quit*, we have the *courage to commit* all four chambers of the heart in order to *finish what we start*—the advancement of God’s kingdom in us. We stop saying, “I will not, I think not, I pray not, or I want not surrender



to His kingdom.” Rather, on the inside we keep saying, “I will, I think, I pray, and I want surrender to God’s design for my life, the unique expression of Christ in me.”

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

In what area of your life have you noticed a crack of discouragement in your heart? Is it one where your challenge seems too big because you have been defeated or one where your challenge appears too small, leaving you restless from multiple victories? Is discouragement surfacing in your marriage, parenting, ministry, education, friendships, or career? Identify that specific area of life where you find yourself saying, “I will not, I think not, I pray not, or I want not.” Next, confess to the Father your shortfall from the heart of Christ. Ask Him to restore your heart to be like His, saying, “I will, I think, I pray, and I want surrender of my heart to Christ. Advance His kingdom in me.”

(2) Never give up on God (Luke 18:1). Luke recorded that the purpose of Jesus’ Parable of the Persistent Widow was that His disciples should “always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1). “*Not give up*” is *egkakeo* in Greek, meaning “to lose heart (NASB), or to grow weary.” When we give up on God, we lose courage, or endurance in our hearts, and we cease praying and obeying. Discouragement leads to disconnectedness from God. However, Paul said that we should pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17). *Prayer* is being online with God 24/7. It is the connection of our hearts with His where God shapes our desires in accordance with Christ’s. Within this connectedness of prayer, we make our petitions and requests (Philippians 4:6). Prayer is followed by obedience, meaning, “to listen under.” Therefore, obedience makes our muscles move with our prayers.



Jesus never gave up on the Father. He prayed alone with Him daily; He lived a life of obedience; and He endured until the end, praying His spirit into the Father's hands (Luke 23:46).

In order to not give up on God, we must pray continually, remaining online with the Almighty 24/7. At the same time, we must make our muscles move with our prayers in obedience to Him. We *never give up to forever live up* to God's design when we find *connection's* way is for us to *pray* and *obey*.

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

In what area of our life have you given up on God, disconnecting from Him by not praying and obeying? Confess this to your heavenly Father, and ask Him to restore the heart of Christ in you. Write "Pray and obey" on your daily calendar as a reminder to connect with God in every task and relationship.

(3) Never give up on each other (Galatians 6:9-10; Hebrews 10:25). Paul explained the *what* and *why* of not giving up on each other: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). The *what* of not giving up is "doing good;" the *why* is the "harvest." Next, Paul unmistakably described the *who* of not giving up, or the audience who receives our good deeds: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10). The *who* of not giving up is "all people, especially the family of believers." The writer of Hebrews elaborated on the family of believers never giving up on one another: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the



more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). “*Not give up*” is *egkatalieipo* in Greek, meaning, “to desert.” Rather than *discouraging* others toward *disconnectedness*, believers are called to never desert each other and to *encourage* their spiritual family members toward *connectedness* both in community with others and communion with God. That is exactly what Azariah son of Oded did with King Asa of Judah.

Jesus never gave up on His disciples (John 17:12). Jesus never gave up on us; He prayed that we would be *encouraged* toward *connectedness*—to live in *community* with each other in *communion* with the Father and Son so that the world may be *encouraged* toward that same *connectedness* (John 17:20-23).

In order to *never give up* on each other, we must *forever live up* to *encourage* others toward *connectedness* in *community* with personal relationships and *communion* with God. When we are tempted to *discourage* and *disconnect* from each other, we must *encourage connectedness* like a sister or brother.

Pause and Let Wisdom Work

Are you tempted to give up on someone? Has the advancement of the kingdom of God in that person skidded to what appears to be a screeching halt? Ask the Spirit of God to reveal to you the cracks in the heart of this person, namely the desires he is attempting to satisfy apart from God. Next, ask for wisdom to encourage that person toward connectedness with God and others. Finally, go to that person and listen to his story, serve him in the way God has prompted you, and encourage communion with the Father and community with others.

Conclusion



When you *never give up on yourself, never give up on God, and never give up on each other*, you will realize that it is not merely you enduring life's challenges; rather, it is Christ in you. In the words of the apostle Paul, "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6).

Never Give Up

When you have the courage to commit with all of your heart

Then you will finish all that you start

When you never give up on God and continue to pray

Your muscles will move with your prayers as you obey

When you never give up on each other—your friends you will never flee

You will encourage them toward communion and community

When you never give up, it's not merely you whom others will see

Rather, it's Christ in you...the way you were designed to be