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How do we *never give up*? Amidst life's challenges, we often say, "I give up," or "I quit." These words weighted with finality flow from the heart. Just like the physical heart is comprised of four chambers, so is the spiritual heart which represents one's entire inner being. Those four chambers 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 speak the words, "I give up," a crack forms in one of the heart's chambers. The crack is *discouragement* which 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 won't," or the *mind* says, "I can't," or the *spirit* says, "I don't pray," or the *emotions* say, "I don't want." Unfortunately, when one chamber cracks, the other three follow suite. In order to *never give up*, we must first say in our hearts, "I will, I can, I pray, and I want."

When faced with an obstacle, we either *give up* or *live up* to whom God has 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*, and (3) *each other*.

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* (Hebrew), meaning "to sink, or to relax, to lose courage." Interestingly, we tend to give up both when we *lose* or *win* much. Thus, our perspective of our challenge is either too big or too small. When we lose severely, we often *sink*, or *lose courage*, because the challenge seems too big. One of the four chambers of the heart begins to crack in *discouragement*. We then say on the inside, "I won't, I can't, or I don't." When we win a great deal, we often *relax*, or *lose courage*, due to the lack of challenges in our lives, much like King David's sin with Bathsheba 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*" (Jn. 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 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*" (Heb.



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12:11-3). Paul challenged Timothy, “*Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus*” (2 Tim 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 won’t, I can’t, I don’t pray, or I don’t want.” Rather, on the inside we keep saying, “I will, I can, I pray, and I want.”

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. *Discouragement* leads to *disconnectedness*. 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 in order to shape our desires in accordance with Christ’s. It is within the *connectedness* of prayer that we make our petitions and requests (Phil. 4:6). Prayer is followed by *obedience*, which means “to listen under.” *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*.

Never give up on each other (Gal. 6:9-10; Heb. 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*” (Gal. 6:9). The *what* of not giving up is doing good; the *why* is the harvest. Then he 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*” (Gal. 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*” (Heb. 10:25). “*Not give up*” is *egkatalaipo* 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* 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).



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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 tempted to *discourage* and *disconnect* from each other, *encourage connectedness* like a sister or brother.

When we *never give up ourselves*, *never give up on God*, and *never give up on each other*, we will realize that it is not we who are not giving up, rather it is Christ in us. 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*” (Rom. 15:5-6).

Never giving up and forever living up,
Mitch