



Don't Give Up

by Jon Bloom, president of Desiring God*

We all long to rest from the fatigue of living. God placed the desire for rest in our souls, and He promises to fulfill it: “I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish” (Jeremiah 31:25).

THE “NOW” AND “NOT YET” OF OUR REST

In a very real way, Jesus gives rest to “all who labor and are heavy laden” and come to him (Matthew 11:28). But in this age, we cannot find complete rest.

In this age, Jesus grants us the gospel rest of ceasing the impossible labor of self-atonement for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21). But in embracing the gospel, we find ourselves also drafted into a war—a war to *keep believing* the gospel and a war to *keep spreading* it to others. In this age we “strive to enter that [complete] rest” of the age to come (Hebrews 4:11).

Wars are exhausting—especially long ones. That’s why you are often tired. Many soldiers, who experience the fierceness of combat, want to get out of it. That’s why you’re tempted to escape. That’s why you’re tempted to give up.

DON'T GIVE UP

But don't give up. No, rather “take courage. Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded” (2 Chronicles 15:7).

Don't give up when that familiar sin, still crouching at your door after all these years, pounces again with temptation.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Don't give up when you feel that deep soul weariness from long battles with persistent weaknesses.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Don't give up when your long asked-and-sought-and-knocked-for prayers have not yet been answered.

And he told them [the parable of the persistent widow] to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. (Luke 18:1)

Don't give up when the devil's fiery darts of doubt find flesh and make you reel.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day...in all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:13, 16)

Don't give up when the fragmenting effect of multiple pressures seems relentless.

“But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger . . . (2 Corinthians 6:4-5)

Don't give up when the field the Lord has assigned you to is hard and the harvest does not look promising.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Don't give up when you labor in obscurity and you wonder how much it even matters.

...your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:4)

Don't give up when your reputation is damaged because you are trying to be faithful to Jesus.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (Matthew 5:11)

Don't give up when waiting on God seems endless.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:30–31)

Don't give up when you have failed in sin. Don't wallow. Repent (again), get your eyes off yourself (again), and fix your eyes on Jesus (again). Get up and get back in the fight.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)

... if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

HOPE AND HELP IN THE HARD

Living by faith in “things not seen” is hard (Hebrews 11:1). Jesus reminds us: “the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Matthew 7:14). But the way has always been hard, and you are not alone in the difficulty. You are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who have passed this way ahead of you (Hebrews 12:1). Many have suffered far more and have remained faithful. Remember them and imitate their faith (Hebrews 13:7).

Above all, remember Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8). Jesus knows your works (Revelation 2:2) and he understands your war (Hebrews 12:3). His grace will be given to you in your time of need (Hebrews 4:16) and it will be sufficient for you, even at the very worst times (2 Corinthians 12:9).

So, look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2), “fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Timothy 6:12), and finish your race (2 Timothy 4:7). When you have done the will of God, you will receive what is promised: his great and eternal reward (Hebrews 10:35–36). Measured by eternity, the hardships of this life will not be long, and “by your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:19). Don't give up.

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