

## Don't Quit

Thomas Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." If we knew this before we quit a great undertaking, fewer people would quit. Emerson said, "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer." Winston Churchill said, "Success is never final. Failure is never fatal." The most famous World War I flying ace and founder of Eastern Airlines who set the standard for world-wide air travel said, "Quitters never win and winners never quit" (Eddie Rickenbacker). Jesus said toward the end of His life and ministry in earth, "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*" (John 17:4). Just before he died, Paul said, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (II Timothy 4:7). Winners never quit! Quitters never win. I want to discuss the characteristics of winners verses quitters with the goal in mind to encourage one and all that read these words to be winners. In the beginning of this challenge I would like to differentiate between ceasing an activity that would either be sinful or lead to sin. Allow me to give you an example: you are in a relationship or enterprise that is leading you away from God rather than to greater heights in the will of God. Ceasing going further in that kind of relationship or undertaking is not the kind of quitting we are talking about - stopping in this instance would be wise and profitable. Psalm 26:4 gives us this warning: "*I have not sat with vain persons (people who have useless, purposeless and evil goals), neither will I go in with dissemblers (imposters)*. We are talking about children of God who are on the right track and become diverted to the point of abdicating the right and good way they are already going. First of all what are the characteristics of a "quitter"?

### **1. A quitter foolishly buys into the "grass is greener syndrome."**

The old saying, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" is speaking to the wanderlust temptation to always see things brighter or better somewhere other than where you are. This type of person lives in constant frustration, always blaming their unhappiness on their environment. In this case the cure will never be geography, it will be the inner attitude of the heart. Let me give you a tweaked version of that old saying, "The grass is always greener over the septic tank." For those who may be "city slickers" and have always known the convenience of suburban corporate sewage systems, let me explain. In rural settings away from city life, you must vent your sewage via a septic tank. This is a holding area, placed behind your house, preferably as far as possible from your house and placed underground to hold and decimate the household sewage. As the septic system ages, the grass over it becomes greener due to the constant seepage of fertilization. I recall as a boy going to my grandmother's house in the country and being fascinated with the green area in the back. It would become soft in the rain. As a playful boy running through the back yard, thinking of that area as a nice landing zone for a tackle, soon became disastrous. I discovered a reeking odor and, due to the dampness, I was able to have some of this odoriferous substance stay with me until I made it to the bath. Far too often you see the greener grass and you have not become close enough to the area of your desire to see that the place has problems, often many more problems than where you are presently. Don't quit and buy into this catastrophe!

The Bible says, "...let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8). "*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*" (Philippians 4:11). "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Hebrews 13:5). Don't quit!

### **2. A quitter is immersed in unfulfilled expectation.**

It is easy to live for the longings of our base nature. On the other hand, the Psalmist said, "*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him*" (Psalm 62:5). In essence, when we make this our prayer, we are saying, God, your Will is my will and I will accept the darkness with the light; I wait only for Thee, for You alone are my expectation. The word "expectation" is the Hebrew word: "tiqvah" which means: hope, live, thing that I long for. We are saying, I love You, Lord; I am

not living for things or other people. You alone are my life (Colossians 3:4)! Therefore, although disappointments come, we carry on.

Do not be dissuaded by the storms of life. Sailors will tell you, "You don't change ships in the middle of a storm." Ride it out! Psalm 107: 28-30 says, "*Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*" 't quit!

### **3. Quitters try to assume a role for which they are not called or not ready.**

When Absalom was coveting the throne of Israel, he said, "...*Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!*" (II Samuel 15:4). Misery awaits anyone who goes contrary to God's plan for his or her life. No matter how hard you try, life will not be sweet, rewards will not forthcoming and coming years will hold for you what Lord Byron said his future held for him, "My life is in the yellow leaf...." Eventually the life of one who misapplies their gifts will become so unhappy that they will feel like quitting. Be what God has called you to be. Do what God has called you to do, where and when He calls you. Don't quit!

### **4. Quitters nurture a root of bitterness.**

The quitter who doesn't reconcile and become a winner will become bitter on life. It has been rightly said, "Bitterness is the only chemical that destroys the container than holds it." The Bible says, "*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled*" (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness defiles. The poisoned quitter is unhappy and often tends to make everybody's world (with whom he associates) an unhappy place also. Quitters are no fun to be around. Who wants to hang out with grouchy, discontented people?

### **5. Quitters launch self-sabotage missions.**

The self-sabotage mission of the quitter is one destined to crash and burn, but they go ahead and launch anyway. Why would anyone purposely operate in life in such a way? There are four reasons for self-sabotage: (1) It is a misguided quest of unconditional love. Due to bad experiences of the past, one believes that no one loves them unless they are performing in a way pleasing to others. To test that love, they quit doing right. If they are rejected, fired, or left, it confirms their worse fears. Life for this person becomes a vicious cycle. (2) They believe that crisis will jump-start a new life, so they quit. (3) We take the counsel of the immature in our confused state of mind. (4) We have entered an all-out state of rebellion. I will give more detail to this when we return.

Next week I want to pick up at this point and give you five characteristics of a winner!

- Pastor Pope -

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