

Don't Give Up

The first week of the new year has passed. How are your resolutions and goals? Today we are encouraging you with *Don't Give Up*.

Introduction

Last week we shared a teaching about new year resolutions and goals. Many people do not like setting resolutions and goals when a new year begins because they often fail to keep them or complete them. You may already be struggling with this.

Still, others live a life of defeat. They have set out with a plan they believe is from God and they have committed the plans to Him, but things are not working out and they are ready to give up on the plan or goal.

Life in this lost and dying world can be hard. It has challenges. Sometimes those challenges seem like they have won. Sometimes we cannot see the path around a challenge and we feel abandoned by God.

Today we want to encourage you. You can continue to work toward your resolutions and complete your goals. Your plans are not wasted and you have not been defeated. We can guarantee you that what God has started in you will be completed. Let's see what the Bible has to say about these situations.

I Can Do All Things

Many people do not like making new year resolutions or setting goals. This often is a result of a lifetime of not following through and failure of completing goals. This happens when we lose focus on Jesus and the mission he has for each one of us. Distracting you from God's mission is one of the biggest ways the devil tries to ruin your life.

God is the giver of dreams and visions. He has given you passion for something. God does not keep you from reaching the goals and fulfilling the mission He has called you to. The key is to keep your focus on Jesus and live the life he has called you to live.

Look at what the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:13.

Philippians 4:13

(13) I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Much of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi is about pressing on, keeping going, reaching for goals, and all in all, being encouraging. In this verse, we easily see Paul's teaching. You can do all God has called you to do in the strength we have through Jesus Christ.

That strength is the key, though. We cannot do all things in our own strength. Your strength will fail you. You must use the strength you receive from Jesus through the Holy Spirit to accomplish all God has called you to do.

You can do all things that God has asked and called you to do with the strength of Jesus Christ. Don't give up on your new year resolutions or goals. Commit them to the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to



guide you to the mission God has for you and trust the power and strength given to you from Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

I Know The Plans I Have For You

To work in the strength of the Lord, you must know the plans the Lord has for you and commit them to him. Your resolutions and goals must be in line with what the Lord has called you to personally. Setting goals outside the overall mission Jesus has given the Church and the personal mission he has given you is a recipe for failure and discouragement.

After Israel had been held captive in Babylon for 70 years the Prophet Jeremiah spoke to them saying in Jeremiah 29:11

Jeremiah 29:11

(11) For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Israel has been held in captivity for 70 years. They felt abandoned by God. God allowed them to be taken captive to teach them. They needed to be reminded of God's sovereignty and desire to keep them holy. But God never forgets you. He created you. He desires to have a relationship with you.

God created you with a plan and a purpose that fits into His master plan and purpose for all mankind. God's plans for you are not for destruction or failure. He does not plan death and despair for anyone who turns to Him and follows Him.

God wants to see you succeed. He wants to see you prosper. This prosperity is not necessarily financial or some other wealth. God's economy is not based on land, livestock, or money. God's economy is based on joy, peace, faith, and love. These are the ways God will prosper you when you continue to keep your focus on Jesus and fulfill the call you have on your life, regardless of what others around you say.

The great missionary Bernard Johnson once said, "Success for the Christian is nothing but living in the perfect will of God for your life." It is not necessarily a large bank account or other great wealth. Nor is it necessarily being the leader of a great many people. It is being in the center of God's plan for your life, no matter what that plan is.

Don't give up because God has a plan for you. He will give you hope and a future you could not imagine. Trust what God has started in you. He will complete it.

He Who Began A Good Work In You

We can be very impatient sometimes. We have difficulty waiting and we want results immediately. Some cultures even only focus on the here and now and do not learn from the past or plan for the future. It can be very difficult to maintain our focus on Jesus and his mission for us when the world can be so distracting.



The devil would like nothing more than to steal people away from God. Satan is the great spoiler. He wants to spoil all of God's plans for mankind and His personal plans for you. One of the devil's most used and most successful tools is distraction.

It is easy to be distracted by the things of this world. We can get distracted by the world's idea of material wealth. We can also be distracted by the world's idea of love and peace, neither of which lines up with God's definition of love and peace.

Jesus gave the Church an overarching mission to go and make disciples. We all have a place and a role in that overall mission. Your personal mission and calling are in line with that. The way you fulfill your mission may be very different than how someone else fulfills theirs.

Do not get discouraged when you see others' success and you see little fruit of your efforts. Do not get discouraged when you make a mistake or fail. Trust God and trust His timing. Paul writes in Philippians 1:6

Philippians 1:6

(6) being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

God will not give up on you and He will complete what He has started in you. All of the resolutions and goals you set that are set in the plans God has for you and the mission He has called you to will come to fruition. He will complete what He started in you.

When you get distracted and when you lose sight of Jesus' plan and purpose for you, do not worry. Refocus yourself on Jesus and God will continue to sharpen you, purify you, and use you to further His kingdom. God has not given up on you. Don't give up on Him.

Conclusion

It is easy to lose sight of the plans and goals we make. We get discouraged because we are impatient waiting for results or we make a mistake. Sometimes we fall prey to the devil's schemes and lose our focus on Jesus and fall into sin.

When you find yourself distracted by the world or falling prey to the devil's schemes remember what the Prophet Micah says in Micah 7:8.

Micah 7:8

(8) Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.

Quote that to the devil the next time you falter or get distracted by one of his schemes. God is faithful to continue what he has started in you. Jesus is right there with you to guide you out of whatever challenge you find yourself in. Trust the counsel of the Holy Spirit and keep your focus on Jesus while you continue forward in the mission God has for you. That is success for you and praiseworthy for all brothers and sisters in the Lord.

