

Christian Leaders Will Tell You, 'Never Give Up!'—Here's Why That's Wrong

Our spiritual leaders constantly tell us not to give up. The movies we watch say don't give up. Our music tells us don't give up. Our sports stars tell us not to give up and even our politicians tell us not to give up.

One of the most difficult things for us to learn to do is to give up. We have had it drummed over and over into our thoughts and minds: "Never give up!" But I am telling you that in order to be successful in our faith, we must learn to give up.

In order to understand what I am speaking about, let's look at the Bible. In Exodus 25:2 (TLV), we read: "Tell *Bnei-Yisrael* to take up an offering for Me. From anyone whose heart compels him you are to take My offering."

Please don't stop reading because, contrary to most who teach from this verse, I am not speaking about money today. This article is not about paying tithes or giving offerings to support a ministry. But the results of this article may change how you look at giving.

As we read these words, let's look at the background of this verse. We find the children of Israel in the wilderness. They have spent 400 years in bondage in Egypt. But, as they were leaving Egypt, G-D told them to ask their neighbors for gold, silver and other valuable items. Their neighbors willingly gave them these riches.

Now, Israel is traveling through the desert and for the first time in 400 years, they are free from Egyptian bondage and they are rich. Now that they are free from Egyptian bondage

and have wealth, G-D asks them to give an offering. Not everyone. Only those whose hearts compel them. In some Bible versions, these words are translated, "those with a willing heart."

What is taking place here in this verse is that G-D is giving Israel the opportunity to truly be free from bondage. They had physically been set free from Egypt, but G-D knew that proximity freedom wasn't the same as being free. Many people get free from prison, but never free from what prison did to them. Others get free from abusive relationships, but never free from the spiritual and emotional bondage caused by it. Some are freed from poverty, but never become set free from the poverty mindset.

G-D is offering all of Israel real freedom. He is asking them to give their gold, silver and other riches not because He needs them, but because Israel needs to understand how to be free. They were free not because they were outside the boundaries of Egypt. They were free because they were with G-D.

They needed to learn that money, gold, silver and precious gems didn't provide freedom from bondage. Only G-D can provide that freedom. So, G-D asked for an offering. The Hebrew word used in this verse for offering is *Terumah*, which means "to offer by lifting up" or "to give up."

This is the type of giving up that I am encouraging everyone to learn. If you are a believer in Yeshua, you have been set free, as we read in John 8:36: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!"

So, please look around your life and see if you are still hanging on to the things that you brought with you out of Egypt. Maybe you are carrying memories from when you were in bondage to drugs or alcohol. Maybe you are carrying anger from failed relationships. Maybe you struggle with greed because of

past poverty. Maybe you are still dragging the frustration of lust and pornography. Maybe you are hauling the hurts that were caused by your parents or your children.

No matter what you are hauling, the truth is that everything you brought with you when you were delivered from your Egypt you need to be willing to give up—to G-D. This doesn't mean G-D doesn't want you to have things. G-D absolutely wants you to be blessed in every way.

What G-D doesn't want is for things to have you. Please take an inventory of your world. If there is anything you have that has you, stop right now and give it up to G-D and be fully set free. {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is author of *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.

A 4-Step Process to Make Crucial, Spirit-Led Decisions

Everyone has made a bad decision or two, decisions that can shape the course of their lives. Whether it's investing in a company that goes bankrupt or saying the wrong thing in an interview for a desired job, those decisions can have a huge impact on a person's entire life, says Dr. Alan Ehler, dean of the Barnett College of Ministry and Theology at Southeastern

University.

In today's chaotic culture, Ehler says, poor decisions can be more costly than ever for the believer. A great deal is at stake.

"We don't get to create everything that happens to us, but we can shape it by our decisions," Ehler told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "Really, there are four steps that can be followed to make any kind of decision in your life, whether it's personal, professional or relational.

"First, your life is a story, and your story begins the day you were born. You must understand your own backstory, and second, you then need to catch God's story and see if Scripture speaks clearly to your issue to give us some principles that we can apply. It's the Holy Spirit speaking to us.

"The third step is to craft a new story. If we know we have heard from God, we still have to figure out, am I going to live this out? The fourth and final step is to tell the new story that is letting everybody know who is going to need to know how to do it, and then we go live it out after we make the decision. And then, if it's an ongoing decision with ongoing ramifications, we want to assess that we're evaluating the right decision. Is this the best way, or can we fix some things here?"

For more about making the right Spirit-led decisions for your life, listen to the entire podcast.

How God Transformed a Marine Struggling With PTSD Into a Spirit-Led Prophet

As a Marine, Jared Laskey knows what it's like to be called to sacrifice. He has sacrificed for his country, and he has sacrificed for his fellow Marines.

After the service and a struggle with PTSD, he became a youth pastor. He thought his natural path after that would be to become a pastor. But it's not what God had in mind for him.

It wasn't until he discovered his identity in Christ that Laskey found what he says is his true calling—the office of prophet. Laskey laid down his priorities to surrender to those God was calling him to.

“[As a Marine] there comes a point in time where you just kind of lose yourself; where you kind of have to die,” Laskey told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “I’m not talking like spiritually dying to yourself, which is a biblical principle. I’m talking like when you just consider yourself dead to make sure that your Marines, your friends, make it out. In Iraq, I died emotionally, and I didn’t know that until I came home.

“When I became a youth pastor, I thought I would do what everybody was supposed to do after youth ministry, and that’s to become a pastor. But no, I failed at that. And that’s on me. But I learned from it.

“I eventually realized that I know who I am and whose I am. I know my identity as a son of God, and He has called me to be a prophet. He’s called me to be an evangelist. He’s called me into the fivefold ministry. I wasn’t supposed to be a pastor. So it’s only been within the last two years that, and I’m not

ashamed to say this, that God has called me to my office.”

For more of Laskey’s incredible story, listen to the entire podcast. And, make sure to listen to his new show, *Adventures in the Spirit*, on the Charisma Podcast Network.

The Perfect Prescription for Your Lonely Soul

You serve a God who will never leave you alone. You are not forsaken in any situation or at any moment in life. He is with you; what glorious relief!

Whenever your heart tries to convince you that you are all alone and that no one cares about you or your life, you must choose to believe the truth of the Scriptures rather than the instability of your feelings. When it comes to loneliness, you must open your Bible and agree with the Word of God and not with the emotions that threaten to alienate you.

Jesus really is your best friend, so feel free to talk to Him anytime ... or anywhere. Share your heart with Him and then listen for His loving response. When you begin to respond to Jesus as you would to a friend, your loneliness will slowly begin to ebb away.

In my seasons of loneliness, I have reminded myself numerous times that there are at least two tools that will help me walk through the door to God’s undeniable presence: fellowship and

worship.

Matthew 18:20 teaches that when believers are with each other, He is with them also. If you want to spend time with God, try spending an evening with a group of people who love Him.

The second way that lonely people can place themselves in the direct presence of the Lord is through the choice to worship. God dwells where praise is full and strong! If you long for your loving Father to make Himself known and manifest in your life, then you should spend time worshipping Him. The Lord shows up when a man or woman of God rises above events and circumstances with a heart that is overflowing with pure worship. If you deal with loneliness, turn up the worship music and then lift your hands in the air, because He is there!

How wonderful it is to know that Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. The assurance that He is always with us just might be the loveliest and most comforting promise in the entire Bible.

But honestly, there have been situations where I felt isolated and just needed another person to touch me or say a kind word to me. Please don't misunderstand me. I certainly had the sweet reassurance that Jesus was indeed with me. But oh, how I longed for just one empathetic squeeze of the hand from a friend who cared about me.

My prescription for your lonely soul is this: Make an assertive and definitive attempt to reach out to someone else at least once a day. Passivity is not a remedy for loneliness.

You will no longer feel abandoned if you can learn the secret of being assertively friendly when everyone else is merely passive or having a cheerful, positive heart when everyone else seems uninterested. Remind yourself every day that love is something you do, not something you feel. If you can reach out in love and kindness to someone every day, regardless of

how you feel, it will change your life.

One of the amazing aspects of your life as a woman is that God wired you for fellowship and for companionship. It is not a sin to desire close friends who will cheer you on through life—it is part of what makes you a glorious creation of the Father.

“When He sent the crowds away, He went up into a mountain by Himself to pray. And when evening came, He was there alone” (Matt. 14:23).

At times, Jesus sent the crowds away for His own benefit, and it seems reasonable to me that He might do exactly the same thing from time to time in the lives of His children.

As we learn from the example of Jesus concerning the opportunity of loneliness in the life of a believer, we must observe what He did when He, too, was all alone. It seems to me that Jesus was in the habit of proactively being alone so He could spend time in prayer. I believe we should imitate everything Jesus chose to do during His time on earth, and if it was beneficial for Him to choose to be alone in order to pray, it will be beneficial for us to do the same.

Do you find yourself in an interval of life when you are often alone? Then let me just encourage you to use those uninterrupted hours to pray to the Father. This time of seemingly arid living can be turned into a thriving garden of the Lord’s presence if you will only choose to pray.

Often, during such periods, instead of praying, we prefer to binge-watch Netflix, read the latest romance novel, talk endlessly on the phone or complain on social media. What if God has wisely appointed you to a season of solitary living so you can grow closer to Him? What if God has sent the crowd away from your life so you are able to experience breakthroughs and miracles in prayer? What if you will never experience the true love of the Father unless you actually

spend time with Him?

Now, when you choose to pray, not only will you bask in the loving arms of the one who created you, but you will also move heaven and earth! What better way to spend your time than to partner with God to make a difference in the world while on your knees?

Days and even years of solo moments are never wasted when we choose to pray.

We often mistakenly identify a season of loneliness as a time of insignificance rather than an opportunity to wield the greatest significance of our entire lives. There is a divine assignment with your name on it that loneliness is not able to erase. While you are feeling alone, you can either alienate yourself—or you can fulfill the plan of God for your life.

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Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. Carol has written 11 books, including *Significant*, *StormProof* and *Guide Your Mind*, *Guard Your Heart*, *Grace Your Tongue*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the *Telly Award*, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.

Korean Revivalist: Bob Jones' 'New Breed' Prophecy Coming to Pass

On the eighth day of a 21-day revival at his church a few years ago, God began to speak to Korean pastor Ben Lim about a "new breed" of believers and a new company of prophetic evangelists that the world has rarely seen.

These younger generation believers, Kim says, will bring a fresh fire to the kingdom and will walk in God's glory and power to help spark an awakening that the world sorely needs in this day and time.

Lim is the senior pastor of His Way of Life church in Koreatown in Los Angeles and has ministered in 20 countries over the past seven years, preaching the gospel to the unreached Muslim population in the mission fields of Southeast Asia.

"It was incredible that on the eighth day of that revival—and you know in Hebrew the number eight means 'new beginnings'—that the Lord spoke and told me that there will be young people rise up who are hungry for more of God, ones that are walking in holiness and zeal and in the power of the God," Lim told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"I believe that God still has a great divine purpose for Baby Boomers. But in the last two years, things have been shifting more to a millennial focus and even to Gen Z. I'm really excited how God is shifting things. God is bringing in a lot of the young, mighty men of valor, like the ones that surrounded King David. And this is a season for the young and old to rise again."

Not surprisingly, the enemy rose up to try and stop Lim's efforts and the message he received from God during that revival, but to no avail.

"People were angry, frustrated and demons were manifesting," Lim said. "There were angry, religious spirits that showed up, but God showed up every day in an unusual way. People watched live on Facebook from Canada to Singapore, and they were having the same encounters we were having. People were getting dreams and visitations. So it spread like wildfire. I believe that the impartation we received during that revival is simply a confirmation of what the late great prophet Bob Jones prophesied many years ago about a new breed."

For more of Ben Lim's message about the new breed of believers, listen to the entire podcast.

Max Lucado: God's Ultimate Answer to Human Suffering

The questions are familiar ones for bestselling author and pastor Max Lucado: "Why Christianity, and what is so different about Jesus?" And they're ones Lucado will answer gladly and with joy in his heart every time.

"Christianity is Christ, the person of Christ, the expression of Christ," Lucado told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "I want to help people understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

"Who would have ever imagined that God would become a human being, that He would reveal Himself to us? Not in some image

or prophecy or not in some delivered book, which He does many times, but that He would reveal Himself in the person of a person, to walk the planet Earth with us so that once and for all, we would know the heart of God? I mean, how gracious of our Lord to do this!

“I believe every generation needs to be reintroduced to Jesus Christ, especially in this day and age where there is so much transition, so much anxiety in the world. In the Bible, God’s ultimate answer to the question of human suffering and struggle is Jesus Christ.

“Because in Jesus Christ, we see a God who understands, who gets us, who has been here. But we also see a God who came to save us and redeem us. He gives us a reason to say, ‘Life is difficult, but it won’t stay this way forever.’ I don’t know any greater answer to the condition of humanity than the message of the accomplishment of Jesus Christ.”

✖ For more of Max Lucado’s message on the uniqueness of Christ, listen to the entire podcast.

Many Believers Can’t Comprehend This Characteristic of God

I recently spoke to a group of people when I made the statement: “G-D is G-D of love; He is also a G-D of judgment.”

One of the hardest concepts for people to comprehend is that G-D can both love and judge at the exact same time. All of His judgments are made through love and, in His judgments, He is demonstrating His great love for his creation.

Once we begin to understand that G-D's judgments are a demonstration of His love, we begin to realize that a large portion of the Bible, both Tanakh (Old Testament) and Brit Chadasha (New Testament), was written to help us understand this concept.

For instance, Exodus 21:1 (TLV) says, "Now these are the ordinances which you will set before them."

The word translated "ordinances" in this text is the Hebrew word *מִשְׁפָּטִים* (*Mishpatim*), which means "judgments." When we keep the text in context, everything that follows Exodus 21:1 is a list of judgments that G-D lovingly put in place for Israel. G-D didn't provide this list of judgments because He wanted Israel to have Hebrew slavery (Ex 21:2-11), murders (Ex 21:12-14), children cursing their parents (Ex 21:15), assaults (Ex 21:18-21), infanticide (Ex 21:22-24), and the list goes on.

G-D didn't provide these laws because He was hoping these activities would become a normal part of Israel. We know this because His Word tells us that, if Israel listened to His voice and obeyed His commandments, they would be prosperous and blessed in every possible way.

So, these chapters in Exodus were written by G-D through Moses' hand in the form of "ifs," not "whens." "If" you fail to hear My voice and obey My commandments, then these are My judgments that you must obey.

For those of you who are a little averse to "Old Testament laws," simply turn in your Bible to Colossians 3:18-25 (as well as other places), and you will find similar instructions provided in the New Testament.

These were G-D's preestablished judgments provided for Israel so that if Israel fell into sin, there were clear instructions provided for them to obey to make sure they didn't add sin to sin. Every one of these preestablished judgments demonstrates G-D's love for His people.

If you are still having a little difficulty understanding the concept of these judgments, please stop for just a moment and remember that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Before man was formed from the earth, G-D provided a preestablished judgment for sin that would allow for man's restoration: the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua.

G-D didn't preordain that man must sin. G-D did, however, preordain the judgement for sin "if" man would sin. G-D loves you and me so much that He provided judgment even before man was created. {eo}

Eric Tokajer is author of *With Me in Paradise, Transient Singularity, OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry, #ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians and Galatians in Context.*

Former Yoga Guru: How Twisting the Golden Rule Can

Lead to the Demonic

A former yoga guru, author and pastor Mike Shreve used to believe all religions were a legitimate path to the same place—God. He used to teach that the Golden Rule was found in the Scripture base of religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and even Islam, and taught against the exclusivity of Jesus and the uniqueness of the Christian message.

Since becoming a Christian, however, Shreve has become enlightened to the truth of God's Word, the true nature of salvation and the destiny of the universe. In essence, the only way to get to God is through the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Exposing other religions' deception is the foundation of his podcast, *Revealing the True Light*, on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"Religions take so many different routes and promote so many different ideas that cannot be reconciled to each other," Shreve told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast. "Yes, there are major commonalities among most positive religious expressions in the world. However, those commonalities are almost always at the base of religious expression and usually deal with character issues like the Golden Rule or kindness or forgiveness.

"There are many good Buddhists and good Hindus and good Muslims who live or attempt to live a moral life. They believe in certain fundamental principles that are character-building ideas. That's one reason that you find the Golden Rule in all religions because it is truth filtering through in a very subtle way through the vehicle of conscience. And that's a very dim light compared to the light of the gospel. It illuminates the minds of those who are receptive to a certain degree, but certainly not enough to be saved.

“A guru within the framework of Hinduism is supposed to be a teacher who brings you out of darkness into light. But when I was teaching it, the huge problem was, I was not in the light yet, and I didn’t realize it. I thought I was helping people. I was in a world where there would be demonic influence in my life, which I now recognize that it definitely happened. .

“The exercises in yoga—breathing and physical exercises—were designed to open something that they call ‘chakras’ to awaken something they call ‘Kundalini.’ ... That’s imaginary. ... It’s all veiled language that really has something very demonic at its core. A lot of people—Christian mothers and fathers even—are influenced by the subtle, deceiving spirits that just move over them into a worldview that is absolutely nonbiblical.”

For more about Mike Shreve’s teaching and ministry, listen to the entire podcast. And tune into *Revealing the True Light* on .

How Fasting Can Cleanse Toxic Emotions

Fasting has many health benefits. But did you know fasting can cleanse toxic emotions and bring deliverance to your soul?

In this video, Jennifer LeClaire inspires you with truth that could very well set you free and help you walk in newness of life.

This Daily Spiritual Discipline Will Transform Your Walk With Christ

Of all of the disciplines in my life, there is one that is more stabilizing, fortifying and invigorating than all the others combined.

I have learned over the years the importance of eating in a healthy manner on a daily basis, of incorporating a moderate amount of exercise into my busy life and even of making my bed every morning. However, it is none of those disciplines to which I am referring as the pivotal and premiere one.

Discipline has never come naturally to me, nor has it been reflexive. I often give in to my fleeting feelings rather than allowing the knowledge of what is best for me to have the final say in my daily decisions. As the years have gone by, and I have realized the value of focused discipline, although it is still not easy for me, I humbly admit this truth: Discipline is worth the dying to self, the seeming inconvenience and the momentary discomfort. Discipline is worth it.

“On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.” (1 Tim. 4:7b- 8, NASB).

In my faith walk, I have determined that “discipline” is a joyful word, not a word to be dreaded. The disciplines that are connected to my relationship with Christ, such as fasting,

tithing and praying, are a direct avenue to joy and to abundant living. When these dynamic disciplines become an intricate part of one's life, they become a precious "want-to" not an abhorrent "have-to."

The one discipline in my life that bears the loveliest and most nutritious fruit has been my daily decision to read my Bible. I was raised in the home of a general of the faith, and often in the early morning hours, I would sneak downstairs to find my father at the kitchen table with his Bible open before him. As I settled my sleepy self beside him, he would write out a Scripture verse for me to read and memorize.

Every Saturday evening, my father wrote a new Bible verse on the blackboard in our kitchen that we talked about during dinner and made it our goal to commit it to memory that week.

My father was the godliest man I have ever known, and I believe that his life of integrity, peace and wisdom was cultivated by a daily commitment to spending time in the active Word of God. Although you have never heard my father's name mentioned with the giants of the faith, he was a man of enormous impact who left a sterling legacy.

I learned from his example to treasure the moments spent on the sacred pages of Scripture. My heart was turned toward godliness and faithfulness as I memorized verses through my childhood and teenage years. My father taught me to dig for gold in every book of the Bible, in every chapter and in every verse.

Now, as an adult, as I awake in the early morning of a new day, the first thing I reach for is my Bible. There are mornings when I can't wait to get out of bed in order to partake of eternity on the written page. There are other mornings when I wish I could stay in bed just a little longer, check the email that seems pressing or turn on the morning news first. However, I make a better choice as I snuggle into

Scripture and solidify my friendship with the one who created me.

Of all of the disciplines in my life, there is one that is more stabilizing, fortifying and invigorating than all the others combined. This joyful and life-changing discipline is found in reading my Bible every day. {eo}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. Carol has written 11 books, including *Significant*, *StormProof* and *Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.