

Give Up

Ready:

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” - 1 John 3:16 (NIV)

Set

Just give up. There is incredible power in giving up. In fact, it should become a daily practice for all of us. If more athletes and coaches would give up, the sports world would be better off.

OK, maybe you don't agree with me so far. You probably think I'm crazy. But I'm not talking about giving up as in quitting. I'm talking about giving up our rights and control and surrendering them to the Lord.

You see, God hates the “quitting-giving-up,” but He loves the “surrender-giving-up.” What does God truly want most from us? For us to give up our lives for the sake of His Kingdom. Our whole life, we are taught to hold on tight to what we have earned, to protect and defend what is ours and not let people take advantage of us.

Oswald Chambers states it with painful clarity: “Every time I insist upon my rights, I hurt the Son of God. The disciple realizes that it is his Lord's honor that is at stake in his life, not his own honor.” This truth is simple, but hard. God's honor or self-honor? Jesus gave us the perfect example of laying down His life on the cross, and we should lay down our lives as living sacrifices, not just for Jesus but also for others. We might freely lay down our lives for our Savior, but we often kick and scream when we have to give up for other people.

As true competitors, we need to die to ourselves and lay aside our rights. Once we figure out that we have to die to ourselves daily (not just when we give our life to Christ for the first time), we begin the journey of being yoked with Jesus Himself. It is the biblical principle of taking up the cross daily.

Paul says in Romans 12 that we must become a living sacrifice. Dead sacrifices don't crawl off the altar like living ones do. Our tendency is to make every excuse why we should not give up and surrender our lives on a daily basis. Giving up requires letting go. You cannot hold on and give up. We struggle living the Christian life by refusing to let go of certain things. But freedom in Christ does not come by holding on, but by letting go. Giving up should not only mark us as individuals, but become a part of who we are when it comes to our sports teams, families, churches, ministries, organizations and businesses.

True partnership is when God's Kingdom comes together to transform vision into reality. It is when one ministry teams up with another ministry to accomplish something greater than they

would on their own. Yes, one group could do a lot without others. Yes, teamwork is much harder. Yes, groups have trouble seeing eye-to-eye. But when you do Kingdom work by giving up and joining together, the reward is great. When the body of Christ joins together, it fires up the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, yes, the nature of Christ is demonstrated in a real, tangible way to a lost world when we give up, unite together and do the work of the Kingdom. It's time to give up. Surrender today and see what God will do with your life. You will become the channel for God's greatest work.

Go

1. Why is it so hard for you to give up?
2. Why do we insist on claiming our rights? Where does that message come from? How did you respond to Oswald Chambers quote?
3. What does it look like to give up on your team, the way God desires? What would happen to your team?
4. Why is God pleased when we partner with others to do His work?

Workout

John 15:12-13 2 Corinthians 6:14 Galatians 1:10

Overtime

“Lord Jesus, I ask for the power to give up. But I don't want to be a ‘quitter,’ but a ‘surrenderer’ who desires to do Your will. I insist too much upon my rights, and it hurts You. Forgive me, Jesus. Show me ways I can partner with others. Bring people and groups into my life so that I can be a part of something much greater than my own effort. I want to be Your channel of blessing. In Your name I pray. Amen.”

Bible Reference:

1 John 3



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