

Don't
Give
Up !!

A Devotional
from the  of Lara Love
& Walk by Faith Ministry

Dear Friend,

I have yet to meet anybody who has not at some point in his or her life considered giving up on something or on someone or even on himself or herself or most importantly on God. Some have given up; others have been tempted to give up. Everyone, it seems, at one point or another faces the challenge to endure when nothing seems more tempting than to throw in the towel and give up.

Given the dire straits this world is in now, and the countless trials, tribulations, and temptations people face daily worldwide, many of which are greater than ever before, it seems that now is a more important time than ever to receive the love, teaching, encouragement, and inspiration to persevere rather than to give up.

May this little devotional you hold in your hands help you to stand strong and to press forward instead of giving up no matter what you may face when you are tempted to quit rather than to press on.

With God's love for you, **Lara**

“Statistics are against you,” a woman told me decades ago after she had pulled me aside after our recovery group had finished meeting. “Given your story,” she essentially said, “Statistics say that you will never have a normal, healthy, productive, fulfilling life.”

I felt like I had been given a death sentence, and this woman was not alone through the years in pronouncing such a verdict on my life. I should not have been surprised, of course.

Childhood sexual abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcoholism, anorexia, self-mutilation, nearly two decades of suicidal thoughts, two decisions to kill myself, debilitating depression, horrible anxiety, hospitals, psychiatrists, psychologists, recovery groups, medications, welfare, food stamps, charity care, long-term disability, abandonment by my family when I confronted the perpetrator of the sexual abuse, abandonment by two husbands, countless losses of loved ones and my beloved dogs, and the list goes on. Sure, statistics were against me. Talk about the temptation to give up.

For decades, it seemed I could think of not too much else besides my challenges and how desperately I was tempted to call it quits – on my very life, on myself, on

others, on my dreams, on just about anything and everyone, including God when I finally came to know Him.

But I persevered, and today I am a love-filled, faith-filled, joy-filled, hope-filled, satisfied woman of God who finally learned that no matter the statistics against me, I can find all that I need and desire in the Lord, in my relationship with Him, and in His Word, the Bible.

It would be impossible for me to count how many times I wanted to give up during my most challenging years. Nor can I count how many times I did give up on something or someone as I battled my way through all the “statistics” against me. Looking back, the “death sentence” imposed on my life came long before that woman drew me aside with her discouraging opinion.

A loved one had told me numerous times while I was growing up that I was a “quitter”. While I admittedly did struggle at times with quitting stuff perhaps I should not have quit, rest assured being called a quitter was probably the last thing in the world I needed. Love and encouragement would probably have gone a much longer way in helping me, and I am sad to say that countless times throughout my life I have been a discouragement to others with my own criticism,

judgment, and condemnation. The Lord had to get a real strong hold of my heart to show me this, and to help me to see this needed to change.

I have been on both the receiving end and the giving end of discouraging words, and thank God I have learned that what we all need is not to be beaten over the head with our faults but to be encouraged to believe in the Lord, to follow Him, and to persevere rather than give up.

I wish I could say that the temptation to give up ended when by God's grace alone I came to the other side of my most challenging years. But this is simply not the case. For one, my peace and joy today do not come because I have an easy and fun life. My circumstances remain hard in numerous ways, to be perfectly frank.

Thankfully, because of my strong relationship with God, I no longer spend my time contemplating suicide. But as any human does, I face my own challenging circumstances coupled with the temptation I believe we all face from time to time to give up on something or someone that or who just doesn't seem or feel or appear to be worth pressing forward with. God calls us in the Bible, however, not to live our lives according to what

we see and feel, but to live according to faith in Him. We are called to “walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).”

Day by day, I am learning to persevere rather than to quit. And I believe the lessons and the Bible Truth that help me to endure are what we all need to move ahead step by step rather than to quit.

I like to remind people that truly repenting of our sins and sincerely believing that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and was raised from the dead is how we are saved from God’s wrath and promised everlasting life rather than eternity in hell and the lake of fire, BUT that this is only the beginning. God calls us not to just believe in Christ, but to follow Him by studying the Bible and learning to live according to the ways of the Lord instead of our own ways.

Believing in Christ as Lord is not a one-time event. We must continue to believe in Christ all the way until the end AND to truly put our trust in Him as Lord which means that we commit as best we can to yield our lives to God and to live in obedience to Him. Talk about endurance. Talk about the need to not give up.

Jesus Christ prophesied of the incredibly trying times the world is in right now, He warned of the false

teachers we must turn away from as we adhere to the Truth of the Lord and the Bible instead, and He was utterly clear that following Him would require endurance.

“Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. These are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

“And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matthew 24:5-13 underlining added).”

Who will be saved from God's wrath against humanity's sins and the resulting eternity in hell? Those

who endure! Not those who just declare their belief in an emotional one-time experience with the Lord. Clearly, we need to keep our faith in God no matter what, and we need to live according to His ways regardless of our trials and tribulations.

When my long-time pastor and father in Christ preached what would be his last sermon since that very night he closed his eyes, got under the covers, and went home to be with the Lord, he used a scripture that is near and dear to my heart. Pastor Freddie, who had commuted back and forth between inner city Savannah and Haiti to minister to those in exceeding need, had never let fatigue stop him from doing what God had called him to do. He could have quit at any time given the phenomenal challenges of the work that he did; he did not. He stood on the scripture I remember him using that last time he preached:

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:9).”

Have you ever grown so weary from a situation, or a relationship, or a challenge, or even from life overall, that you have felt you just don't have the strength to take another step? Have you ever been tempted to quit on a difficult marriage, to quit a job you are clear God

wanted you to take, to give up on a loved one who can't seem to break free from an addiction, to give up a dream you are certain God gave to you, to give up trying to stop smoking or losing the weight the doctor said you must lose, etc.?

Sometimes God does want us to give up something or someone. Sometimes we have taken on something that we come to realize is not His will, or perhaps that we knew all along would not be pleasing to Him and come to see we really must let go. Sometimes we do need to give up out of obedience to the Lord, but what about the times we are just plain old weary from trying to press forward in something we truly believe God has called us to? How do we get the strength to carry on?

The Bible says:

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:29-31).”

The word “wait” is translated from a Hebrew word that includes in its definition, “bind together, tarry,

expect, look, and patiently,” according to Strong’s concordance. In other words, we need to cleave to the Lord – to attach ourselves to Him.

How? We need to seek His face, pray, pour out our hearts to Him, study His Word, praise Him, spend time with Him, and listen to Him speak into our hearts. He will never speak against His own Word, so we need to study the Bible diligently and check anything we believe we hear from Him against His Word. Do you do this regularly? We should do this daily, as our relationship with God should be the number one priority in our lives.

Then, when we feel like giving up on something or someone, we can cleave all the more to the Lord and learn to rest in Him even as those voices might cry out to us, “quit, quit, quit.”

Have you ever heard those voices tell you to give up? Sometimes those voices are the people around you offering you words of discouragement. Sometimes the voice is your own flesh feeling like you just can’t stand another minute of how hard it is to press ahead. Sometimes it’s the world around you and all its temptations. Sometimes the voice is the devil himself screaming into your ear that it’s no use continuing; just

quit. Sometimes it's a combination of all of the above. No matter how hard those voices are working to tell you to give up, there is an answer I have found that always works when I use it.

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:5-6).”

In plain English, this means that we need to get rid of everything – those voices included – that goes against what the Bible says. Anything that goes against God's ways must be gotten rid of. But how? According to this verse, we have to take everything that comes against God and His ways captive. Imagine a police officer taking a criminal into captivity and making him comply with the law. We need to make what comes against God's Word submit to His Word. In essence, we need to choose God's Word over anything else.

When the devil came against Jesus Christ in the desert, Jesus responded by quoting scriptures from God's Word (Matthew 4:1-11). This is how He secured the victory against the devil's tactics. We need to do the

same. We must study the Bible regularly, and not merely rely on someone else teaching it to us once a week in church, so that we can stand strong on God's Truth.

On one of the extremely rare occasions I had a few suicidal thoughts after years of being free from them, the Lord put into my heart and used a woman to confirm this that I needed to stand on the scripture, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord (Psalm 118:17)." I stood on that Bible verse, and the devil took off running. I have had wonderful opportunities since that time to declare the works of God. The more we study the Bible, the closer we get to the Lord, the more we know His Truth, and the better able we are to find victory in His Word and to persevere no matter our challenges.

Whether the devil is screaming in our ear, the voices of the world are crying out at us to give up, or our flesh is telling us to throw in the towel, we need to stand firm and move forward with God's will for our lives no matter how much those voices try to get us to give up. But how can we stand when all we want to do sometimes is to crumple down to the ground, wave our fists in a temper tantrum, sob our hearts out, crawl under

the covers and never come out, go backwards instead of forwards, return to darkness instead of to stay in the light, and any other matter of quitting instead of walking forward? How can we stand?

We need to understand that when we repent of our sins and place our trust in Jesus as Lord, and commit to follow Him and God's ways instead of to continue in the dark and selfish ways of the world, the devil will wage an all-out war against us to try to get us to fall and to quit on following the Lord.

Many years ago, I skipped like an excited child into Pastor Freddie's office to brag to him about how I had learned from a new friend to "put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6:11)" every day. Pastor Freddie looked at me with all seriousness and said, "Would anyone walk into the middle of a major war and take off his armor at all?"

In other words, how foolish of me to believe that I should put on my spiritual armor every day. If I were wise, he wanted to point out to me, I would not ever take it off in the midst of the spiritual war in which I was now engaged as a follower of Christ.

Ephesians 6 is a wonderful, and well known, chapter in the Bible that teaches us what the full armor of God

actually is – and how to stand no matter what comes against us. I have heard it said that anytime the Bible repeats the same word over and over, we should pay extra close attention.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6:11-18);”

Those well-known scriptures make it perfectly clear – over and again – that we must stand.

When my paralyzed dog Miss Mercy, one of 17 mostly special needs and senior rescued dogs I had in my care at the time, spent a week in three separate vet clinics to help save her life because her spleen had split into two when she had been hit by a car 2.5 years earlier after which she was dumped in a shelter where she would probably have been euthanized, she had to be on an I.V. to provide the fluids necessary to help keep her alive.

The day she was discharged, a technician explained to me how to administer I.V. fluids at home if she needed them. The technician showed me how to use the clamp both to start the fluids – and to stop them.

Ephesians 6 explains that our sword is God's Word. I think of God's Word as like the fluids in an I.V., and we need to undo the clamp so that His life-giving Word flows through us to help us to learn, to grow, to be transformed, to be strong, to be able to resist the devil's attacks and to resist temptation, and to submit our lives to God as we learn to live according to His ways.

The world has perverted the meaning of meditation, getting it mixed up with false gods and false teaching.

But the actual Hebrew word translated into meditation in the Old Testament of the Bible includes in its definition to study, to ponder, and to utter, according to the Concordance.

The Bible says: “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Psalm 1:2-3).”

The Bible also says: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8).”

In other words, God calls us to meditate (to study, to think about, and to speak about) the Bible, and to obey what He teaches in the Bible. God’s Word, then, is like an I.V., and we need to study, to hear, and to do what His Word says.

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and

straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:23-25).”

I have persevered through countless challenges even while the devil screamed in my ear to quit, even when the world’s voices shouted at me that my life would be easier if I went back to a life riddled with sin, and while my own flesh wanted nothing more than to flat out quit. My belief in Jesus would not have been enough. I needed, and still need every day, the I.V. of God’s Word. Without the love, mercy, strength, and direction of God’s Word, and the power of His Spirit living in me, it would be far too easy for us to give up.

Through the years, I have periodically thought about people who are starving and dehydrated. Starvation and dehydration can cause delirium, and ultimately death. Those who are desperate for food and drink are likely to take whatever is handed to them just to get a bit of food or to get something to quench their thirst.

I believe that countless people who are going through phenomenal struggles in their lives will grab onto anything or anyone they possibly can to save them if

they are not grounded in faith in God, immersed in God's Word and a personal relationship with Him, and planted in the Body of Christ with other believers to love, help, and encourage them. They will even become delirious at times, choosing foolish and sometimes life-threatening actions because they are so desperate to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

When we are tormented with thoughts of giving up, we are highly susceptible to grabbing onto anything we think might have even the remotest possibility of helping us. But God tells us in His Word that we need to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and that only in Christ can our hunger fully be satisfied, our thirst truly be quenched, and our lives genuinely saved.

Jesus said: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6)."

He also said: "...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst (John 6:35)."

When we are struggling, when we are desperate, when we are in dire straits, when we are thinking of giving up on something or someone, we need to grab on and cry out to the only One who truly saves. Jesus Christ. We

need to cling to God, we need to dig deep into His Word, we need to hook ourselves up to the I.V. of His Word, and we need to take into us the life-giving, life-saving, and life-sustaining nourishment and fluids of His Word.

My ex-husband once laughingly said I should have an implant of the Bible. He never found me far away from the Bible. I had a Bible almost everywhere I went, and I still do. In fact, I now sleep with one beside me so it is ready for me to feed on at any time. And in some of my most challenging times, I will play the audio Bible on my computer for hours and hours at a time as I walk around the house attending to my work responsibilities.

Our vital need for God's Word should come as no surprise. Why? Because Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, who died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, in whom we must put our trust as Lord and follow after to be saved from God's wrath and to have eternal life with God in heaven, is the Word of God:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In

him was life; and the life was the light of men (1 John 1:4).”

I believe we have four choices when we are tempted to give up. First, we can give up. Second, we can pridefully look to ourselves to try to hang on. Third, we can desperately look to the world to try to help us not give up. Fourth, we can turn to the Lord, find strength in Him and in His Word, and press on.

I spent decades running to the world to try to save me. I looked to my addictions, to loved ones, to counselors, to recovery groups, to medications, to strangers, to men, to self-help books, to anything and everything I thought might help me to hang in there for even another minute.

While I am blessed that I did find some help from loved ones and professionals, for the most part I ended up with a big human bandage on top of my brokenness and a festering wound underneath it all. Only when the bandage was ripped off and I finally learned how to turn to the Lord and to His Word for help and healing, for love, strength, mercy, grace, courage, and for His Truth in its entirety, did I at long last learn how to endure and to step by step move forward in my life.

My trials are by no means over. Though I do not talk about them much of the time like I used to, some of

them are chronic. Some are enormously painful. Some I wonder at times if anyone would truly understand. But I know the answer. God does.

Giving up, however, is not a temptation merely for those with great challenges. And despite how great my challenges have been in my own life, I am well aware that they are truly nothing when compared with the trials faced by so much of this world. Even for those who do not necessarily face great struggles, giving up can still be a temptation.

No matter how great or small our challenges, no matter what struggles we might face or whether we feel we face no great struggles at all, we are all as humans faced with the challenge to persevere first and foremost in our faith in Christ and our relationship with God through Christ, and to endure in our day to day lives as we learn to walk with the Lord.

For those of us who do not yet know Him, who have not yet repented and placed their faith in Christ, the starting place is exactly that – to be born again and saved by repenting and believing in Christ.

Once born again and saved, we learn to walk with the Lord. And when the temptation comes to give up, we must choose not to. There were a few times through the

years, I was in so much pain and turmoil that I doubted the Lord, I doubted His love, and I doubted whether I really should continue to try to follow Him. Thankfully, rather than run away from Him, I did my best to run to Him, bringing my doubt and questions to Him and crying out to Him as I poured out my heart to Him.

The Bible is clear that there are some who will in fact turn away from the Lord. There is literally nothing more important than making a commitment and maintaining a commitment to believe in and to follow the Lord. Whether or not we choose to give up on anything or anyone else in our lives, the starting point when it comes to hanging in there, so to speak, is to carry on in our faith journey with Him.

One of the greatest tragedies, I believe, is how many people have a lukewarm relationship with the Lord. Imagine, then, what happens when the temptation comes to give up. Straddling the fence, having one foot in the world and another in the Bible, it is a dangerous and potentially deadly place to be.

If we are not strong in the Lord consistently, and do not continually invest our love and time and care into our relationship with Him and spend time regularly in His Word while learning to apply it to our lives,

Imagine what happens when trials come along. There is a much greater likelihood that out the door we may go.

Jesus gives a wake-up call to those of us who might be lukewarm in our relationship with God:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Revelation 3:15-16).”

Being tempted to give up is a wide open door to falling away – not merely falling into sin, as though that is not bad enough, but falling entirely away, and even permanently for some, from the Lord. The Bible warns against this.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (1 Timothy 4:1).”

When the temptation comes to fall into sin, or to fall away from God entirely, we need to remember this:

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:7).”

We need to make it through our trials to the other side, and it can be assuring to recognize that God is doing something in the midst of them.

Though I often could not see it at the time, some of the times I was most ready to give up were the seasons in my life when God was doing the greatest work inside of me so ultimately I would be better prepared and equipped for Him to work through me and so I would be refined in preparation to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

If I had thrown in the towel by giving up on God and walking away, or by giving up on myself and the dreams God had given me, or given up on the people in whose lives God wanted to use me to draw them to Himself, I would have missed amazing opportunities.

Holding on when we want to give up can be harder than imaginable, but God equips us to endure our trials — no matter how big or small. He also sends us help, though in the thick of our battles it can be hard to see at the time.

I can't count how many times I have cried out to the Lord in desperation, threatening aloud as I ranted and cried and even cursed and threw my tantrums though I

wish I had not acted in such ways, and accused God of not giving me the help I needed.

With an entire ministry in my heart and hands as an evangelist, author, and special needs & senior rescued dogs mom & caretaker on a bare-bones personal and ministry budget with no staff and virtually no regular volunteer help for years, I found myself crying out to the Lord countless times that I did not feel it was fair He did not give me the help I needed. Little did I know as I threatened to give up time after time that God was teaching me what help I truly needed.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help (Psalm 121:1).”

One of the biggest reasons I have wanted to give up so many times through the years was because I was hurt over the actions or inactions of people. Abused. Rejected. Abandoned. Betrayed. Let down. Broken promises. Broken relationships. Disappointments. The list goes on. I had the perfect excuse to give up on God, to give up on life, to give up on people, or so I thought.

But God wanted me, and God wants us, to place our trust in Him. He wants us to find love, peace, hope, satisfaction, joy, strength, mercy, dreams, plans, direction, fulfillment, etc., in Christ.

When we want to give up because we are discouraged, disappointed, depressed, dejected, hurt, worn out, etc., we should ask ourselves if we have fallen into such an abyss because we have placed our trust and expectations in ourselves and other humans instead of in Him. If we have, we need to seek the Lord's forgiveness and return our trust to where it belongs. Our faith needs to be in the Lord.

I am sad to say one of my biggest sins with which I struggled for decades was complaining. God warns against complaining in His Word when He speaks of the children of Israel after they were freed from bondage in Egypt:

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer (1 Corinthians 10:10).”

Instead of complaining, as the Bible instructs numerous times, we need to be thankful to God.

Over and over through the years, God has used people in my life to remind me to be grateful. So many times when I have wanted to give up, it was because my eyes and heart were focused on the negative. I refused to see all the amazing blessings right in front of me – the most important one being God almighty and an amazing,

ever-growing, ever-more intimate relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. A friend told me long ago of a scripture I could simply not believe until I saw it myself.

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; (Ephesians 5:20).”

How could I thank God *for* the hard stuff?

The Bible also says:

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thessalonians 5:18).”

How could I thank God *in* the hard stuff? The way I see it is that no matter what our challenges, no matter our circumstances, God sent His only begotten Son Christ to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that if we repent and put our trust in Jesus, we will be given a relationship with God and adopted into His family now and forever. This is not contingent on our life’s stories. It is contingent on Him. If we were never given another blessing, this one would be enough to warrant our thanksgiving for eternity.

Sometimes I have wanted to give up on something or someone because I have only seen the little picture. Someone once told me that God doesn’t just see the

little picture; He sees the whole picture. How many times have I wanted to quit because I couldn't see the outcome I wanted? God wants us to trust Him for His outcome. How often did I want to give up because I felt it was taking too long for someone, or something, to change, including myself? God has His timetable. It all comes down to trusting God, I came to find.

Too often, we want to give up because we are looking from our own, little human perspective. We cannot see, nor can we imagine, what God sees from His eternal perspective. We also need to understand that it is entirely possible we may never get the outcome we desire. A loved one may die. A relationship may fail. A spouse may never return but choose instead to divorce us. A child may never get free from drugs. A dog that ran away may get hit by a car.

If we put our trust in people and stuff and situations, and if we put our trust in the outcomes we want, we are setting ourselves up for incredible disappointment. And it is highly possible we will end up wanting to give up – and may even do just that.

I used to be obsessed with finding the right man to give me the love I wanted. I was on an endless roller coaster. I would literally contemplate suicide if the man

did not return my affections. I thought I knew what love was, and I was desperate to love somebody and to be loved. Left and right, I wanted to give up on life altogether. Why? Because my hope was in men. In humans. Fallible humans.

Whether we want to give up because we have placed our hope in the wrong person or thing, i.e. anything but in God, or we want to give up simply because our flesh can't stand the trials we face, or the hurt we experience in our situations, the antidote to wanting to give up is always the same.

I have yet to hear of a medical treatment that provides a 100% full-proof cure for every single sickness and disease on this earth. Yet when it comes to wanting to give up, no matter how small or large our reason may be, there is a 100% sure-proof cure. The answer is God through faith in Jesus the Christ.

A loved one told me long ago, "there is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God." How right he was. I just didn't understand it at the time. In fact, I ended up needing to be stripped of almost everything and everyone I held dear for a season of my life to realize something that to me was mind boggling.

Though I had been going to church just about every time the doors opened, going to prayer meetings and small groups and studying the Bible, hanging out with Christians, reading Christian books, and doing anything and everything Christian I could just about conceive of, I came to see after I was stripped and was crying out to the Lord what was missing at the very foundation of me.

Though I had faith in Christ as Lord, I had no real relationship with the Lord. I had a relationship with Christianity and things and people Christian. But not with God Himself.

My loved one had been right. I knew a heck of a lot about God. But I did not know Him intimately. I had been so hurt by life that I pretty much walked around my life with my arms crossed tightly over my chest, a big thick wall “protecting” me from the world so I wouldn’t be hurt any further. So sadly, I was also “protecting” myself unknowingly against God. I simply would not let Him wholly into my heart.

Persevering in my walk with the Lord instead of giving up no matter how many times I have been tempted to do just that has come more than anything else from what I now would describe as a rock solid

relationship with the Lord. Faith? Yes. But that is just the beginning.

I spend time with the Lord daily, I cry out to Him, I pour out my whole heart to Him, I ask Him questions, I seek His face, I pray, I study His Word diligently, I listen to Him speak through His Word and also speak directly into my heart and measure what I hear against the Word to make sure it is from Him since He never speaks against His own Word, I ask Him for help, I thank Him, I grow as He convicts me and chastens me and teaches me, I repent when I need to, and I fall ever more deeply in love with Him as He transforms my life and teaches me to walk according to His ways. The Lord through the years has taken me to a place of such love, surrender, and devotedness that I now live and breathe every breath to love and serve Him and to bring glory to His name! Oh, what joy!

This kind of intimate relationship with the Lord is available to us all through confession of Christ as Lord, belief that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9), and a life committed to following Him.

Don't give up. Repent. Believe in the Lord. Follow Him. Cleave to Him. Seek His face. Yield your life to Him. Hook yourself up to the I.V. of His Word. Commit

to live according to His ways. Don't give up. Hold on –
to Him and to His Word. “Endure unto the end
(Matthew 24:13).”



The Best Message in the Universe

Ever since the first man and woman Adam and Eve sinned against God and were kicked out of their perfect lives in the Garden of Eden and lost most importantly their relationship with God, all humans have been born into sin which results in the curse leading to death and eternal separation from God in hell and the lake of fire. Why? Because we as sinners cannot be in the presence of a perfect and holy God. We all fall short of God's glory, and nothing we can do can earn His love, forgiveness, and everlasting life.

But God loves us so much He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to the earth as a man, to die a heinous death on the cross to pay the death and hell penalty for our sins by taking God's wrath at us for our sins upon Himself, and to be raised from the dead and to now sit on the right hand of God in heaven until He returns again as the final steps unfold leading to His forever Kingdom of heaven that will be filled with Christ's followers. If we are genuinely sorry we have sinned against God and repent of our sins, believe Jesus is the Son of God and died for us and was raised from the dead and is Lord, turning from our sins to a life devoted

to God and His ways, we are forgiven and enter into a relationship with God and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven with Him! We are born again spiritually with a clean slate and saved from God's wrath, death, and hell and the lake of fire.

Belief in Christ as Lord is NOT an intellectual faith. Even the demons believe. True faith in Christ is an ongoing belief in Him, all that He is, did, is doing, says in the Bible, and a true trust in Him as Lord whereby we turn from our wicked ways and live according to the ways God teaches us in the Bible. We are not called to just believe in Christ in our minds. We are called to follow Him by yielding to God our very lives and demonstrating in our hearts, words, and actions that we have turned away from the ways of the world and turned to the Lord. We are to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him whereby we die to ourselves and live for Him. Countless people who believe they are going to heaven based on an intellectual belief, an emotional experience, church attendance, good works, etc., will be turned away by Christ and end up in hell and the lake of fire forever apart from God because they neglected to understand and put into practice that

believing in, and following, Christ is a WAY OF LIFE of living for God!

God commands us above all else to love Him with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 32:37-40). Once born again, we must go through a life-long sanctification process in which our minds are renewed by studying the Bible, our lives are transformed by God's Spirit, and we are conformed to Christ's image. Good works cannot earn our salvation, but good works should be the fruit of true repentance demonstrating we are truly living for the Lord. Our purpose is to love God, to love others, to proclaim the Gospel message to others and to help lead people into God's Kingdom as we follow Christ, using the gifts God has given each of us to bring Him glory while rejoicing in and enjoying forever fellowship with Him!

Spend time with the Lord daily, studying the Bible and learning to live by it, praising and worshiping Him, pouring out your heart to Him, praying and seeking His face, listening for His voice which will always line up with His Word, and loving and obeying and revering and fearing and honoring God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Assemble in fellowship with fellow followers of Christ as God commands us whether in a church, Bible study, and/or house church.

As the world draws to an end, and God's judgment nears, evil and false teaching abound. Check everything you hear and read against the Bible because God only and always speaks in line with His Word. Anything not in line with His Word is not from Him.

Live day by day, breath by breath, to love and serve the Lord with all your heart forever! Rejoice in Him! Grow in Him! Live to bring Him glory forevermore!



Scriptures

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:”
Romans 3:10

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Eph. 5:6

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Mt. 13:41-43

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:3-6

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10:9

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Colossians 1:13

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21



About Lara & Walk by Faith Ministry

I am a 100% Jewish follower of Christ, evangelist & author & special needs & senior rescued dogs caretaker devoted 24-7 to loving and serving the Lord and helping people to become and remain forever followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. For loads of love, encouragement, inspiration, and help, and to read my story & order my books, Gospel tracts & devotionals, & Daily Inspiration online & in print, and to meet the ministry's very special dogs, please visit my ministry online and feel free to get in touch:



Lara Love, Walk by Faith Ministry

PO Box M2 / 3715 Argent Blvd, Ridgeland, SC 29936

Phone: 843-338-2219 / love@walkbyfaithministry.com

www.walkbyfaithministry.com

all scriptures are from King James version unless otherwise noted.

Copyright 2016 Walk by Faith Ministry