

# Don't Quit

by Paul E. Hamilton

*"I can't impress this on you too strongly. God is looking over your shoulder. Christ himself is the Judge, with the final say on everyone, living and dead. He is about to break into the open with his rule, so proclaim the Message with intensity; keep on your watch. Challenge, warn, and urge your people. Don't ever quit. Just keep it simple. You're going to find that there will be times when people will have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food—catchy opinions that tickle their fancy. They'll turn their backs on truth and chase mirages. But you—keep your eye on what you're doing; accept the hard times along with the good; keep the Message alive; do a thorough job as God's servant."*

*- 2 Timothy 4:1-5*

I remember the first time I read that set of verses. It was many years ago and I was sitting in front of a fire place in a home we were renting. It was a very low point in my life. Things were not going well for me -- physically, spiritually, financially, emotionally, etc. I was at rock bottom in the darkest period of my life. I was alone, listening to some music, while staring into the fire. My Bible was sitting next to me and I opened it to 2 Timothy Chapter 4. Tears poured down my cheeks as I read those penetrating verses. It was then that I knew what God had created me to do and what His purpose was for my life. It was God's call on my life to be a minister. I wish I could tell you that things changed overnight and life was rosy and perfect ever since, but that would not be true. One thing is for certain through this whole journey, God's words to me on that day continue to ring in my ears. **DON'T EVER QUIT.**

Believe me when I tell you that I do feel like quitting some days. If you have been reading this newsletter for a while, you know the hard times we have been experiencing, trying to get our new ministry outreaches launched. It seems like every corner that I turn, there is a huge barrier standing in my way. Some people have suggested that we have obviously "missed God" in what we are trying to do, but I know deep in my heart of hearts that we have not. I heard someone say that if I ever "miss God", He's faithful to find me! Isn't that great news!! Every time I am tearfully praying to God for direction, His words to me are always the same. **DON'T EVER QUIT.** When I do feel like quitting, God always brings

me back to the lives of those who have served Him in the past. I am sure that Abraham wanted to quit waiting for a son of his own. I am sure that Noah wanted to quit building the ark while waiting for the ,first ever, rain to come. I am sure Moses wanted to quit and leave the complaining people of Israel in the desert while traveling to the Promised Land. Yet each time, God's message was the same. DON'T EVER QUIT.

I am sure someone reading this is saying "Paul, you don't understand. It is not that easy just to say - I'm not going to quit." Believe me, I know how you feel but listen closely to what I am about to say. Let's be honest, life is hard. We live in a world today that is no longer a Christian society. The numbers of people who are truly wanting to serve God and follow His true Wholistic Gospel are few. Just as the Apostle Paul said to Timothy, most people do not want Truth. They want to follow an easy gospel that pats them on the back and tells them that as long as their needs are being met, everything is good. They live on a diet of spiritual junk food, not on the meat of God's Word. There are a lot of churches in our nation today that are nothing but a Christian country club and their gates are shut to the "non-members". But the truth is, Jesus called us to go into the places where the lost and hurting are. He has called us to venture into the "smoking sections" of our world and find those who are in need of a Savior. Jesus Himself said "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite good people to be my followers. I came to invite sinners." (Mark 2:17, Contemporary English Version)

So, what should you do? You can take the verses that Paul wrote to Timothy listed above and break them down into helpful steps. First, "keep your eye on what you're doing". One of the quickest ways for me to start down the slippery slope of depression and quitting is to not pay attention to what I am doing. It is very easy to grow complacent and lazy when things are not going well. It is easy to get off track and become distracted by other things I have to keep my eye on the goal that Christ has set before me. I have to be a good steward of my time, something that I struggle with sometimes, and make sure things are getting done. I also need to keep an eye on my attitude which directly ties into step two. "Accept the hard times along with the good." As I have already stated, life is hard. Problems will always come and nothing will ever go perfectly till we are with God in Heaven. Till then, we have to deal with what comes our way. The good thing about Paul's statement to Timothy here is the last part; "along with the good." Hard times are going to come, and come, and come, and come, but good times will come as well. We have to learn to

cherish those good times. Don't let them slip by you unnoticed. It could be the comforting words of a friend, the loving hug of someone you care for, or even the laugh of a child. Sometimes, the most cherished thing in our home is laughter. I could not begin to tell you the silly things or jokes that come out of my kids. There is always someone who has something funny to say in our home and those times of laughter, as a family, help us to accept the hard times that come our way.

Thirdly, "keep the Message alive". Anything that is alive needs attention. This summer, Jamie and I grew herbs and cucumbers in our backyard. Each day, they needed to be watered and tended to. When it was time, we had a wonderful harvest. The same thing could be said for the Message of Jesus in your life. You have to tend to it each day. I know this sounds like a cliché, but we have to find time to cultivate our relationship with God. My relationship with Jamie requires that I devote time and effort to maintain it, well, so does a relationship with God. It is a living thing that needs attention to grow, and the benefits of a healthy relationship are worth it.

Lastly, "do a thorough job as God's servant". God has a purpose for each of us. Not everyone is called to be a minister, but we are all called to be a servant of God. Each of us needs to help those in need. God requires more from us than just showing up at church on Sunday morning and participating in a church service. He expects each of us to "do a thorough job" and get our hands dirty in the world. Just as Jesus said, we need to go to those who are down and out. Nothing makes you feel better about your life than helping someone who is worse off than yourself. It is very rewarding and reminds us: DON'T EVER QUIT.