

Do Something Great With Your Life

On Those Days When You Feel Like Giving Up

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

All right, good morning, men. Please turn in your bibles to 1 Peter 5:6. Here's the deal. We're at a series, **Do Something Great With Your Life**. Part of doing something great with your life has to do with figuring out how to keep your composure and stay the course when things aren't going the way that you want them to do. We're going to look at that this morning and how you can keep yourself on track a little bit. We're going to start though with some shout-outs.

Today is, I'm going to say figuratively, roughly, but anyway, today we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of doing shout-outs, weekly shout-outs. We're going to go back into the archives and give a shout-out to an existing group that started with us on the video bible study in 2002.

They are still going strong. They're 12 men. They meet on Fridays with us at 6:30 a.m., the Shoreline Community Church at Akron, Ohio. Dr. Scott Campbell, pastor there, is the leader of the group. From their website, it says, "It's a time for men to share their hearts in a safe, confidential environment and pray together concerning spiritual issues that men face in the world today." What a great description for our study. Oh, you are part of our study, so we want to give you a shout-out and thank-you and you're the ones we want to celebrate the 10-year anniversary with, so would you join me in giving a very warm and rousing welcome to men at Shoreline. One, two, three, oorah. So honored to have you as part of the group. By the way, if you are a group out there and we haven't given you a shout-out before, we'd love to hear from you. Send me an email, Patrick Morley, maninthemirror.org, and we'll get one out to you.

Oh, and we have some really good shout-outs coming up too. We've got a series of, so the Asian ministry has been exploding. We now have groups, and I think I've got this right, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Indonesia, India, is Jakarta in one of those places? Anyway, and they just opened the Philippines last week, and so we're going to start doing some shout-outs to them as well.

Then there's another shout-out here today to our regional director in Arizona, Mike Grimm. Usually, I cut down these paragraphs that they send in, but I just couldn't figure out where to cut this one, so I'm going to read you the whole thing. "For years, I saw men who had a deep faith, but I didn't know how to get there myself. God directed me to a man who disciplined me, and it changed my life. I believe men desire the life God calls us to, but they need another man or group of men to help them get there."

Wow, this is just really beautifully said. Mike is a ... has a number of area directors under him. I wonder if you'd join me in giving Mike Grimm a very warm Man in the Mirror. Welcome this morning. One, two, three, oorah. Mike, thank you for your passion to see men, know God, and become disciples of Jesus.

To the topic today, **On Those Days When You Feel Like Giving Up**. We want to look at God's plan today for helping you to get through whatever you feel like is holding you back. When I was in business, about one day a week, I would feel like giving up. If somebody would've come along and offered me a dime, I

would give them everything I had just to get out of it, but now that I'm in ministry, I don't feel that way anymore. Now that's two days a week, so.

IT'S NOT JUST THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS WOUNDED, BUT WE ARE WOUNDED TOO

Life is hard, and it's not just that everyone is willing to, which we talked about last time if you were part of this sitting last week, it's not just that everyone else is wounded, but we are wounded too. This has become a very fascinating part of my own life because my calling is to take God's message of love to a broken generation, so for whatever reason God has continued to put into my life on a regular basis every day, I usually get the men who are wounded or the men who are broken or the men who do feel like giving up.

So I actually wrote a book seven years ago called *Man Alive* where we took a look at the different inner aches and pains that men are experiencing, you've heard me say these before, the seven inner aches and pains that I've noticed that men will say, "I just feel like I'm in this alone," "I don't feel like God cares about me, personally," "I don't feel like my life has a purpose. It feels random," "I have these destructive behaviors that keep dragging me back down," "My soul feels dry," "My most important relationships, they're not healthy," and then finally, "I don't really feel like I'm doing anything that's going to make a difference and leave the world a better place."

Seven years ago ... I read the Bible through every year for 30 years. Last year, I read the gospels through because of Don here, once a month, so 12 times through the gospels last year, and for these last seven years, I have had my antenna especially up looking for verses that have to do with the men who feel like giving up and, in many cases, have given up. I've had a special interest in men who, for whatever reason, are so in despair that they have walked away from their faith or they're filled with doubts about their faith, and so for these last seven years, I have been, every time I've read a verse in the Bible that has anything to do with the subject, I have copied and pasted it into a Word file, a Word document file.

I have in my file so many different verses, and just a few of them, "A bruised reed he will not crush. A smoldering wick he will not snuff out. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. I will never leave you or forsake you. All those the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never drive away." Jesus said Scripture about these verses, Scripture cannot be set aside. Jesus said, "My words will never pass away." The angel speaking to Mary said, "For no word from God will ever fail."

Yet, we saw in the scriptures, we have seen in the scriptures, perhaps you've seen this in the scriptures that Jesus told Peter, "Satan has asked to sift you like wheat." He told Peter, "Before the cock crows, you're going to deny three times that you even know me." What happened? Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus. The cock crowed. Jesus looked at Peter, and what did Peter do? He went outside and wept bitterly, the pressure, the pressure to give up. But he said, "Don't worry, Peter, because I have prayed for you, and when you come back, help restore your brothers."

Then we know from Scripture that Jesus predicted that "in my hour of despair, all of you are going to desert me." In the garden, what happened? All the disciples, our model group, Peter and the others, our model group, what did they do? They deserted Jesus, and they fled. Everybody comes under pressure to give up. Everybody does.

What I want us to see this morning, though, the center of gravity of these texts that I just mentioned, really, the center of gravity of the teachings, there's the proclamation of the Gospel, and then there's the teachings of how we live, so with regard to the teachings of how we live, I believe that the nexus, the center of gravity for that is the Big Idea that I'm about to show you. Of all the Big Ideas I've shown in a long, long time, I have a degree of certainty about this statement that is unparalleled. The Big Idea today is this: **Even if you do give up on Jesus, He will never give up on you.** The Big Idea today. **Even if you do give up on Jesus, He will never give up on you.** He did not give up on Peter. He did not give up on the disciples. He does not give up on a bettered reed. He does not give up on a smoldering wick.

Why this is so important for us is that if you believe the scriptures are true that you can have confidence that even if you do give up on Jesus, he's not going to give up on you. What this does is that this gives us the ability to face the adversities, the troubles, the blockages, the things that do make us feel like we want to give up and understand that no matter how bad it gets, Jesus is not going to give up on us.

HOW DO WE KEEP OUR COMPOSURE AND STAY THE COURSE?

If this is true, if this is true, then what is the question we should be asking ourselves? One of the questions we should be asking ourselves, the way I would say it, is this. How do we keep our composure and stay the course, given that even when we do or if we do give up on Jesus, he will never give up on us. Given that, how do we keep our composure and stay the course? For this, I want us to turn to 1 Peter 5:6. Hopefully, you're already there. I am not, so give me a moment.

First, the situation that called this text into existence. In the Greco-Roman world, there was severe persecution of Christians, and so Peter is writing to Christians throughout this Greco-Roman world who are suffering, who are staggering around, who are basically having days like we were talking about here where they might want to give up, and here is his advice to them. Here is his advice to us. We're just talking here before, a couple of us, before the meeting. Isn't that ironic how a book that's 10 years old, we think, "Oh, well, that's an old book." Here we are, we're studying a book that's 2,000 years old that's as relevant today as it was then.

Peter writes, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand." Why? Why do we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand? Because even if you do give up on Jesus, he will never give up on you. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time."

Now, there are four things we're going to look at in this text. The first one is, there are kind of like the responses of how we, or the ways that we can keep our composure and stay the course. The first one is humble ourselves. The first way we keep our composure is we humble ourselves. Why do we do that? Because under God's mighty hand, He is going to lift us up in due time. How do we humble ourselves before God? We bring ourselves into the presence of the Almighty, and we bow down, and we worship Him, and we remind ourselves that He is the Creator, we are the creature, and He is the One who is going to lift us up.

We don't have to worry about lifting our own selves up. Because of His grace, His mercy, His love, His kindness, His gentleness, God has never let ... Well, I don't think I can say what I was just going to say. Humble yourself. That's the first thing we can do, but this should be understand that this is not some self-willed effort that we do. It's basically rather bring yourselves into the presence of God and just understanding that we really don't have the power, the strength that we need, and we're going to turn to Him in humility so that He can lift us up in due time.

Number two, Verse 7, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." That's the second way we can keep our composure and stay the course. Cast our anxiety on Him. Why do we cast our anxiety on Him? Because He cares for you. Well, how do we do that? If we humble ourselves by worshiping God, we cast our anxiety on Him. How? How does Scripture encourage us to cast our anxiety on God? Be anxious for nothing but what? "In everything with- ... prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will keep your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus." He's given us a tool here to keep our composure, stay the course when we sense anxiety, and that is to pray. We humble ourselves by worshiping. We cast our anxiety through prayer.

Oh, I just remembered. I don't very often read out of a commentary, but there is something that I read in the New American Commentary that is really, really worth passing along to you with this idea, anxiety or worry that comes, fear, whatever. Worry is a form of pride because when believers are filled with anxiety, they are convinced that they must solve all the problems in their lives in their own strength. The only ... When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in His mighty hand, acknowledging that He is the Lord in sovereign over all of life. As one writer says, "Affliction either drives one into the arms of God or severs one from God."

But just this whole idea, think about that, I had not really thought about that before, that worry is a form of pride because I'm worried because I'm the person who has to solve this. No, you're not the person that has to solve this. The Scripture says, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." It's not "cast all your anxiety on Him so that He can give the power and your own strength to resolve that." No. He's the one that cares for you. Humble yourselves. Cast all your anxiety to Him.

Number three, be alert and of sober mind. Why? Because your enemy, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. How do we do that? How do we stay alert and be of sober mind? Well, you've heard me use this illustration before, perhaps, when you watch a National Geographic special about life on the Serengeti and you watch the lion stalking the herd, the lion never goes after the herd. Who does the lion go after? The weak one. The one that has become separated from the group, the one that's isolated from the group. When the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, if you guys are in a group, he's not looking for you. He's looking for you. Have you guys ... You're sitting by yourself here today, Reggie.

The Scripture says, again, "Be alert and of sober mind." How do you do that? You do that in a group. Do I have enough time to do this? What time is it? 7:20? Yeah, I got enough to do it. This is the new book, the Christian Man, that's not out yet, but this is like an advanced reading copy. In the chapter on friendships, I really set this problem up much better than I have here this morning for those days when you feel like giving up. This is the problem that friendships and small groups help solve.

"The fallen world is an ever-sleeping juggernaut that relentlessly crushes everything in its path without pity: our dreams, our plans, and our relationships. We fight back, but eventually, the accumulation of thousands of unfair and unjust criticisms, insults, accusations, rejections, slights, innuendos, disrespect, gossip, bullying, getting overlooked, feeling kicked to the curb, being denied access, getting ambushed, being undervalued, and getting thrown under the bus takes a toll. We tire of the snarky, lusty, rude, crude, coarse, envious, jealous, arrogant, and pretentious comments that people make.

"The disgraceful, greed, unethical, and illegal behavior of others staggers our sensibilities. The endless onslaught of of trials, temptations, sins, errors in judgment and failures, where is this now? It adds up.

At a point without some outside help, it all just gets to be too much. We despair over the evil we see that people are capable of inflicting on each other. Our faith in humanity is gutted. We become fragile, easily offended, lose our resilience, composure. Hope fades away. Bitterness crushes what little happiness our hearts were holding on to. Our wheels get broken. We are prone to withdraw, even if we keep up our daily routines. Despair sets in." Watch this. "We isolate ourselves from our friends. God has given us a resource to keep our composure, stay the course: our friends."

Then fourth, so we have humble yourself, stay alert and sober, resist. Did I get this right? No. Humble yourselves, cast all your anxiety on Him, be alert and of sober mind, and then number nine, resist him, meaning the enemy, standing firm in the faith because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

How do we do that? How do we do that? Well, again, the scriptures give us the answer. Put on the full armor of God. There's a spiritual world that is trying to overcome us, and in Ephesians 6, we're admonished to put on the whole armor of God, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the shield of faith, and all of these things.

These are the things that we do to cooperate, but these are not the things effect our ability to make it through. What helps us make it through is God Himself, and that's Verse 10. The God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered a little while will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. Through Him be the power forever and ever. This is why we say that the Big Idea today is: **Even if you do give up on Jesus, He will never give up on you.** At some point, if we do not grow weary in well-doing and give up, after a little while, after you suffer a little while, He Himself is going to restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast.

WILL THIS EVER END?

Then the big question, will this ever end, will this ever end? I just, it just ... The St. Johns River, which flows not too far to the east of where we're located here, for those of you online, it starts down at Indian River County, and the mouth of the river is up in Jacksonville, Florida. The early life of the river, the river is narrow, the water runs fast, but about halfway up to Jacksonville, all of those little droplets of water empty into a big lake we call Lake Monroe, and all of a sudden, the water loses its velocity, and it begins to spread out. Each little droplet just thinking, "What happened to me? I was getting along so great, and now here I'm over in this little side eddy swirling around, or I'm stick in the middle of the lake. It's not working out for me."

But here's the thing. Every droplet of water is inevitably going to come out of Lake Monroe because of the flow the water, and eventually, the riverbanks of the St. Johns River are going to regather all of that water, all those little drops of water, and because of the riverbanks, every droplet of water will regain velocity and direction.

That's the way we should be looking, I think, at the problems that we have that make us feel like giving up. Everybody gets stuck in the lake from time to time, but because God is good, He is coming along, and as the Scripture says, "After you have suffered a little while, He Himself will restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast." Whatever you're going through, whether it's by death or it's by human circumstance, the Lord is going to gather you back up again. The Big Idea today, **Even if you do give up on Jesus, He will never give up on you.** Make sense? All right. Let's pray.

Our dearest Father, this is just one of so many scriptures that really are all saying the same thing, and that is that, yes, we need to live by faith, but it's you, Lord, that are rescuing us, and this will end. Give us each the confidence, the faith, the trust in you to understand that you will never give up on us. I just pray that there would not be a single one of us that would ever, ever succumb to the idea that you would give up on us but rather that we would humble ourselves, that we would cast all anxiety on you, that we would stay alert and sober, and that we would resist the enemy. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.