

Never Give Up!  
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

*“A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with bricks others have thrown at him.”* David Brinkley, Journalist

In his youth, Winston Churchill attended Eton, an English school for boys. Later, when he became known as one of the world’s greatest orators, he was invited back to speak at his Alma Mater. The students were told to take notes because they would probably hear the greatest speech of their lives.

Churchill began by saying that he had been asked to speak on what he believed to be the secret of success. “Here it is in three words – never give up, never, never give up!” And then he sat down. With one sentence he electrified his audience. It was a message, short and sweet, and one those students should never forget.

Above all, I want this to be a message of encouragement. Perhaps in your life right now things are becoming quite rough and you want to quit. The physical, mental and moral pressures are too great. Perhaps you heard disappointing news. Nothing seems to work out. So now you’re ready to pull out or cave in. But, instead of throwing in the towel, why not follow Churchill’s advice.

Thomas Edison made over a 1000 tries before finding the right materials for the incandescent light bulb. However, he did not see them all as failures. Rather, with each attempt he gained information about what didn’t work, bringing him closer to a solution. He once said to some younger inventors, “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” In 2016, suppose the Patriots had given up in the closing moments, when they trailed by 25 points. They would have missed the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history.

Think of some of the people with whom Jesus came in contact who had made serious mistakes. Zaccheus made dishonest business transactions. Paul, before his conversion, was Christianity’s strongest antagonist. There are preachers standing behind pulpits today who were once far from God. There are excellent schoolteachers who were problem students a few years ago. But these individuals were big enough to admit their mistakes, smart enough to profit from them and strong enough to correct them. Three strikes and you’re out in the game of baseball; but in the game of life there is a remarkable difference. There, you are definitely not out until you stop trying.

Circumstances are often beyond our control, but we can choose the attitude we take toward them. Psychologist Victor Frankl believed, “The last of our human freedoms is to choose our attitude in any given circumstance.” He proved the truth of that conviction by surviving in a Nazi death camp.

So, no matter what happened to you yesterday, your attitude can determine how you act today. You can say with Paul, "*I can do everything God asks me to do with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power*" (Philippians 4:13 TLB).