

Don't Give Up!



March 4, 1993. Former North Carolina State basketball coach Jim Valvano (pictured above), whose life would be taken by cancer in less than two months, gave an inspirational speech in which he announced the formation of the Jimmy V Foundation for Cancer Research. Since that time, over \$80 million has been raised for cancer research under the motto, “Don’t give up, don’t ever give up!”

Isn’t that what our Lord says to us each day? Don’t give up, don’t ever give up! We are facing a battle of even greater significance and importance. Coach Valvano shared in his speech that cancer can’t touch my soul, but sin can! If a person dies without faith in Jesus as their Savior, their body and soul will spend eternity in hell, separated from God! With the “cure” in our possession, how can we ever think of giving up on sharing that cure—the precious Gospel—with those dying in sin?

Those attending the Iowa District West convention in June were met with an unusual site. Suspended around the Christian Life Center were “pipe cleaner people” such as the one pictured to the right.

Each of those “pipe cleaner people” represented one person whom a member of Iowa District West had on their heart and in their life; one person for whom that member was praying; one person who did not yet know Jesus as their Savior; one person to whom they might witness.

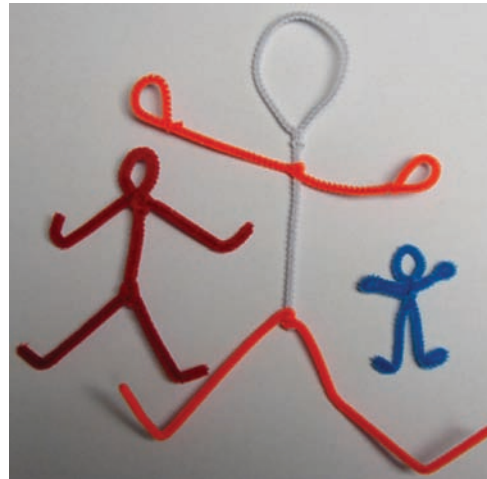
With 17,400 Iowans dying each year without knowing Jesus; 83 people in the world dying each minute without Jesus, can we even think of giving up?

If you’re like me, the temptation to do so is great. I like instant results and when I don’t see them, it’s easy to get discouraged. Yet God promises us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, know that

in the Lord your labor is not in vain!

At my former congregation, we had utilized the “pipe cleaner people” about five years ago. Recently a member shared with me the story about his “pipe cleaner person.” After repeated attempts to witness with no visible results, he was becoming discouraged. However, he recently met his “pipe cleaner person” and learned that not only was he attending worship regularly, but so was his formerly unbelieving spouse, two daughters, a grandchild, and even his ex-spouse—and they were all sitting in the same pew! As the member shared with me, It took five years, Pastor. Five years! Yet he didn’t give up and God continued to work through the Word that was shared. God be praised!

Whom has God placed in your life that doesn’t know Jesus? Perhaps it’s a family member, friend, co-worker, neighbor, or classmate. Let me challenge you to identify one person to whom you can witness. Then do the following:



Procure your own pipe cleaner person (if you don’t want to make your own, contact us for one left over from the convention).

Position it in a place where you will see it regularly.

Pray for an opportunity to witness, courage to seize it, the words to share, and for God to work in the person’s heart.

Personally witness to the difference God has made in your life and what He has done for you -- and them.

Whatever you do, Don’t give up, don’t ever give up!

Celebrating the Victory.

P.S. – I’d love to hear your story of how God helped you seize an opportunity to witness! Share it with me that I might share it with others as an example or encouragement. To God be the glory!



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