

DON'T EVER GIVE UP!



As many in the churches of Christ already know, the title and the picture above are from a book by Bob Spurlin. Bob was a preacher for nearly thirty years before multiple sclerosis forced him into retirement. He has been bedfast for many years, yet he continues to write and even preaches live on camera from his bed! Brother Spurlin is certainly qualified to write a book about never giving up since he has endured more than most of us will ever have to! His brother was murdered, and just after he was diagnosed with MS his 16 year-old daughter died in a traffic accident.

Life's problems will either make us bitter or better. Just like the frog in the picture above, even when the situation looks hopeless we must remember that God promised us, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" so that we may boldly say, "*the Lord is my*

helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

We must always remember that no matter what happens in life, we rarely experience pain or loss even close to that experienced by Job or Jesus! God strengthened them and He will strengthen us! "*Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might ...*" (Ephesians 6:10).

Knocked Down But Not Out

Dan Murphy

In a boxing match, a fighter may get knocked down several times but he keeps getting up and eventually goes on to win the fight. Spiritually, we are in a fight against the Devil. He seeks to knock us out and win over us. The old Serpent will strive to level us with several blows: a family or marital problem, a plaguing sin, a church dispute, a threatening illness, or discouragements of all sorts. Once the Wicked One has us down, he hopes we will throw in the towel and give up as Christians – knocked out.

Brethren, Satan will knock us down, but it is our bad choices that allow him to knock us out. We don't need to give up as Christians since God adamantly promises us victory if we will only fight (**II Timothy 4:7; James 4:7**).

Some in the past have given up on Christ and let the Adversary defeat them. Judas betrayed Jesus but he gave victory to the Evil One when he went out and hung himself (**Matthew 27:4, 5**). Another knockout was scored when Demas forsook

Paul, "**...having loved this present world**" (**II Timothy 4:9**). Both of these men gave up on Christ – knocked out by the Devil.

Others were knocked down by the Tempter but not knocked out. Peter denied the Lord vehemently three times (**Luke 22:54-62**). He was down and could have given up like Judas, but he didn't. Instead, Peter wept tears of repentance and later preached the first sermon of the church's grand beginning (**Acts 2:14**). Another fighter was Job, who had several problems: health, financial, loss of family and critical friends. Satan floored him. Another blow of the Devil came from Job's own wife, "**Curse God and die,**" she said (**Job 2:9**), but Job refused to be flattened by the Wicked One. Instead he said, "**Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him (Job 13:15)**". These men were knocked down but chose not to be knocked out. They did not give up.

Our greatest example is found in Jesus. He was tortured, mocked, and treated cruelly, but Christ stayed on the cross for us. He didn't give up. Jesus was put to death; He was knocked down, but three days later He rose up from the grave, assuring us a victory. Christ defeated the Devil (**Hebrews 2:14**)!

Our Lord was down but not knocked out. The Devil may get us down but we should never give up as a Christian. Refuse to lose. Don't quit attending, praying, reading the Bible, and living daily for Him. Fight the good fight of faith, finish the course, keep the faith and a victory awaits you (**II Timothy 4:7-8**).