

## **A MESSAGE ON YOUR GOD-GIVEN WORTH**

# **GOD DOES NOT GIVE UP ON US!**

***When we think we have failed too many times, He stands ready to achieve His best through us.***



**By George Foster**

I'M ALWAYS IMPRESSED if not completely overwhelmed by the patience God has with me. God has never given up on His plan for my life and I know He *never* will.

Because God is good, He *wants* what is best for me.

Because God has infinite wisdom and knowledge, He *knows* what is best for me.

Because God is all powerful, He *can do* what is best for me.

Because God is purposeful, He *works in me* even when I don't understand.

Because God is faithful He *keeps the promises* He makes concerning His best for me.

Because God is merciful, He *forgives* me and *directs* me to what is best for me.

Because God is patient, He *prepares* me to embrace what is best for me.

And of course that applies to every one of us.

### **God's handiwork is still a work in progress!**

The dual truth that we can cling to is this: 1) We are God's handiwork; 2) We are a work in progress. Both truths comfort me and help me keep things in perspective, maintaining high expectations, appreciating what He has already done, and recognizing that. God is always working to finish what He started even when I am not conscious of His action

*"...Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" . (Philippians 1:6).*

Jesus chose disciples who were not sophisticated, highly educated, influential, or "calm, cool and collected." He wasn't looking for people to make scholarly explanations of His work; He was looking for common folk who would *do* his work. He doesn't choose the able and then make them willing; He chooses the willing and makes them able. Some of us require a great deal of attention in God's hands.

### **A volatile apostle**

Of the common people Jesus chose, the one who needed and received the most attention was Peter. Always ready to speak and get actively engaged, Peter had his obvious qualities, but he also had some faults that the Lord Jesus was willing to work with. In the Gospels, we have glimpses of the highlights and low blows in Peter's life:

1. A new identification – You are Simon. You will become Peter, the rock.
2. A change of vocation – Come follow me. I will make you a fisher of men.
3. A disciple's preparation – Three years with Jesus and colleagues.
4. A major revelation – Jesus, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!

5. A strong affirmation – Peter, you are blessed. My Father revealed this to you.
6. A misinformed exclamation – Suffer and die? This shall never happen to you!
7. A needed explanation – Deny your self, take up your cross and follow me.
8. A boastful declaration – I will lay down my life for You.
9. A shameful three-time repudiation – I do not know Him.
10. A terrible frustration – The cock has crowed as He said. I have failed.
11. A humbling restoration – Do you love me? Feed my sheep.
12. A capacitating manifestation – All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.
13. A powerful proclamation – Repent! Save yourselves from this generation.

Yes, Peter had his ups and downs. Maybe you and I can see ourselves in some of his experiences. Jesus did not give up on Peter. At the lowest moment of Peter's life, Jesus asked him a simple but searching question:

*“Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”*

*“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”*

*Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”*

*Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”*

*He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”*

*Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

*The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”*

*Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”*

*He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.””*

The question was extremely personal (Simon son of John) and searching, (Do you love me?) He asked three times. Was it once for each time Peter denied the Lord?

Peter's answer may have represented the only thing that he knew for certain at that moment—that despite his failures and loss of hope regarding ministry—he still loved Jesus. It's possible that Peter knew that he would always love Jesus—even though he could see no way of fulfilling the ministry that Jesus had promised him. What he didn't know was that Jesus hadn't given up on him! Could he be hearing right?

Every time Peter answered that he loved the Lord, Jesus gave a command that must have renewed the discouraged disciple's hope:

*“Feed my lambs.” “Take care of my sheep.” “Feed my sheep.”*

Jesus was saying that even though Peter had given up on himself, He had not given up on Peter. He would never give up. He was counting on Peter to shepherd the flock.

Peter got the message. In total humility and brokenness, he had his hope restored, he renewed his consecration, he gave himself wholeheartedly to ministry and he became the person God used to deliver the message of Pentecost and to lead the church at Jerusalem.

What about us? When we are at our worst are we able to believe that God has not given up on us and that He will make us into the people He has always meant us to be?