

How Believing in a Never-Give-Up God
Will Change Your Life

Holding On to HOPE

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 **Pacific Press®**
Publishing Association

Nampa, Idaho | www.pacificpress.com

Cover design: David Berthiaume
Cover design resources: GettyImages.com
Interior design: Aaron Troia

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Quintana, Heather, 1975- author.

Title: Holding on to hope : how believing in a never-give-up God will change your life / Heather Quintana.

Description: Nampa, Idaho : Pacific Press Publishing Association, [2023] | Includes bibliographical references. | Summary: "Hoping in the never-give-up God provides comfort for the brokenhearted, rest for the weary, and anticipation for a broken world made new"-- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023031741 | ISBN 9780816369713 | ISBN 9780816369720 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Hope--Religious aspects--Christianity.

Classification: LCC BV4638 .Q56 2023 | DDC 234/.25--dc23/eng/20230817

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023031741>

August 2023

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CHAPTER 1

Giving Up on Giving Up

*Never give up then, for that's just the place
and time that the tide'll turn.*

—Harriet Beecher Stowe

Giving up is not an option, according to the old motivational saying. But try telling that to the dusty in-line skates in my garage, the violin I played for one semester in college, or my abandoned box of crafting supplies that is now older than a tenth grader. I've given up on plenty of things, and I have a stack of reminders to prove it.

The truth is that giving up *is* an option, and it's often the easiest one. But giving up is rarely the most satisfying option. Quitting often leaves you with a strange mixture of relief and disappointment. You feel relieved because the pressure is off but disappointed because something inside you wanted to do that thing you quit—otherwise, you wouldn't have started it in the first place.

Those of us who know the disappointing relief of giving up have a special appreciation for people who have the grit to keep going. That's why we cry at movies based on true stories of overcomers who never gave

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up. It's why we cheer when we see someone running forward in life even when they're tired.

Is it crazy to refuse to give up?

Ron Avitzur considered himself lucky. It was the 1990s, and he had been hired by Apple as a contractor on a secret project: creating a graphing calculator.¹ It was a job he loved so much he would have done it for free. In fact, that's what he ended up doing.

Even though the project had a promising start, it became bogged down by ego and bureaucracy and was eventually canceled.² Many contractors were transferred to other projects; however, Ron's contract was terminated. But Ron felt like there was unfinished business: he believed strongly that this calculator needed to exist and that it would be an especially important tool for students and educators.³

So he kept showing up for work even though he had been fired.

He quietly pulled in others to help him, and he worked on the project between twelve and sixteen hours a day, seven days a week. He didn't quit when the paychecks stopped coming. He didn't quit when his electronic badge was deactivated and he had to rely on others to let him in the building. He didn't quit when Apple employees kept asking who he was and why he was there. He didn't quit when the facilities manager gave his office to someone else. He didn't quit when a computer monitor he was working on randomly burst into flames.⁴

Giving Up on Giving Up

After six months of unpaid labor, working nearly around the clock and refusing to give up, Ron's graphing calculator was ready. He gave a demonstration of it to the directors at Apple—and they loved it. Ron's creation became a part of every Macintosh computer in 1994. In the decades that followed, it was loaded on millions of machines.⁵

Ron has a great story because his never-give-up attitude led to success. But let's be honest: if it hadn't worked out, the story would be that he was a strange man who trespassed and wouldn't go away even after he was fired.

We know the sensible thing for Ron to do would have been to pack his things and leave, but something in our hearts is drawn to the boldness of a hope that never gives up. We all face moments in our lives when it seems crazy to keep holding on to hope. We just can't seem to let go, not yet, not easily. In those moments, we have to decide if we're going to keep hoping even when things seem hopeless.

Maybe you've carried a dream in your heart for years, but now it seems too late for it to come true.

Maybe you have hopes for reconciliation with a friend or family member, but it has been so long since you talked that the distance seems too great.

Maybe you always wanted to try a new job or a new city, but you feel stuck where you are.

Maybe you have goals to get healthier, or lose weight, or stop smoking, but you keep giving up after a few

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weeks . . . or days . . . or hours.

Maybe you've given up on yourself and are starting to think you simply don't have what it takes.

When met with resistance or rejection, it's tempting to give up. But what if you're giving up too soon?

Throughout this book, as we explore Isaiah's prophecy, we'll find that when Jesus looks at situations others consider hopeless, He sees a world of potential and possibility. Because of His never-give-up spirit, He sees what *could be*, not just what *is*.

This is the promise and the hope: Jesus doesn't give up easily, and He doesn't want us to either.

1. Ron Avitzur, "The Graphing Calculator Story," *Pacific Tech*, accessed June 27, 2023, <http://www.pacifict.com/Story/>.

2. Avitzur.

3. Julia Dahl, "When His Project Was Canceled, an Unemployed Programmer Kept Sneaking Into Apple to Finish the Job," *Mental Floss*, July 2, 2012, <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/31077/when-his-project-was-canceled-unemployed-programmer-kept-sneaking-apple-finish-job?fbclid=IwAR11Lgda3n9weSULvdBN5tAF4os43CBtIBDbDs0we4U0soyiXuvpXzzNF9A>.

4. Avitzur, "Graphing Calculator Story."

5. Avitzur.