

The Great Commission Theological Institute

September 14, 2024, 8:15AM

Great Commission Pentecostal Church

51-53 Marshall Street Paterson, NJ 07501

Reflection:

God Doesn't Give Up On You So, Don't You Give Up on Him

By Kenny Passaro

Gloria a Dios!!!! Blessings! Gloria a Dios!!!!

I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ pours out the power of His Holy Spirit upon me at this moment that I can reflect on persistence in life.

Oh Lord, at this moment, I open my heart and my mind to reflect on the fact that God has not given up on me since I was born as I had the umbilical cord wrapped around my neck which strangled me to death but Jesus raised me from the dead through the hands of the doctors, Gloria a Dios.

I have not given up because God doesn't give up.

Affliction, illnesses, disobedience, incarceration, revenge, and other adversities have impacted my entire life.

However, Jesus, my Lord, has not forsaken me and has not given up on me. Gloria a Dios!

With His love and His Word, God has protected me...always.

My reflection on persistence today is based on the Word of God.

I will cite several verses about persistence to denote the promise that our Lord will never give up on me, you, or any of His children.

Before I continue, I want to take a moment to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Nestor Montilla, Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla, Pastor Miqueas Nieves, and Pastora Paula Nieves.

Their unwavering support and encouragement have been instrumental in my journey of faith. Thank you for this opportunity to share my reflection with you today.

Let me say that the way Dr. Montilla says Maria Teresa sounds like he is saying 'Mother Teresa'.

They are both a lot alike. They are filled with love and compassion for all.

Also, my paternal great-grandmother's name was Teresa, spelled the same way. So, I call her Mother Teresa.

Dr. Montilla has asked me to reflect on persistence for nearly a year.

At first, I couldn't accept the invitation from Dr. Montilla as I was blessed with the opportunity to teach on my prayer call on Saturdays. Gloria a Dios! It's in English.

I regularly teach and back whoever is teaching in case that person can't make it.

When I told Mother Teresa I wouldn't be able to do the reflection due to my previous commitment to teaching Saturday, I thought that was the end. It wasn't.

She kept praying and kept asking.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 instructs us to pray without ceasing.

Pastor Miqueas has shared that *Hermanas* pray more intensely than *Hermanos*, Gloria a Dios.

I believe that to be accurate, I have told Mother Teresa multiple times that I could feel her praying for me.

Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when they are old, they will not depart from it."

Proverbs 23:13 instructs parents not to spoil their children, when it says, "Spare the rod, spoil the child."

Ephesians 6:1-4 instructs parents to bring up children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and to not provoke children to wrath.

My grandfather used to provoke my mom.

After serving in the Army during World War 2, he returned and would give my mom the white glove test.

That meant he ran a gloved index finger on the furniture's surface to test for cleanliness.

Because of this, my mom became full of rebellion and adopted a "laissez-faire" attitude toward raising us, which meant being hands-off.

I can only remember one main rule growing up... and that was revenge.

Unfortunately, revenge landed me in and out of jail and prison.

I put myself out there as an example of how not to raise your children.

I am a 51-year-old spoiled brat.

If anyone thinks spoiling your kids is cute, ask Dr. Montilla, Mother Teresa, Pastor Miqueas, and Pastor Paula what it is like to deal with this 51-year-old spoiled brat.

I am the type of child who never got the belt from my dad because my mom told everyone I was brain damaged.

However, my brother got the belt and never got in serious trouble daily because he was taught respect.

When in prison, I prayed for a spiritual mom.

Therefore, now I have many spiritual moms, as 1 Timothy 5:2 states, "See older women as Madres."

I am blessed to have *Hermanas*, who are younger and more mature than I am.

And I think of them as Madres.

As I started to prepare for this occasion to reflect on persistence, I was reminded of Lucas 18:1-8 which talks about the persistent widow with the unjust judge... lol.

I was also reminded of Psalm 37:38, which talks about the promise that God will never forsake His children, His saints.

I've learned invaluable lessons throughout my journey studying the Word of God to grow spiritually.

I've learned that whatever you are praying for, don't give up, as God healed me from a learning disability, schizophrenia, Lyme disease, and the COVID-19 virus. Gloria a Dios!

God is good because I had to pray for 20 years for my student loans to be forgiven.

God answers the prayers of His children, Gloria a Dios!

I was homeless for 3 ½ years, and during that time, I was a squatter, as Pastor Miqueas recently preached.

I can confirm that what he preached is true.

I chased out fire starters who came back one night to end me, and God told them, "You can't see him," and made me invisible, so they left thinking I was not there.

I walked out the next morning, and they never bothered me again, confirming Proverbs 16:7, which says, "When a man's ways are right with the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." Gloria a Dios!!!!

For those who don't know, Pastor Miqueas is my spiritual Father.

I was saved through his ministry at the Passaic County Jail. Thank you, Pastor Miqueas.

There, when I was in prison, Gideons passed out pocket Bibles. I witnessed the miracle of a pocket New Testament turn into an Old Testament

During my time in prison, I prayed for and received unconditional love from my spiritual community.

This love, along with God's grace, sustained me and led to my transformation.

I am deeply grateful for the role each of my mentors has played in my journey. Gloria a Dios!

During my incarceration, I kept fervently praying for unconditional love, and God answered.

His love has transformed me, and now, I am blessed with my publishing business with my partner.

We are helping those still in prison. Thank you, Jesus.

This is a true testament to the transformative power of God's love. Gloria a Dios!

Jesus speaks about that in Matthew 25:35-40 and says, "For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in, I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison, and you came to visit me." Halleluia!

In verse 40, Jesus says, What we do for the least of these people, we do for Him, which was a promise God made to me when I was in prison.

And all of God's promises are "Yes" and "AMEN!!!!!" as 2 Corinthians 1:20 says.

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." Halleluia!

This verse reminds me of a famous American college basketball player and coach who died in 1993 at the age of 47.

Although his name was James Thomas Anthony Valvano, he was known by the nickname "Jimmy V."

He once said: "Don't give up, don't ever give up."

I tell you, I've never given up, and God has blessed me abundantly. Thank you, Lord.

Pondering on this quote and the verses I read, I reflect on my life, acknowledging that thanks to God, thanks to Jesus:

1. I have never given up.
2. I have prayed for nearly 20 years for my student loans to be paid off, and now they are. Gloria a Dios!
3. I'm a straight 100% student in the Theological Institute, Gloria a Dios! While I am humble enough to admit I am not the best student in the class, as others can write way better than I can, I'm still a straight-A student, Gloria a Dios!
4. For three straight years, the government program DCA has paid my electric bill. Gloria a Dios!
5. The Federal agency known as FEMA has granted me the opportunity to move into my apartment. Gloria a Dios!
6. The Federal Program, Section 8, pays my rent when my income is sporadic. Gloria a Dios!!

As you can see, I am a blessed child of God who has never given up, as He has never given up on me. Halleluiah.

Dr. Montilla, Mother Teresa, Pastor Miqueas, Pastora Paula, and my Hermanos y Hermanas embody what the Christian song *Reckless Love* by Cory Asbury says.

It says, "overwhelming never-ending Reckless Love of God that chases us down, fights till we're found, and leaves the ninety-nine." Gloria a Dios!!!!

I conclude my reflection by saying that I am standing here with an ankle the doctor is recommending surgery for.

But we know the doctor of doctors, the surgeon of surgeons, the healer of healers Dr. Jesucristo de Nazaret, Gloria a Dios.

In John 14:6, Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me. "

In Lucas 11:9-13, the Word says: "Keep asking, seeking, knocking."

And again, Jimmy V said: "Don't give up, don't ever give up."

I've tried to give up many times over again, but God won't let me, Gloria a Dios.

I have persisted through hard times overcoming adversity thanks to God's mercy.

Were it not for the love and protection of Jesus, I would be long gone already.

As Genesis 28:15 says, "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Glory to God.

God is telling me to persist, to persevere as I won't leave until He is done with me. Gloria a Dios! Thank you, Lord.

Jesus, please come quickly!

Amen.