
Keep Striking the Stone

by Cary Branscum

Ever feel like throwing in the towel?

Most folks feel that way at times. Maybe you've worked, fretted, and given yourself to a relationship, a job, or a cause that doesn't go your way. You are caught between conflicting desires; you feel like giving up on the good things, the right things, even as you hold onto the wrong things. Feeling like giving up is a universal human experience, even for Christians! In [Romans 7:21](#), the apostle Paul shares his own experience as he struggles to do good even as evil lurks close at hand. Where there is belief, there is doubt. Where there is trust, there is distrust. Where there is obedience, there is disobedience.

You can always give up. [John 6](#) finds Jesus telling His disciples the truth about God. In verse 66, some "walked no more with him." They gave up. They threw in the towel. They quit on Jesus. I can't help but imagine all kinds of things as Jesus turns to the Twelve, His core group, and asks, "Will you also go away?" And then Simon Peter gives an answer that rings true for all followers of Jesus. He replies, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." There is no one else, there is no place else, if you want eternal life; it's Jesus or no one. ([Acts 4:12](#))

Still, it's just so tempting to give up, isn't it? We really feel like giving up on God ... on other people, and even on ourselves — giving up the song in our soul, our hopes and dreams, both big and small.

Let me tell you a story. I have a lifelong fascination and deep abiding interest in ancient Native American culture. One of my dreams was to learn flint-knapping, the art of making tools and weapons from flint, chert, or obsidian. I especially wanted to make arrowheads. To make an arrowhead you need a hammer stone, the

right piece of flint, and a lot of patience. As a kid, I tried to make arrowheads. After trying, it seemed impossible, so I gave up.

Years later, one hot afternoon near a summer camp, I stumbled onto a pile of river rocks near Lake Whitney, Texas. Something caught my eye. There, in the middle of the pile was a huge chunk of flint. My old arrowhead dreams came back in an instant. Dreams can do that sometimes. Picking an oval rock to use as a hammer stone, I tried to knock off a flake just the right size for an arrowhead. No such luck. I tried again. Nothing. The longer it took, the madder I got, the harder I hit. Twenty minutes later, my arm ached, my eyes were blinded by sweat, and my thumb was bloody from a misplaced blow. It's a good thing that I wasn't a part of a tribe that expected me to make an arrowhead and bring home dinner; they were just out of luck. I was about to give up for good when something indescribable happened. The flint gave a short, sharp sound as a thin wafer, the size of a dinner plate, flew off the chunk and landed softly in the grass about twenty feet away. I stumbled over, picked it up and with deep primitive joy began making the first of many arrowheads, spearheads, and stone axes. Now it's easy, now it's fun. Now there's nothin' to it.

Don't give up!

Don't give up on the God who may seem so distant right now. He has not given up on you.

Don't give up on people even though you've had some bad experiences.

Don't give up on the song in your soul just because the chaos of your life or the hurt in your heart temporarily drowns out its melody.

Jesus has, and IS, the Word of Life.

Your arrowhead awaits ... just keep striking the stone ... and don't give up.