

Don't Give Up

by Jeannie St. John Taylor

Zelma didn't want to leave her husband, but when she discovered Jacob sexually abusing their daughter, she had no choice. She filed for divorce.

Jacob filed for custody of their son and daughter. He hired slick attorneys. He recruited psychologists who lied and called Zelma an unfit mother.

Zelma fought for a while, then weariness and fear set in. Would people believe the false accusations against her? If they did, would she lose her children? Would she lose her job as a teacher at a private school? If she lost her job, how would she support herself and her family? Maybe the children would be better off if she just gave up and let Jacob have custody. She couldn't afford the attorney's fees anyway.

Completely beaten down, she knelt at her bed before work one morning. "*Should I give up?*" she asked the Lord. "*The children will be okay if I do, won't they?*" She waited for an answer, but heard nothing. It appeared she'd have to figure this one out without any help from the Lord. Even he had deserted her.

Exhausted, she made her decision. It was too much; she couldn't bear any more. She would just give up and give Jacob custody of the children.

At work, an hour after her prayer, Zelma walked her young students to the school auditorium for Wednesday morning chapel. As the youth pastor from a local church took the podium, Zelma's mind drifted to her pain and sadness. She heard very little of what the young man had to say until he spoke in a confident voice, "I have a word from God."

Zelma looked up, his tone and words startling her out of her reverie.

The pastor paused and looked around the audience, then he actually shouted. "Don't give up!"

This was certainly not the way speakers usually acted in chapel. Zelma wondered at the wisdom of the young man's methods. Well, he was awfully young and few youth pastors were noted for wisdom.

He moved a few feet from the podium and shouted again. "Don't give up!" Walking off the stage and down the center aisle, he continued to shout the same words over and over: "Don't give up! Don't give up!"

Finally, he stood directly beside Zelma in her seat at the end of the row, yelling, "Don't give up! Don't give up!" over and over. It wasn't until the fifteenth or twentieth shout

that the message registered in Zelma's brain. It really was a word from God, and it was for her. God was urging her not to give up.

A renewed energy surged through Zelma. She fought for custody of her children and got it. No one believed the lies against her.

Second Thess. 3:13 tells us, "And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right" (2 Thess. 3:13).