

## Don't Give Up

"Life is never so bad at its worst that it is impossible to live; It is never so good at its best that it is easy to live", this quote said by Gabriel Heather typifies my outlook towards life in general, as there will be plenty of bumps and sometimes even walls throughout ones life. Sometimes you just have to stick in there and keep the right door open. When one door closes another door opens. Why choose an exit if you can have an entrance?

In so many ways this quote refers to my family, as we have faced many obstacles along the way. For starters my mother and father divorced after 10 years of marriage. My mom re-married in which brought about many changes. Life was good, we had a new beautiful home, a huge property, nice vehicles, a new 5th wheel and money to travel. We had "The American Dream", but all soon changed within a blink of an eye. It wasn't long after my step-father's mother passed away that my step father began to get sick.

At first we all assumed that his symptoms were not alarming, however we soon learned that we were completely wrong. My step-father was diagnosed with a rare disease only seen in the 1800's. It took approximately 15 doctors to finally diagnose him with an auto-immune disease called Cicritical Pemphigoid. Scientists believe there is a direct link to mold exposure and or chemicals found in concrete, others beg to differ and conclude that there is no rhyme or reason to the disease other than a genetic disposition. His team of doctors include a Rheumatologist, Dermatologist, Ophthalmologist, Pulmonologist, Cardiologist, ENT Physician, Plastic Surgeon and so forth.

Throughout the last five years he has gone through having a tracheotomy for 4 years, blindness, 24 hour oxygen, many trips to Stanford, UCLA, USC hospitals and many hospitalizations locally at Kaweah Delta Hospital. Many times we did not know if he would pull through, all we could do was remain positive and leave all things in the hands of the Lord. I would honestly have to say that he has faced death in the eyes more than once or twice. A few times he was on Hospice, but miraculously he managed to pull through. During his stay at Stanford Hospital two years ago my mom was faced to make the decision to pull the plug, as you can probably guess she refused to do so and thank God she refused because he is alive today.

I give my mom so much credit for remaining positive and encouraging my father to continue to fight even today. We soon learned that life was so much greater than "The American Dream". We lost most of all our material items as medical bills began to multiply. My mom was forced to raise four children, care for an ill husband and work two jobs.

We continue to battle this illness and all its effects, but the truth is we have learned a great deal about trials life hands you. Many blessings have come in disguise, but most

importantly everything happens for a reason. Perhaps someone can learn from this testimony or maybe they can feel that whatever their trial is they are not alone.

Through everything I have learned throughout this journey I wish I could spread the words "Don't Give UP", God doesn't hand us anything we cant handle. Things will always get better, it just takes time.

Therefore, as you can see I can relate to this quote as said before, "Life is never so bad at its worst that it is impossible to live. It is never so good at its best that it is easy to live. Rest assured, there's light at the end of the tunnel. My little cousin Brooklyn said it best before she passed away, "Gods In Control", He doesn't give you something you can't handle.

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