

Never Give In

By Jim Hendry

After Thomas Edison and his men had come to yet another failure in their attempt to develop a practical electric light, Edison turned to his dejected coworkers and declared, “Well, men, we have discovered one thousand things that don’t work.”

What would compel a man to continue on despite literally thousands of failed attempts? My wife and I were recently talking about what makes a life great; our conclusion: living for a cause outside oneself. Whether in the realm of invention (Edison’s search for a safe, efficient light), science and medicine (Pasteur’s creation of vaccines for anthrax and rabies), statesmanship (Churchill’s leadership in the fight against tyranny), or whatever, it is those who seek to better the lot of their neighbors who achieve true greatness. Churchill and Hitler were both powerful leaders, but only one could be considered great.

General Dwight Eisenhower, describing the D-Day invasion, explained that it was the largest amphibious assault in history. But unlike so many massive invasions before, it was not launched to satisfy the avarice of a tyrant or to extend the borders of a particular state, but to bring freedom to other nations in bondage. The thousands of men who stormed the beaches that day had no thought of personal gain. They risked (and many gave) their lives for a greater cause—the wellbeing of their fellow man.

Homeschoolers are giving their lives for freedom, too—freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and others. They are daily laying down their

lives that their children might have something many of us did not have—an education that parents believe is best for their children.

Many face the additional struggle of seeking to instill in their children skills and character traits they never learned themselves. For most, their “blood, toil, tears, and sweat” are not so they can bask in the glow of their child’s winning a spelling bee or a scholarship (though it can be a nice side benefit), but that their children will be best prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities life will lay before them.

Great men (and women) have their share of sins and failures; sometimes, due to the mammoth size of the task at hand, they have more than their share. Edison and Pasteur failed countless times; Churchill was turned out of office whenever there was not a crisis. But they persevered.

If you are pouring your life into your children, though it be in obscurity, with countless bumbblings along the way, you are doing a great work. Never, never, never give in.

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