But there is a negative side to this trend. When we are simply phoning it in, doing the bare minimum, and not caring about our labors, then we are not loving biblically. Jesus wants us to be engaged deeply in life, just as he was. When Jesus predicts that he will leave the disciples, he has no intention of quitting on them. He promises that God will give them “another Counselor to be with you forever” (John 14:16). This counselor is not a guidance counselor or a vocational counselor or a mental health counselor or a marriage counselor. Instead, it is a *parakletos*: A counselor who stays with you, encourages you, comforts you, helps you, and advocates for you. This counselor is the very Spirit of God.

The promise of God’s Spiritmeans that God is never going to quit on us. God’s Spirit will stay close beside us, working for good in our lives. Professor Gail O’Day points out that what the Spirit does is not new, “but is a continuation of the work of Jesus.” The counselor is “the Spirit of truth” (v. 17), which connects to Jesus being “the way and the truth and the life” (v. 6). The counselor is one who “lives with you and will be in you” (v. 17), which is exactly what Jesus promises he will do when he says, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (v. 18).

Jesus knows we need help to navigate this life. Some days are hard! Jesus had his own share of tough days. At any point Jesus could have said, “I quit. I’ve had enough.” But he didn’t. Lee Lelpi understands this. Lee is a retired firefighter, a New York City firefighter. He gave 26 years to the city. But on September 11, 2001, he gave much more: he gave his son, Jonathan, also a firefighter, who lost his life when the Twin Towers fell.

Firefighters are a loyal clan. When one perishes in the line of duty, the body is left where it is until a firefighter who knows the person comes and picks it up. Lee made the discovery of his son’s body his personal mission. He dug daily with dozens of others at the 16-acre graveyard. On Tuesday, December 11, three months after the disaster, Lee found his, and Lee carried him out. Lee didn’t give up, he didn’t quit. He refused to turn and leave. Why? Because his love for his son was greater than the pain of the search. The same can be said about Jesus. Why didn’t he quit? Because Jesus’ love for us was greater than the pain of the journey. He came to pull us out when our world collapsed. He came when we were dead to sin because he loves us.

There is no quitting with God the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Trinity are present and active in our lives, even when we feel stressed and overwhelmed and ready to quit. All three are seen most clearly in the face of Jesus, the One who never lets up, but who is constantly moving forward. Jesus remains engaged with us, giving us his truth, life, and love, and he invites us to remain connected to him.

When it comes to following Jesus, we never have any reason to quit because **Jesus guides us in the truth**. We grasp this truth when we look at the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This truth is not “something that you get out of a test tube, or a math formula,” says New Testament scholar N.T. Wright. “We don’t have truth in our pockets. Philosophers and judges don’t own it.…Jesus has come to give evidence of this truth. He is himself the truth.”

Jesus guides us in his truth, showing us how important it is to love not only our friends, but also our enemies. To turn the other cheek. To go the second mile. This truth leads us to welcome children, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to be a friend to outcasts, and to lead lives of service and sacrifice. “What Jesus did on the cross is what truth is and does,” says Wright. “Truth is what Jesus is…Jesus died for Barabbas, and for Israel, for the world, and for you and me.” If you seek the truth, look no farther than Jesus.

We need not quit because **Jesus gives us new life.** “Because I live,” says Jesus to his disciples, “you also will live” (v. 19). Speaking to his followers before his death on the cross, Jesus assures them that when he is raised to new life, they will experience new life as well. He promises to remain engaged with all who follow him, saying, “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (v. 20). For Jesus, new life comes from remaining engaged.

Last summer, “there was much discussion of the concept of ‘quiet quitting,’” writes author Laura Vanderkam, “doing the bare minimum at work.” This did not surprise her, especially after two years of pandemic uncertainty and stress. “When you’re exhausted and overwhelmed, it feels like *something* needs to give,” she says, “and for many, that seems to be the pursuit of excellence at work.” But quit quitting is not the answer, according to Vanderkam. She believes “that the opposite of burnout isn’t doing nothing, or even scaling back. It’s engagement.”

Jesus would agree. New life comes from active engagement as a follower of Christ. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments,” says Jesus (v. 15). And what commandment are we to obey? “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Our engagement as disciples is shown in our love for one another: Nothing more, nothing less. Love for our brothers and sisters in the church. Love for our neighbors of different faiths, races, and nationalities. Love for our opponents across the many divisions that are afflicting our nation today. Jesus’ command is clear: Love one another!

This can be tough, but fortunately **Jesus** **promises us his love**. “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them” (14:21). Jesus invites us to engage by loving others and loving him, and he promises that both he and God the Father will love us in return. Our involvement with Jesus is never like a job that makes endless demands on us without any recognition or affirmation. Jesus vows that he will love us and show himself to us. Jesus will never abandon us but will continue to give us the gifts of his presence, truth, and love.

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses an unexpected image to reveal his powerful love for his people. Speaking to the city of Jerusalem during the last week of his earthly ministry, Jesus says, “how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37). Jesus describes himself as a mother hen, gathering her chicks in a spirit of love and protection.

This is a good image to keep in mind on Mother’s Day, as we think about Jesus never quitting on the people he loves. He always goes above and beyond, never being satisfied with the bare minimum. Jesus guides us in the truth, gives us new life, and promises us his love. He remains eternally engaged with us, and he asks us to do the same with him. Jesus never quits on us. Let’s not quit on him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I come to you today with many burdens. Some days I am overwhelmed and unsure of how to proceed. Give me the wisdom and guidance I need to make the right decisions. Give me the assurance of your presence and the strength of your Spirit to keep moving forward. Help me to trust in your goodness and to find hope in your promises. Keep me grounded in your love and help me to never give up. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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**Jesus Is Not a Quiet Quitter**

Sunday, May 14, 2023 [John 14:15-21](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3a15-21&language=en&version=NRSVUE)

Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Maggie Perkins worked as a teacher for six years. Then, after she had a daughter, Perkins discovered that if she stayed late at school, her daycare would impose a fine on her. So, she began “quiet quitting.” For Perkins, this meant leaving school as soon as her official hours were over. “Within education, above and beyond isn’t compensated,” she explains.According to surveys, the typical teacher works 54 hours per week. Perkins decided that she wasn’t going to do it. She set a boundary and stuck to it. Eventually, Perkins quit teaching entirely and pursued a Ph.D. She continues to advise teachers on quiet quitting, telling them not to bring work home or spend their personal money on classroom supplies. Quiet quitting is “a survival tactic,” she says. “It’s a coping mechanism.”

More and more people are taking this approach. They do not actually quit their jobs, but they do stop going above and beyond at work. In fact, a recent survey revealed that as many as 21 percent of Americans now describe themselves as quiet quitters. Quiet quitting means that you do the job you are paid to do, and nothing more.

Rachel Anderson writes that the American work ethic and the belief that if you-work-hard-you-will-succeed enables overwork. In the U.S., economic security is too often associated with worthiness and worthiness with work. We work to achieve security. We keep working to justify whatever security and success comes our way or to avoid blame if we lack either. A work-based ideology suggests that overwork is a natural condition and possibly even a virtuous one. Anderson advises that we should set sensible boundaries to control our tendency to overwork and protect our family life and our mental health.

The importance of setting boundaries has a long biblical tradition, going back to the Ten Commandments. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy,” said God to Moses. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work” (Exodus 20:8-10). The Sabbath day is all about boundaries. It is a reminder that we are valuable for *who we are*, not for what we do. We are precious children of God, not cogs in a wheel. If quiet quitting means maintaining a day of rest, then we should *all* be quitters. At least one day a week.