



NEVER GIVE UP

BY DON BEEBE
AS TOLD TO KIRK NOONAN

Late in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XXVII and the Cowboys were blowing us out, but I had to try to catch him. Leon Lett had scooped up the football after we fumbled and was rumbling toward the end zone uncontested.

When I started my pursuit of him I was nearly 40 yards away. But I also could run the 40-yard dash in 4.21 seconds — I don't think he knew that. With the score 52-17, another Cowboys touchdown wouldn't matter. But I was raised never to give up, so it did matter.

I closed in quickly on Lett as he strutted toward the goal line. Just before he reached the end zone I dove at the ball and popped it out of his hands on the 1-yard line.

People tell me that play is one of the greatest moments in Super Bowl history. But I view it only as a great story that has opened doors for me to tell others about God. The same is true of my football career.

Determined

In 1983 I accepted a full-ride football scholarship to Western Illinois University after finishing my prep career at Kaneland High School in Maple Park, Ill. Within days of starting college I became extremely homesick. It's hard to explain, but those two weeks in Macomb were the most brutal weeks of my life. I dropped out and went home to play basketball for a local university.

After one season of playing basketball I dropped out to hang siding for a living. I did that for three years. Though I stayed in shape, played sports and continued to believe I'd play professional football, it didn't look like it was ever going to happen.

DON BEEBE

“WHAT MOST PEOPLE DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT PLAYING FOOTBALL WASN'T A DREAM OF MINE, IT WAS A CALLING.”



But what most people didn't know was that playing football wasn't just a dream of mine, it was a calling.

My parents always told me I could and should go after whatever God put on my heart, so I did. When I was 7 years old I committed my life to Christ. The night I accepted Christ I felt that God called me to a career in sports. From that day on I never gave up on my Savior or my dream to play in the National Football League.

Even though I hadn't played organized football for 3½ years, I prayed and asked God to open a door for me to play if it was His will.

A few weeks later the coach from WIU called me and asked if I would be interested in playing for him again. I couldn't believe it, but quickly accepted his offer.

Soon after my arrival at WIU the coaches realized my eligibility had been reduced to only two seasons. Things were only going to get worse.

I was called into one of the coaches' offices and informed that I didn't have enough college credits to transfer back to WIU and I'd have to attend junior college. In doing so I would lose one year of eligibility.

The following semester, even though I only had one year of eligibility remaining, I was still determined to play in the NFL. But then the coach called me in and said they weren't going to let me play.

It seemed like my dreams were shattered. As I sat in the coach's office I cried. But then I remembered that God was in control and I told the coach I felt like Christ brought me to WIU and He was going to work it out so I could play.

A few hours later the coach called me back in his office and informed me I could play one season for WIU.

During that spring semester NFL scouts came to WIU to time some of our seniors in the 40-yard dash. I happened to be walking through the facility where the trials were taking place and asked if I could be timed even though I wasn't a senior.

The NFL scouts said sure but I'd have to run barefooted because I was wearing flip flops and they didn't have time to wait for me to get my shoes. I ran the 40-yard-dash in 4.3 seconds. The NFL scouts asked me what number I was on WIU's game film. I told them I hadn't played college football yet.

The next fall I played well and received phone calls and letters from several NFL teams telling me I had a great shot as a free agent. Because I couldn't play in the NCAA anymore and didn't feel ready for the NFL, I transferred to Chadron State University, then an NAIA Division II school in northwestern Nebraska eight hours from Omaha.

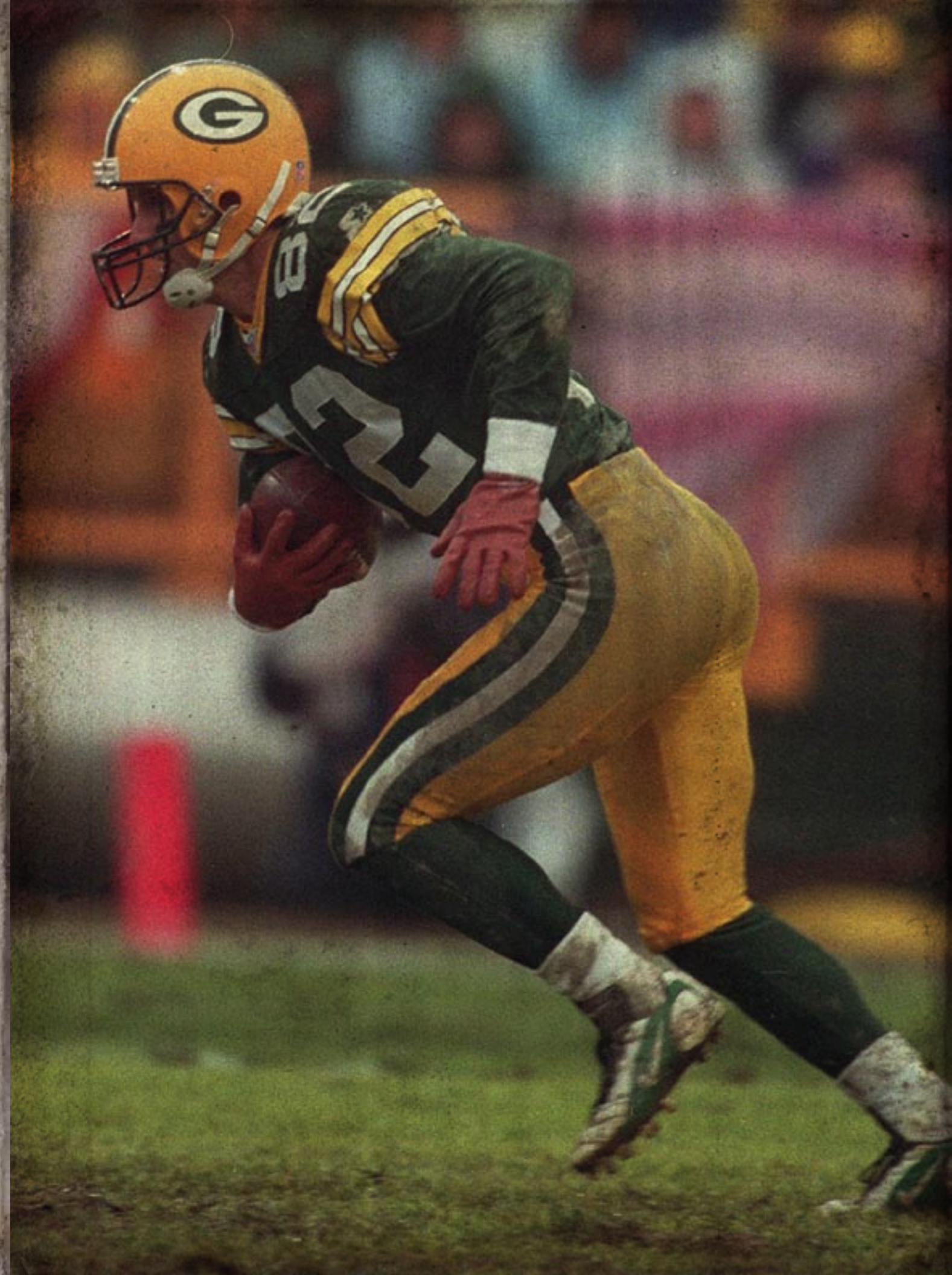
The summer before I went to Chadron I married Diana, my high school sweetheart. We drove to Chadron and pulled into the football field's parking lot late at night. Since we didn't have a place to stay we slept in our car.

Early the next morning, an elderly woman knocked on our window, offered a job and a place for us to live for \$110 a month. God had everything taken care of before we even opened our eyes.

Open doors

Every year the NFL invites 300 student athletes to a combine where each player is evaluated. I, an unknown player from Chadron State, was one of those invited.

continued on page 16



DON BEEBE

“DURING THE COMBINE I TIED THE RECORD FOR THE FASTEST 40-YARD DASH, BROKE THE PRO AGILITY RECORD, AND CAUGHT ALL THE BALLS THROWN TO ME.”

How does that happen?
Obviously, Jesus Christ had a plan for my life. At the combine all of the athletes had expensive shoes and their agents catering to their every need. I didn't have an agent and the shoes I ran in were the ones I wore into the combine — the ones whose left sole had come unglued and made a flapping sound as I ran.

During the combine I tied the record for the fastest 40-yard dash, broke the pro agility record, and caught all the balls thrown to me. It was a God thing. I went in completely unknown and left flocked by agents, NFL general managers and coaches.

Rest in His promises

On draft day friends and family crammed into our tiny one-bedroom apartment. Everyone seemed tense and nervous. But it was a calming experience for me. I didn't really care who drafted me or when I was drafted because I knew God had a spot for me in the NFL.

That may sound arrogant, but it's really more about faith than arrogance. I've always had a really strong faith and I always believe God is going to bring me through anything. And He has.

It took several hours, but I was finally drafted 82nd overall by the Buffalo Bills. God had not only made my dream come true, He had also fulfilled the calling He put on my life.

continued on page 18

Valley Forge Christian College



Apply online today, or call for more information

800.432.8322 • www.vfcc.edu

VALLEY FORGE
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

1401 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460
800.432.8322 • Fax 610.917.2069
admissions@vfcc.edu
www.vfcc.edu

Majors:

Business Administration
Children's Ministry
Christian Education
Christian Ministries
Church Music
Early Childhood Education
Elementary Education
(Public Teaching Certification)
(Private Teaching Certification)

Music Education - K-12
(Public Teaching Certification)
(Private Teaching Certification)
Music Performance
Pastoral Counseling
Pastoral Ministry

Psychology
Senior Adult Ministry
Theological Studies
Urban Ministry
World Missions
Youth Ministry

press on. **FORGE** ahead.



“AG Financial Loan Services is the preferred and premier lending arm of the Assemblies of God.”

Thomas E. Trask
General Superintendent, General Council of the Assemblies of God

AG Financial Loan Services Provides Complete Financing Solutions

- **Construction and Renovation Projects**
Our construction loans offer interest-only payments during a construction period of up to two years, followed by a guaranteed no-cost conversion to permanent financing at competitive rates and terms.
- **Purchase of Land or Existing Facilities**
We offer permanent, first mortgage financing at competitive interest rates to assist churches, districts and affiliated ministries in purchasing new facilities or available land for future expansion.
- **Refinance or Consolidation of Existing Loans**
Lower your monthly payments, lower your interest rate or combine high interest debt into one loan.
- **Lines of Credit**
Secured lines of credit can offer the assurance you desire in a time of need.

With AG Financial, your funds are invested in eternal dividends.

To learn more about how we can help you meet your loan challenges, contact us toll-free at

1.866.453.7144

or visit our new and improved Web site at
www.agloanservices.org



FINANCIAL
Directing God-given Resources to God-given GoalsSM

Loan Services

1661 North Boonville Avenue • Suite F • Springfield, Missouri 65803

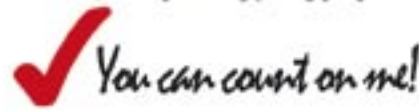
Teen Challenge Students

are **counting on YOU...**



Teen Challenge has been fortunate over the years to have faithful, committed friends who invest in our efforts to make a difference in the lives of our students. All support becomes more critical in the days of tight budgets.

There is strength in numbers. If everyone reading this would make a gift, a gift of any size, the combined gifts would enable us to meet the challenges we face; to help hurting young people.



Enclosed is my gift of:
 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Cash/check enclosed
 Bill my credit card MasterCard Visa
 Credit Card # _____
 Signature _____
 Exp. Date _____

Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.
 World Ministries Offering: 3098142 (40) 700

TEEN CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL
 The Faith-Based Solution for the Drug Epidemic
USA
 P.O. Box 1015
 Springfield, MO 65801
 call us at 417-862-6969
 or visit www.teenchallengeusa.com

IRON BEEBIE

At the start of my rookie season I was 24 years old. Too old, some scouts said. But others liked how old I was because they believed I was more mature. I didn't really care what they said; I just knew I was going to work hard and give it my all.

Just before my third game, quarterback Jim Kelly went to coach Marv Levy and said he wanted me in the starting lineup. I started against the Houston Oilers at the Astrodome.

As I stood at the line of scrimmage, the Oilers' Chris Dishman got in my face and started trash talking. He said some funny things and asked me if I was as fast as everyone said. After the first play, which was a run, I returned to the huddle. Kelly looked at me and said, "If Dishman is jamming you at the line, I don't care what route you run. Just take him deep."

After the huddle broke, I ran up to the line praying against Dishman pressing me because I was scared to death. As before, he came right up on me and started talking again.

When the ball was snapped I sped downfield and turned and looked up for the ball. I found it. But the ball was so high it looked like it had been punted.

Then the ball disappeared in the lights. So I stretched my right hand out and the ball, coming over my outside shoulder on the right side of the field, dropped into my hand. It stuck there and I pulled it in and ran into the end zone. My first completion in the NFL was a 63-yard touchdown.

On our next offensive series Dishman got up in my grill again and said, "You are fast." Then he took three steps back.

Not-so-super Super Bowls

While with the Bills, we went to four consecutive Super Bowls and lost all of them, including that memorable loss to the Cowboys. It was disappointing and demoralizing. But we played our best, and for some reason we couldn't win when it counted. I learned that sometimes even when we do our best we still lose. That's just how life is.

My last two seasons in the NFL I played for the Green Bay Packers and we made it to two Super Bowls. We won the first and lost the second.

During our Super Bowl victory, I remember guarding Brett Favre as we killed the clock in the waning seconds of the game. Though I was happy we won, I felt bad that Marv Levy, Jim Kelly and all my Buffalo teammates and the fans in New York hadn't experienced a Super Bowl win when we were so close so many times.

I retired from football after nine seasons. I always thought it would be easy to leave the game. But it wasn't long before I missed the smell of the crisp autumn air and the roar of 50,000 fans. I admit there were days when I longed to run out of the tunnel just one more time.

I moved on like we all have to do when a chapter in our life ends. With a partner I started a company called House of Speed. We train elementary-aged athletes up to professional players to be faster at our camps, clinics and private lessons.

It's rewarding for me to see an athlete improve under our direction. But the most important things we teach our clients are biblical

precepts, morals and values.

A couple of seasons ago I also started coaching varsity football at Aurora (Ill.) Christian High School. Coaching has filled the void of competitiveness I felt when I left the NFL. But, more importantly, I get to invest daily in the lives of high school football players.

Each week players come to my house for weekly Bible studies. Seeing them grow in their walk with God is more rewarding than anything I've ever done. Some kids have rededicated their lives to Christ; others have accepted the Lord as their personal Savior. It's incredible.

More to come

Today I am 40 years old, married and the father of four children. Life is excellent. Sometimes I think about my playing days and wonder how in the world I ever played in the NFL. It's crazy. But obviously God had a plan for my life.

He has a plan for everyone's life, but it's up to each of us to find out what that plan is. A lot of people never find out what their calling is because they give up on it. God never said following His will would be easy.

But the person who sticks with God's plan and listens to the Lord ends up getting things done the way God wants, and that ultimately affects people's lives for His Son.

My autobiography is called *More Than a Ring* because my life has always been more than playing football or winning a Super Bowl. It's about living each day for Jesus.

I pray yours is too. **tpe**

KIRK NOONAN is associate editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.



A Tamil-speaking pastor, attending the South India AG General Council, receives his first copy of the Tamil Fire Bible, presented by David Stewart, Sr., (right), coordinator of the project and veteran AG worker. David Mohan, general superintendent of the India Assemblies of God (center) expressed his thanks for U.S. contributions to the project.

Pastors and believers in many nations are being blessed with their own personal copy of the *Fire Bible* in a language they can read and understand because of your sacrificial gifts. Here is an update on our partnership efforts.

Fire Bibles completed prior to 2005

Chinese (Simplified Character)	Polish (NT)	Spanish
English	Portuguese	Tagalog
Indonesian	Romanian	Ukrainian (NT)
	Russian	

Fire Bibles completed in 2005

Chichewa	Malayalam	Swahili
Chinese (Traditional Character)	Mongolian	Tamil

Fire Bibles scheduled for completion in 2006

Albanian	Czech	Moore
Arabic	French	Telugu
Bengali	Hindi	Ukrainian
Bulgarian		

Fire Bibles in progress

Amharic	Georgian	Tiddim Chin
Armenian	Hausa	Turkish
English for the Third World	Igbo	Urdu
Farsi	Malagasy	Vietnamese
	Thai	Yoruba

Thank you, friends of the *Fire Bible* and members of the Assemblies of God Bible Alliance, for making this Pentecostal study Bible – with Pentecostal notes, commentary, articles and maps – one of the most widely distributed study Bibles in the world.



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
BIBLE ALLIANCE



1445 N. Boonville Avenue • Springfield, MO 65802-1894
 417.832.0440 • 800.532.0440 • E-mail: info@biblealliance.org