

is weak if these aspects of my hope are weak. The author of Hebrews wrote, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

Again, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that is nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

Further:

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

Finally:

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace" (2 Pet. 3:13-14).

The word hope and comparable terms are used in the Bible to contrast it with despair. The apostle Paul wrote that the Ephesians were at one time "without Christ.....having no hope and without God in this world" (Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess. 4:13). But he adds "Now in Christ Jesus ye.....are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). That is why the apostle was able to write to the Colossian brethren and say, "To whom God would

make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

The apostle Paul continues to admonish the Galatians, "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). He is saying to them, in farm language, that in preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed and spending the growing season in watering and cultivating the crop that they should not become weary and faint, because their hope will be realized in the fall at the time of gathering and harvesting the produce.

The Christian's hope becomes "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19). When Robert Owen visited Alexander Campbell at his farm in Bethany, Campbell took Owen out to the pasture to show him his prized cattle. Owen pointed out one of the calves and said to Campbell, "I'm just like that animal, neither of us has any fear of death." "Yes," replied Campbell, "but neither of you has hope."

Brother N.B. Hardeman would describe hell to his Bible class as "a place where hope is a stranger and mercy has never been found."

The Christian's hope is built upon our desire and expectation that God can and will keep His promise (Titus 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that love "believeth all things (and) hopeth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). The apostle Peter encourages us to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). It is surely true that our hope is deepened when it is challenged, and we are able to defend our hope against all questions.

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Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am
Wednesday—7:00pm

Evangelistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser &
TV Program
"The Bible Says"
Public Access
Cable Channel 16
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm
Tues. @ 2:30pm
Fri. @ 9:00am

- Steps to Salvation**
1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
 2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
 3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
 4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
 5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
 6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)



I'm sure many of you have seen this bumper sticker attached to many vehicles. Probably more in the north than in the south, but it is gaining ground. The original was designed by a Polish artist which only had the signs for Islam, Judaism and Christianity, but since many varying forms have been added to the mix, such as Wicca, Science, Baha'i, Hindu, Buddhist and Taoism. Its whole purpose is to symbolize religious tolerance. One writer said, "Life is too short to make just one decision and God is too big for just one religion."

Believe me, if it were my decision, I would want everyone to be saved, because that would include my family who stand on the outside of the Lord. The emotional plea that God is too big for just one religion is never a sound argument. Why? Because if God is too big for just one religion, then God is too big for religion period. If not, why not? There is no doubt that we are living in an age of "tolerance," which is really not tolerance at all. People love to throw the word around, but seldom do they ever completely embrace its character.

There is no tolerance when Muslims kill non-Muslims, or Atheists sue cities for religious holidays, or Hindus and Buddhists refuse lodging or jobs to Christians. The fact of the matter is that true New Testament Christians understand the concept of coexisting. You will never see or hear of a true Christian strapping a bomb to

himself to kill others in the name of God, or refusing to rent a house or give a job to a person simply because they are not Christians (at least I hope not). It is the God given right of every person to choose whether they will obey their Creator or not. It's not for me or anyone else to force upon them what they should or should not believe when it comes to religion.

The only duty God has given to us all is to plant and water His truth. It is God alone who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). All the arm twisting our strength can muster is not power enough to honestly motivate the hearts of others to serve God (Romans 1:16). Coexist? You bet your life we can coexist, and we must if we are to be faithful servants of the God of Heaven. Jesus reminds us, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, **love your enemies**, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:43-45ASV).

Christians coexist because we all come from the same parents—Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:20). We coexist because God desires that everyone come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). It is God's will that His children coexist by subjecting themselves to governmental powers (Titus 3:1; Romans 13:1-6); and as examples to others (1 Peter 2:21). However, we cannot coexist by compromising the truth and tolerating sin. God, the Creator of the Universe has chosen only one way to please Him. That way



is not found in Atheism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, denominationalism, or the hundreds of other 'isms' invented by men for the pleasing of the god of this world (2 Timothy 3:13). God's way is found only in the one church, the church Jesus said He would build—the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; 2 Timothy 2:10). Only those who obey God will find eternal rest (Hebrews 5:9).

Yes, it is not only possible for us to coexist, it is a must if we are to please God. However, coexisting and tolerating sin and error are two different things. While God commands the one, He despises the other, and so should we.



Always Watching

By Bill Burk

WHEN I was a small boy I was allowed to play anywhere I wanted to in either our back or front yards. I wasn't allowed in the street for any reason unless accompanied by someone older. Although I could not see my mother, interestingly enough, any time I ventured somewhere I shouldn't, she was immediately there. I have heard her say before that she never took her eyes off me. Knowing she was watching kept me out of a lot of trouble. In the September, 2006 edition of the Reader's Digest under the caption, "I Spy...A Reckless Teen," I happened to come across the following:

Debbie Schwartz's 16-year old daughter knew the rule, and broke it by giving friends a ride back from a basketball game. Schwartz found out only because a stranger saw this bumper sticker on the girl's car: "How is my teen driving? 1-866-4-R-Teens." Schwartz got this email report: "Black car full of teenage girls cut gentleman off. Were to preoccupied with conversation to heed his horn. Nearly clipped him."

The bumper sticker was part of a new program that Schwartz created with another Los Angeles mom to monitor their kids' driving habits. For \$60 a year (at 18664RTeens.com) you get a sticker with a number that drivers can use to identify your car when they call.

Schwartz had a chat with her daughter. "Now she's aware people are watching her, so she's driving more carefully," Schwartz says.

The Following thoughts bring to mind certain spiritual parallels. Consider these additional thoughts.....

- 1. We are never out of the Lord's sight. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Psalm 15:3). "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on

behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13).

- 2. We are seldom out of the sight of others. It is possible to do a number of things secretly but much of life is lived in the spotlight of life's stage. People are watching. If you follow Jesus, they will want to see if you are the real deal or not.
- 3. We must live responsibly. If the Lord watches, and He does, and if others are paying attention to our lives, and they are, then we should be careful to live in such a way as to give God glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). May we always strive to set forth the right example (Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

The Lord watches us. What does He see? Our family members, friends, neighbors and associates watch us. What do they see? Let us make certain that our conduct is worthy of the gospel. And let us remember, there's always someone watching.



Reclaiming Joy

By Glenn Hitchcock

IN the Garden of Eden when the man and woman sinned against God, an amazing phenomenon took place. When questioned by the Creator concerning their transgression, the man blamed God and the woman and the woman blamed the serpent (the Devil). While this incident was occurring, God simply noted their behavior and promptly gave the remedy that would take man beyond the blaming stage. Adam and Eve just stood before God blaming while God presented the remedy for their sin (Genesis 3:15). They were both equally guilty of sin and the need of the hour was to reclaim their lost innocence! Blaming behavior was not the cure for the problem, it only made it worse! What of our present day?

The dance of blaming continues still today with nearly everyone. Husbands blame wives and wives blame husbands. They are robbed of the precious joy of intimacy and friendship. Workers blame co-workers and children blame the dog. Satan is always the beneficiary whenever relationships can't grow beyond the blaming stage.

Why don't we wise up and learn to stop blaming others and blame ourselves for wrongs. God knows us! He is acquainted with every aspect of mankind, and for this reason He will judge mankind (Acts 17:30-31). God will be our only judge, James 4:12: "there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art Thou that judgest another?" Many are standing before our Divine Judge with guilt and sin-stained souls and instead of reclaiming the remission of their sins and

the purging of their consciences, they are blaming someone or something! It seems that everyone is at fault or to be blamed expect "ME."

Here is a challenge. Let's work to reclaim the lost intimacy, the absence of friendships, and the lack of family harmony. Blaming never settled the issue of sin and guilt. Study carefully Matthew 7:1-5: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote of thine eye: and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of the thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

These verses do not deny the right of making moral and spiritual judgments (cf. 7:6; 1 Corinthians 2:15; 5:9; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Philippians 3:2; 1 John 4:1), but forbid a bitter, hostile, and unkind spirit which delights in finding fault and blaming others. Hypocritical self-righteousness has no place in the life of a Christian. In the area of motives, no one of us can know the heart of another (only God can know this) and draw conclusions as to the "Why" of peoples actions, especially when those actions are indifferent or even good, is to invite God's judgment upon one's life.

As you journey through this belief life instead of blaming your mate, or fellowman—start reclaiming your own life and all of the joys that make living worthwhile. Reclaim don't blame! God has prepared the remedy; accept it and you will be abundantly blessed. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:3-4).



Christian Hope

by Adrian Doran

THE hope, which a Christian possesses, is far greater in substance than mere wishful thinking. The writer of the Hebrew letter said, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, who had been "called to be saints":

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then we do with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25).

That is why Christians base their hope on the substance of faith and their faith on evidence.

The word hope comes into comparison with such words as desire, expect, anticipate, wait, and look for. My hope

Remember in Prayer

Special Prayers

- Mike Batot in the loss of his mother-in-law; Ann Ryan Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer— more tumors are growing
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Ben Griffith—strep infection
- Wade Miller—diabetes
- Susan Noel— that she studies to understand God
- Russell Bender— that he studies to understand God
- Freeman Dudley—liver cancer
- Kaiser family
- Jones family
- Walker family
- Brother Odom (Abilene)—COPD
- Cody Ledesma—Drug Rehab
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- Platteville church of Christ
- TV Program & Advertiser Ads
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O'Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan
- Ernie Lawrence—Hutto, Texas

Military

- Chip O'Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Afghanistan
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Tech Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way