

Our Highest Hope

Contributed by Gary Henry, Word Points
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Gary Henry wrote this bulletin article about the hope that should motivate all our choices and actions. It is a great thing to meditate on as we begin a new year; we should make choices motivated and empowered with the hope of Glorifying our God and Father in heaven. It is our hopes that produce progress in our lives. Both in our outward conduct and our inward character, we are moved to do better than we've done in the past by the hope that better things are waiting for us up ahead. From time to time, other incentives and motivations may have an influence upon us, yet none of these move us forward with anything like the strength of hope. But there are many different kinds of hope, and some of these provide more power than others. Many of our hopes fall into the category of what may be called self-interest. Self-interest is not always a bad thing. Indeed, it can be very noble, as when we desire to inherit eternal life. But as powerful as some of our self-centered hopes may be, our real progress depends on something else. When what

we hope for is that God will be honored (even when that honor seems to conflict with our own interests), that is when the door is opened to the kind of progress we most need to make in life. When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he naturally hoped that his life would be spared. But that was neither his highest hope nor his main concern: "For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:19,20). What Paul hoped was that Christ would be "magnified" -- whether by his life or by his death! John wrote, "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Self-centered hopes are simply not powerful enough to "purify" us. In the long run, they will not keep us moving in God's direction and transform us into the glorious beings that we desire to become. If our progress is to reach its eternal perfection, our hopes must be centered on God's glory, not on our own preferences. Nothing else will do for us what has to be done. The hope that we may be a part of God's honor is the highest hope available to us. And if we wish to go anyplace other than where we've already been, we must lift our sights to this horizon.