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Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

### Can We Dream Again?

When we reach January 1, somehow we give ourselves permission to start all over. We make resolutions and plans and goals. Some we achieve, and many we don't. What's interesting is that January 1 does not miraculously change the details of our lives. It's not that, suddenly, everything is different. Interestingly, the difference between December 31 and January 1 is just twenty-four hours, not much variation at all. Life doesn't follow a calendar. We make calendars to mark time, plot plans, and look beyond the moment.

I wonder what might happen if we decided that every day is a brand new day? You know, don't you, that January is an artificial grid we place on the passing of our lives? We do, however, find a new perspective. It's more hopeful. Do we just give ourselves permission? Do we take a moment to become aware of the future? Do we focus on the way this day will affect tomorrow and all the days to follow? I'm not sure. I do believe, though, there's a real place in there (somewhere) for hope. The look to the future is often a look of hope. There's a "dream" feel to it.

I believe it's possible to lose that dream, however. When you're young all things are possible. Granted, our fantasies can run wild. We have a hard time believing that anything is *not* possible. We do have to grow up, and maturing has that element to it. Realism is just that, getting real. What a shame, however, to lose the big picture. How sad to quit in your heart... where hope happens. We might ask, how do we lose the dream? Is it just a function of growing up? Do we just get old? Do we get used to the hardness and harshness of life? Do dreams destroyed forevermore remain crushed? Do they have to, or can we hope again?

People are very complicated machines. What sparks joy or hope for one might not be just the ticket for another. I've noticed that men and women "hope" differently. Also, we move through stages in life. What stirs our hearts at one stage might leave us cold at another. How we find courage to try again after failure might be different depending on where and who we are. Some can find hope best alone, while others need a little hand from family or friends. People are complicated, and the hope within them is complicated as well.

I find my hope in Jesus. It's really hard to explain. Talking to Jesus and living with Him, I find myself often looking up. *Hope is a look up.* Living with Him, I am not alone. Hope is fertilized in the warmth of positive relationships. *Hope grows when we're connected.* Jesus taught us the value and potential of the human heart. Science is all about the outside. By this I mean it centers on the touchable, the testable, the seeable. Jesus knows and taught about the unseen man. While we may not be able to completely put our finger on it, He leads us to see and believe in that which we know is real, regardless of its unseen nature. *Hope is an inside experience.* I find my hope in Jesus, and I know you can too!

I love you,  
Jerry Rea