

NEWSLETTER

RESURRECTION HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

(Abrahamic Faith)

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THE CROWN OF GLORY

Self-Discipline

Winning even one medal demands meticulous care, not to say devotion. The athlete must pay constant attention to diet, with the object of building up energy and stamina to the required level. There must be great care to ensure that there is adequate sleep at night, to gain the maximum rest and relaxation. And, of course, there must be constant exercise to ensure peak fitness, and continuous application to the technical demands of the event.

Only by a concentrated effort in this way can an athlete hope to achieve success in the highly competitive arena of the Olympic Games. Yet there is no shortage of athletes willing to make immense sacrifices to achieve their coveted prize. This is what they live for.

Nor is it just athletics that makes such demands. The tennis player, who has done so well in the lead-up tournaments, must practice for hours daily as he or she strives to win the greatest of all tennis crowns – the Wimbledon singles title. This is the ultimate glory for all talented tennis players – to be acclaimed as champion on the Center Court! Then there are playing surfaces other than grass to master, and other tournaments to win in pursuit of the Grand Slam. The challenge goes on and on.

Personal Challenge

Nor is it just in the public eye that people strive for mastery and achievement, despite the demands of the discipline. Turning to another activity somewhat different, the mountain climber who has mastered some of the highest peaks around the world will turn his or her attention towards the conquest of that silent, forbidding giant whose icy crags reach upwards to the clouds – Mount Everest!

After a careful build-up, on peak after challenging peak, for the experienced climber this highest of all mountains represents the very pinnacle of human attainment. It is a challenge that the mountaineer has always found difficult to resist – despite the dangers and the deaths of many climbers. As the high point of his career, he will want to prove to himself that he can emulate the great feat that others have accomplished. That is what he lives for, and could die for.

Human Potential

Getting back to the realities of life, we may be surprised to learn that the Bible makes it plain that these things – regarded as great accomplishments in this life – have no such place in the eternal purpose of God with man and with His earth.

These human exploits – like winning the Olympics, achieving the Wimbledon Championship or conquering Mount Everest – have to do with the purely physical attributes of human nature.

God wants something else to be achieved, and holds out a much greater reward than a medal, or a trophy, or a set of Everest photographs.

We are told in the Book of Genesis, the first Book of the Bible, that man was created “*in the image of God*” (*Genesis 1:26*), having been given an ability to know right from wrong – what we now call a “conscience” – and the capacity to acknowledge his Creator in his life by obeying the laws designed for his salvation. The Bible says that God is –

“long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9NKJV).

He wants everyone to realize their true spiritual potential. If we devote all our efforts in the quest for the glory and honor we can obtain in this life, which will be our final reward. For these worldly achievements have no moral worth in the sight of God, who is concerned with our spiritual development and ultimate salvation.

He wants to bestow eternal life on those who are faithful and obedient, a Divine prize-giving which is scheduled to take place when the coming Kingdom of God is established on the earth. That will be the time when the Lord Jesus Christ returns from heaven to be its King, ruling from Jerusalem.

Fading or Forever?

The “*crown of glory*” that can be won in this present order of things can at best only be described as transitory – whether a medal, a trophy, a qualification, a promotion, or whatever. The Apostle Paul, writing to the believers at Corinth, said that

- “*the form of this world is passing away*” (*I Corinthians 7:31*).

Similarly, the Apostle John says:

- “*The world is passing away*”, but, he added, “*he who does the will of God abides forever*” (*I John 2:17*).

The teachings of Jesus make it abundantly clear that we cannot have the better of two worlds for, he once asked:

"What is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul..." (Matthew 16:26).

The word "soul" in this context simply means "life". Don't strive for earthly glory, Jesus was saying, but lose out on the prospect of eternal life – the life which is life indeed! For the person who, in humility and faith, turns to God and who lives in accordance with His plan of salvation, is doing what is pleasing to the Creator and will be blessed with everlasting life in God's coming Kingdom.

PRAYER REQUESTS

John Branch, John Hartley, Vanessa Phillips, Paul Jones, Jimmie/Wanda Keller, Frances Hedrick, Tyler Richardson, Bert Peek, David Krogh, Judy Ritch, Jerold Brewer, Kevin/Keila/Zerden Keller, Hub/Mozelle Minton, Dolly Yount, Fay Gentry, David Brewer, Susan Stine Bradley, Bill Brewer, Ken Wood, James Walker, Victoria Corpening, Justin Keller, Tommy Clonch, Miriam Colvard, David Reid, April Land, Mark Pennington, David Rowe, Cliff Ellis, Tony Sloan, Tom Swallows, Dave Church, Brandon Ritch, Dee/Doris Winkler, Brandi Clontz, Maddie Austin, Steve West, Arthur Jones, Linda DeAngelo, Douglas Whisnant, Bea Holden, Joan Rowe, Verlie Duncan, Coral Reeder, Clarence/Florence Walker, Mary Monroe, Juanita English, Ruth Robinson, Jack Anderson, Doug Whisnant, Hansel McNeil, Sandy Thomas, Eldridge Phillips, Shirley Helton, Melissa Smith, Lt. Justin Smith, Shawn/Mirra Tilger, Chris/Melody/Bryce Corpening, Amelia/Daniel Corley, Shane McCracken, Kathy Barnwell, John Phillips, national economy, ABC/COG re-location, the Lord's SOON return.

Note: Please turn in the addresses to Becky Ritch of people that you add to our prayer list!

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, February 7th, 6 p.m. in the church. All men are encouraged to attend and bring another friend who hasn't experienced the fellowship one with the other.

OFFICIAL BOARD MEETING

Saturday, February 7th, 7 p.m. in the church. Board members are asked to be in attendance to carry on the business of the church

GRACE HOLDEN CIRCLE MEETING

Saturday, February 7th, 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies are invited to attend. Cookbooks are still available - \$10.00 each. Wanda Keller is program leader program, Elizabeth Duncan, prayer leader.

VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

You are invited to a Valentine's Party on Feb. 14, 2 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Bring your family for a sweet time!

YOUTH DONATION LUNCH

Sunday, Feb. 15, 12 noon

Support the efforts of our youth as they seek to raise funds for their projects and activities. They will be serving **soup/sandwiches/dessert/drink** after morning worship on the 15th. Enjoy their meal and make a generous donation toward the youth work. Progress is being made on the "Fields of Grace" youth social room in the basement of the fellowship hall. On Jan. 23rd many of them helped move things into an area and carry in building supplies to get ready for the construction of this room.

CAROLINAS CONFERENCE MID-WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

February 20 - 22, 2009

Advent Christian Campground, Blowing Rock, NC
Youth, 7th grade and up may attend. Cost is \$50 for Retreat and \$50 for Skiing. See Elizabeth Duncan for an application.

YOUTH SUNDAY

MARCH 1st, 2009

Our youth are planning a special day for Youth Sunday. Plan to be in attendance to experience morning worship with them. Bring a friend. Encourage our youth to be leaders in the church and share their faith with their friends.



On the First Day of February

On this first day of February,
Lord, give me extra love;
I need a bountiful supply
Sent from Heaven up above.

Equip me with enough, O Lord,
To be kinder every day;
To show more consideration
To those I meet along my way.

May I be worthy to receive
The extra love I need;
Give me patience to be kind
In action, word, and deed.