

the Encourager

Hope for Those Who Hurt

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VISIONS OF
HEAVEN

A PUBLICATION OF DAVE DRAVECKY'S OUTREACH OF HOPE

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Special thanks to the Hope In Christ Cancer Support Group in Sacramento, California, and Pastor Ted Haggard of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado for sharing their thoughts on this topic.

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The mission of Dave Dravecky's Outreach of Hope is to serve suffering people, especially those with cancer and amputation, by offering resources for encouragement, comfort, and hope through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. *The Encourager* is free, a gift from us to you. When you've finished reading it, don't throw the gift away, pass it along!

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ESCAPIST ABOUT
PONDERING
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ARRIVE, EVEN NOW
ITS ATMOSPHERE
CAN FILL US WITH
HOPE.

JAN DRAVECKY

WELCOME

Dear Friends,

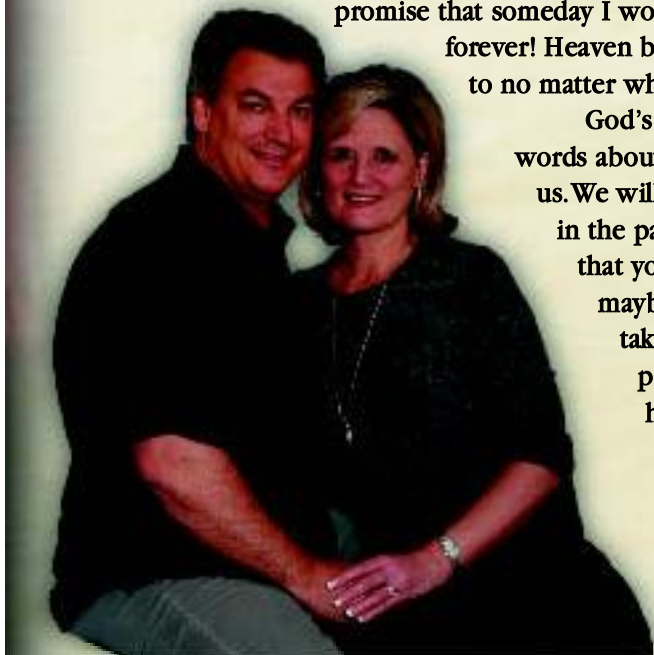
There is great truth and hope in the statement, "Life is a dream and heaven is reality." Unfortunately, when we are facing our own mortality, we may have a hard time looking at it that way. We may be more likely to say, "Life is reality and heaven is a dream!"

This is understandable. As we journey through pain and suffering, our families and friends become a major focus. We think about leaving them behind and worry about who will take care of them. We may become so concerned about and focused on life here on earth that those of us who have put our faith and trust in Jesus forget that heaven is our real home!

Of course these are legitimate concerns, but they are not to be our only focus. The truth is, our perspective changes as we turn our thoughts toward the reality of heaven. A focus on heaven draws us closer to God to whom we can entrust every concern we have for our loved ones. A focus on heaven gives us an anchor that helps us endure our suffering.

Prior to my cancer diagnosis, I used the word *heaven* way too casually. But after the diagnosis it became very real to me. I had no promises when it came to facing cancer. There was so much uncertainty. Heaven was the only hope I had! I could confidently cling to that hope because many years ago I became a Christian by responding to God's call to follow Him. I received His promise that someday I would live with Him in heaven forever! Heaven became a reality I could cling to no matter what happened in life.

God's Word is full of comforting words about the place He is preparing for us. We will share those words with you in the pages that follow. My hope is that you will be encouraged, and maybe even a little excited as we take a brief glimpse at the promises God offers about heaven, our real home!



DISCOVERING THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

by Jan Dravecky

AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER. —Psalm 23:6

When I was a child, I could grasp the idea of God a little bit; I thought of Him like a big granddaddy in the sky. But the idea of heaven was more difficult; it was just way, way out there somewhere. It wasn't something I knew much about, and for a long time I rarely thought about it.

Since then I've realized that many of us are a bit like children when it comes to thinking about heaven. We like the idea of living with God forever in heavenly bliss, but we rarely give heaven a second thought. It's hard to believe, but the place we plan to spend eternity remains a mystery to us.

Heaven is a mystery in part because we are incapable of fully comprehending what it will be like and what it will mean to us. It is also a mystery because we don't investigate it. We rarely give heaven a second thought until the pain and suffering of this life forces us to grasp for a greater hope.

I never realized how important heaven was until Dave got cancer. Then, heaven got my attention! When the threat of death became real to me, the reality of heaven zoomed into focus. The hope of heaven was something I could look forward to and hang onto no matter what was happening in my life on earth.

But as comforting as the hope of heaven was, something still bothered me: I didn't know much about heaven. It still seemed too distant, too unknown. Because I am an inquisitive person, I began asking questions. *What, exactly, will heaven be like?* I wondered. *What will my body be like? When will I get to heaven?* And on and on.

I looked first for books about heaven, but at the time there were very few books on the subject. So my search for answers led me straight to the Scriptures. And the more I learned, the more excited I became.

One of my big questions about heaven was what would happen to our physical bodies. Dave, after all, was facing the loss of a limb. So imagine my excitement as I read 1 Corinthians 15:42-44: "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body,

it is raised a spiritual body.” What a comfort to learn that our earthly bodies are temporary—they are not made to last—and we will be raised up and given new bodies that are appropriate for heaven!

I also wanted to learn what heaven was like and what life would be like there. So I began reading the portions of Scripture that describe these things.

The visual descriptions of heaven are truly amazing—incredible images of beauty, light, color, purity, and abundant life. But even more amazing to me were the descriptions of how we would experience life in heaven. The pain and suffering I saw in life on earth had always troubled me, but in Revelation 21:3-5, I read about God living with His people and wiping away “every tear from their eyes.” In heaven, God will make everything new! The old order of death, mourning, crying, and pain that we have known our entire lives *will be no more!* What a wonderful comfort that is!

As I investigated the truth about heaven, I not only found comfort, I gained a whole new perspective on life. I discovered that heaven truly is a wonderful gift. Even more important, I learned that nothing here on earth can take away the promise of living with God forever. Now that’s a hope we can hold onto!

CULTIVATE, THEN, YOUR HOPE...SPEAK OF
HEAVEN AND ACT AS THOUGH YOU REALLY
EXPECTED TO GO THERE. MAKE THE
WORLD KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A HOPE OF
HEAVEN...THAT YOU ARE A BELIEVER IN
ETERNAL GLORY AND THAT YOU HOPE TO
BE WHERE JESUS IS.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

HOME SWEET HOME

by Kim Jones

An embroidered “Home Sweet Home” sign hangs near the front door of our home. As much as I love my home, there are days when I am tempted to take the sign down. In fact, there are days when life on earth is anything but sweet.

Just last week I listened as a 28-year-old cancer patient wrestled with his doctor’s recommendation that he get his affairs in order. The same day a family member and close friend were each diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. I looked forward to the sweet rest of home, but a ferocious hailstorm had left my petunias looking like they’d been run through a salad shooter. To top it off, our television decided we should return to the fifties and view our entertainment in black and white! (I know it’s trivial, but it’s irritating.)

In a brief attempt to escape reality, my husband and I opted for a change of scenery. We went on a tour of homes that line one of the finest golf courses in our area. Each “castle” came with a glossy brochure highlighting the perks of ownership. As we strolled through each magnificent home, I kept thinking, *No matter who buys these incredible homes, it’s just a matter of time before a hail storm or heartache knocks on the front door. It’s just a matter of time before they realize that this home will need repair, that it isn’t as sweet as they had hoped. Will they, like me, find themselves homesick, longing for a better, safer, quieter place to live?*

That got me thinking about how a brochure might describe the features of heaven, God’s home. So let’s take a look at some highlights of the home God is preparing for us in heaven.

MASTER-BUILDER CRAFTSMANSHIP!

Our heavenly home will be built by no one less than Jesus, the Master Builder. “I am going there (to heaven) to prepare a place for you” (John 14:3). Imagine! The architect of the universe, the shaper of the Grand Canyon, and the crafter of a human being is building me a home! If He paves the streets of heaven with gold and carves its gates from pearls (Revelation 21:21), can you imagine what He uses for floors and walls?

MAINTENANCE FREE!

No more painting, patching, or potholes! Our heavenly home will never need repairs or maintenance because nothing gets old, tired, or broken (including us). Life on earth is subject to the physical laws of the universe, the cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death (Romans 8:21). Paint peels, pipes leak, and plants need pruning. But in heaven, “the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4). Everything will work perfectly—forever!

MORTGAGE FREE!

Our heavenly dwelling be mortgage-free, and because God's children inherit His Kingdom (Matthew 25:34), everything in heaven will be ours! We won't need to buy or sell anything, because nothing will wear out. We will work, but it won't be for wages and it won't be the difficult, sweat-inducing, stressful "labor" we know on earth (Genesis 3:17-19).

PERFECT NEIGHBORHOOD!

The crime statistics for this neighborhood are impressive! Heaven is the "home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13), so no crime can exist there. Even the thought of crime will be erased.

In his book, *Escape the Coming Night*, Pastor David Jeremiah invites us to imagine a city where everyone is holy, "a community where no one lied, no shady business deals were ever discussed, no unclean movies or pictures were seen." No Neighborhood Watch or deadbolts needed!

BREATHTAKING VIEWS!

Picture in your mind the most breathtaking scenery on earth. Multiply that beauty a hundred thousand times, and you still haven't captured the beauty of heaven because the Bible tells us that "No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Even though our world is incredibly beautiful, it is still a fallen world plagued by sin and death (Genesis 3:17). Try to imagine, then, what a perfect world must look like! A little girl who was walking with her father in the evening captured a glimpse of the wonder of heaven when she exclaimed, "O daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be?"¹

NEVER MOVE AGAIN!

In heaven there are no job changes, farewell parties, evictions, or good-byes. Our search for peace, contentment, and meaning will be over. Every desire in our heart will be met because we will be with God, and in His "presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever" (Psalm 16:11, NASB).

Our home in heaven is "not merely a place, not merely a point in time, but a way of living and a way of relating that our hearts ached for but can hardly grasp, bound to this earth as we are."² In heaven we will be "Home Sweet Home" at last!

**I HAVE COME HOME
AT LAST!
THIS IS MY REAL
COUNTRY!
I BELONG HERE.
THIS IS THE LAND
I HAVE BEEN
LOOKING FOR
ALL MY LIFE,
THOUGH I NEVER
KNEW IT TILL NOW.**

THE UNICORN
THE LAST BATTLE, C.S. LEWIS

¹ *Unto the Hills*, by Billy Graham, Word Publishing.
² Sue Kline, *Discipleship Journal*, July/August 2003.

Dave and Jan Dravecky walked out of their personal time of suffering having discovered that heaven offers a hope we can count on even during life's darkest hours. In *Glimpses of Heaven*, they open your eyes to the wonderful truth of heaven. Let heaven's precious reality captivate your heart and give you a joy and a hope that cannot be shaken.



\$ 8.00

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To order your copy of 'Glimpses of Heaven' use the toll-free number or visit us on the web!

Order Toll-Free 1-800-295-5880 or www.OutreachOfHope.org

FOR THE JOURNEY

Wisdom

YOU GUIDE ME WITH YOUR COUNSEL, AND AFTERWARD YOU WILL TAKE ME INTO GLORY.
WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT YOU? AND EARTH HAS NOTHING I DESIRE BESIDES YOU.

PSALM 73:24-25

HEAVEN WILL BE A PLACE WITH NO SIN AND NO WORRIES,
A PLACE WITH NO PROBLEMS AND NO HURRIES.

MEGHAN KALMUS, AGE FIFTEEN

THEY WERE LONGING FOR A BETTER COUNTRY—A HEAVENLY ONE. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT
ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM.

HEBREWS 11:16

THE REALITY OF HEAVEN DOESN'T TAKE AWAY THE PAIN OF OUR SUFFERING OR OUR LOSSES,
BUT IT ASSURES US THAT OUR PAIN IS TEMPORARY.

DAVE DRAVECKY

I AM VERY ANXIOUS THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF JESUS
CHRIST... NO ONE EVER LIVED, WHO WAS SO GOOD, SO KIND, SO GENTLE, AND SO SORRY FOR ALL
PEOPLE WHO DID WRONG, OR WERE IN ANY WAY ILL OR MISERABLE... YOU CAN NEVER THINK
WHAT A GOOD PLACE HEAVEN IS WITHOUT KNOWING WHO HE WAS AND WHAT HE DID.

CHARLES DICKINS

I HEARD A VOICE THUNDER FROM THE THRONE: "LOOK! LOOK! GOD HAS MOVED INTO THE
NEIGHBORHOOD, MAKING HIS HOME WITH MEN AND WOMEN! THEY'RE HIS PEOPLE, HE'S THEIR
GOD. HE'LL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES. DEATH IS GONE FOR GOOD—TEARS GONE,
CRYING GONE, PAIN GONE—ALL THE FIRST ORDER OF THINGS GONE."

REVELATION 21:3-4, THE MESSAGE

OUR FATHER REFRESHES US ON THE JOURNEY WITH SOME PLEASANT INNS,
BUT WILL NOT ENCOURAGE US TO MISTAKE THEM FOR HOME.

C.S. LEWIS

LET'S NOT GET TOO SETTLED IN, TOO SATISFIED WITH THE GOOD THINGS DOWN HERE ON EARTH.
THEY ARE ONLY THE TINKLING SOUNDS OF THE ORCHESTRA WARMING UP. THE REAL SONG IS
ABOUT TO BREAK INTO A HEAVENLY SYMPHONY, AND ITS PRELUDE IS ONLY A FEW MOMENTS AWAY.

JONI EARECKSON TADA

HEAVEN

PERFECT IN EVERY WAY

Heaven is our true home. It is where our hearts belong and where our dreams will find their ultimate fulfillment. It is where we will become whole, where we will be made perfect—totally free from the pain and limitations of our fallen, sinful nature (Hebrews 12:23). Just imagine...

A PERFECT BODY

Philippians 3:20-21 tells us that God will make us fit for heaven because He will “transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his (Jesus’) glorious body.” That’s an amazing promise! Jesus’ resurrected body was far superior to His human body—we know He walked on water, stepped through stone, and was glorified (or luminous) in appearance. Even though His glorified body was very different from His earthly body, people who knew Jesus still recognized Him.

Although our heavenly body will be like Jesus’ glorified body, we don’t know exactly what it will look like. First John 3:2 tells us “what we will be has not been made known.” But this much we do know: our human body is limited by the laws of nature; our heavenly body won’t be. Our heavenly body will be immortal, indestructible, glorious, magnificent, and spiritual—perfectly suited for eternity in heaven.

A PERFECT MIND

Imagine a perfectly functioning mind! That’s what the apostle Paul says we can look forward to in heaven: “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

In his book, *Lets Talk About Heaven*, Dr. Chuck McGowen notes that Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century, is reported to have said that he “only knew about three percent of all there is to know. In heaven, we will have the capacity to know the other ninety seven percent,” and we won’t forget any of it!

Imagine, too, what it would be like to have a perfectly pure mind that is completely free of hurtful or vengeful thoughts about others, frivolous daydreams, or dark fantasies. In heaven we won’t be plagued by guilt over even a single errant thought.

Best of all, imagine a perfectly understanding mind—one that fully comprehends spiritual truths. Passages of Scripture and spiritual principles that mystified us on earth will become crystal clear in heaven. Those who have wrestled with questions of “why” or “for what purpose,” will find answers. “On earth,” Joni Eareckson Tada explains, “the underside of the tapestry was tangled and unclear; but in heaven we will stand amazed to see the topside of the tapestry and how God beautifully embroidered each circumstance into a pattern for our good and His glory” (see Romans 8:28).

PERFECT RELATIONSHIPS

Imagine relationships with no squabbles, misunderstandings, hurt feelings, gossip, or disappointment! Just as the disciples instantly recognized Moses and Elijah, men they had never met, when they came to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-4), we will recognize each other in heaven. Even better, those relationships will be perfect because we will have been made perfect.

On earth we are diamonds in the rough—covered in dirt, roughly hewn, unpolished. In heaven, we'll be flawless and radiant. We'll know each other perfectly. We'll see each other as God intended us to be, in our fullness and uniqueness. In his book, *Answers to Life's Problems*, Billy Graham describes our heavenly relationships as being far deeper and closer "than was ever possible on earth, without the imperfections and sins that mar our human relationships."

A PERFECT HEART

By far the most rapturous and joyful moments on earth are those spent in God's presence. Whether that moment occurs during an earnest time of worship or as we view a glorious sunset, once we have tasted God's goodness and experienced the fullness of joy that comes from being near Him, we are never fully satisfied with anything else this world has to offer.

Therein lies our greatest joy and sorrow. We have a wayward heart that constantly pulls us away from God. No sooner do we begin to experience God's presence than—out of nowhere—we sin. We feel conviction, guilt, and misery, we confess our failing, we ask for forgiveness, and in no time at all we begin the cycle all over again. What a relentless, exhausting, and seemingly endless battle!

The Apostle Paul sums our condition up in Romans 7:21-24 (*The Message*), "It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?"

Yes, it is! And 1 John 3:2 (NASB) provides the answer: "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him!" In heaven, we will at last have a clean heart. Like Jesus, we will be free of sin and will finally be free to stand in God's presence without guilt, condemnation, or shame. We'll enjoy uninterrupted, joyous, fulfilling, relationship with God. Now that's heaven!

IN HEAVEN GOD
PROMISES THE
QUALITIES OF
PERFECTION AND
ETERNITY—QUALITIES
THAT CANNOT NOW
BE FOUND ANYWHERE
ON THIS EARTH.
WHAT A PROSPECT!

A.W. TOZER

THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

AN ANCHOR FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Hebrews 6:19

Sometimes heaven is the last thing we want to think about when we're suffering. After all, to contemplate heaven is to admit that our suffering may ultimately take us there. We may want to spend eternity in heaven, but most of us, in the words of one cancer patient's wife, "don't want to go there today."

Yet heaven offers us far more than a nice place to go when life on earth is over. Heaven assures us that we are eternal beings who were made for a life that earth simply cannot provide. Heaven offers us a rock-solid hope that the best is yet to come. The hope that heaven awaits us can be an anchor of strength that encourages us while we live through the hardships of life on earth. So consider these anchor points that hold fast in any storm.

HEAVEN ASSURES US THAT OUR SUFFERING WILL END. The pain we experience on earth will not last forever. Although we may struggle to keep the end in sight, there is an end. There is no suffering, sin, death, disease, or distress in heaven. Pastor Ted Haggard puts it simply, "If you are sick, it's temporary. If your body is dying, you will not die. When your body can no longer hold you, you...will step into eternity."

Lord, give me the strength to endure my trial, my pain. My suffering blinds me and makes me shortsighted. Help me remember that You will one day set me free from this frail, fragile life and give me a life free of all suffering that will last forever.

OUR SUFFERING WILL BE ECLIPSED BY HEAVEN'S JOY. No matter how overwhelming or unrelenting our suffering may be on earth, it can't begin to stack up against the permanent state of joy and ecstasy we will experience in heaven. The hope of heaven prompted the apostle Paul, a man who was well acquainted with intense suffering, to refer to his trials as "light and momentary" when compared with the "eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Imagine that! Our pain will be totally eclipsed by the beauty, splendor, and magnificence we will experience in heaven. Just as a cool glass of water is most appreciated by one who is thirsty, the joys of heaven will be most refreshing to those who have suffered on earth. That hope gives Sharol, who has fought seven recurrences of cancer, the confidence to say, "heaven makes it worth it all."

Lord, my suffering feels oppressive and permanent—not the least bit light and momentary. The idea of experiencing eternal joy is beyond my comprehension right now. It's too far away. Somehow place in my heart the hope and joy of heaven.

HEAVEN IS EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL. The hardships, doubts, pain, uncertainty, heartache, and fear we experience during times of suffering make us feel very much out of control. During our darkest moments, some of us wonder if God notices, if He cares, or if He is helpless to assist us.

But the reality of heaven stands as a monument to the fact that God made us for a better world and that He is faithful to fulfill His promises. It reminds us that despite the difficulties in our lives, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28 NASB). When we step into heaven, we'll marvel at how God has turned every apparent failure, tragedy, or loss into His triumph.

Lord, help me to remember Your love and faithfulness. Don't let me forget that You are in complete control. You care for me so deeply that You count every hair on my head as well as every tear on my cheek. Help me to remember that one day I will be face to face with You in perfect peace.

DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED. TRUST IN GOD; TRUST ALSO IN ME. IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY ROOMS; IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I AM GOING THERE TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME BACK AND TAKE YOU TO BE WITH ME THAT YOU ALSO MAY BE WHERE I AM.

JOHN 14:1-3

HEAVEN A TREASURE WE CAN ENJOY FOREVER

It's easy to ignore heaven when life is sailing along smoothly, but suffering has a way of focusing our attention on heaven and what is truly important in life. In her book, *Heaven Your Real Home*, Joni Eareckson Tada, who has been paralyzed for more than three decades, writes, "Broken homes and broken hearts crush our illusions that earth can keep its promises that it can really satisfy. Only the hope of heaven can truly move our passions off this world—which God knows could never fulfill us anyway—and place them where they will find their glorious fulfillment."

God does not want us to live our lives on earth as if eternity doesn't matter. In fact, Scripture tells us that everything we do has its reward on earth or in heaven. We can focus our hopes, dreams, and actions on what God considers to be valuable, and it will result in permanent, indestructible reward in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Or, we can set our sights on accumulating earthly treasure, which will perish and be worthless in eternity (Matthew 6:20).

God's desire is that we "may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance..." (Ephesians 1:18).

PREPARED FOR HEAVEN?

Imagine setting off on the trip of a lifetime with no knowledge of your destination, no map, and no compass. It would be unthinkable! When we're anticipating an important trip, we research our destination. We want to know what to expect, what to pack, what preparations we need to make to ensure a safe arrival and a pleasant experience. We want to learn as much about it as we can.

Yet many of us spend more time planning our annual vacation than we do preparing for our ultimate destination.

It's not all that surprising that we don't prepare for what's ahead. We live in a climate of comfort. We have achieved some success in creating our own kind of heaven here on earth, and we want to hold onto it. As one caregiver has observed, "we are so entrenched in this world that we don't want to let go. Our kids are here, our friends are here."

Then, too, this is the only life we've known, and we may have responsibilities that keep our thoughts very much tied to earth. A cancer patient and single mother said, "I don't even want to think about heaven. I've always known that heaven is my home, but I'm not finished here."

But the reality is, one day we will be finished here. One day we will let go, whether we're ready to or not. So the question is, are we prepared?

Have you learned enough about heaven that you want to be there? Have you prepared for the journey to heaven's gates? Have you shared enough of your life on earth with God that you long to spend an eternity in His presence? Does the reality of heaven infuse your daily life—yes, even your suffering—with an unquenchable hope?

**THE MAN WHO EXPECTS TO GO
TO HEAVEN MUST TAKE THE TIME
TO STUDY THE ROUTE THAT WILL
GET HIM THERE.**

UNKNOWN

STRAIGHT TALK FROM DAVE

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN?

I'll never forget the day the doctors looked at Jan and me and said, "You have cancer!" I didn't want cancer, I wanted to live for a long time! But as scary as it was to hear the word, *cancer*, I found peace in the promises in the Bible, promises I had embraced years before.

I first discovered those promises when my minor league roommate challenged me to read the Bible. I had tremendous respect for God and always thought if I could be good enough maybe I'd have a chance at heaven. But as I read, I realized I was a sinner (something most of us realize when we take a good, hard look at ourselves!).

Bible teacher R.C. Sproul perfectly describes what I discovered: "While there is a great attraction to the idea that 'nice' people will go to heaven, Scripture clearly states that all humanity is under penalty of death because of sin." But thankfully God made it possible for us to avoid this penalty.

Through the Bible, I learned that Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. If we ask Him to forgive us for our sins, He not only forgives us but promises that life in heaven awaits us! Little did I know how important that promise would be when I learned I had cancer. I am so thankful for the hope I had, and still have, in Jesus! Cancer could have taken my life, but my hope is beyond life on earth. It is in the promise of heaven, the hope Jesus offers to us through His death and resurrection!

I am certain I'm going to heaven because I have received the precious gift of forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ. Anyone who trusts in Him can have that same hope.

God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son. So, whoever has the Son has life; whoever rejects the Son, rejects life. My purpose in writing is simply this: that you who believe in God's Son will know beyond the shadow of doubt that you have eternal life, the reality and not the illusion (1 John 5:11-13, *The Message*).

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HEAVEN

HEAVEN CANNOT
BE DESCRIBED
IN WORDS OF
MORTAL MEN.
ALTHOUGH
THE ARTISTS
DO THEIR BEST,
IT CAN'T BE
DRAWN IN PEN.
IMAGINATIONS,
THOUGH THEY TRY,
FALL SHORT
IN EVERY WAY.
FOR ONLY GOD
CAN MAKE A PLACE
WHERE ALL
WILL LONG TO STAY.

CARLA MUIR