

REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15, NKJV).

Some people misunderstand true spirituality. Others know and consciously repudiate it. They may consider Christian beliefs to be hopelessly backward, an infringement upon their rights, socially corrosive or something more sinister. We are not only citizens of the kingdom; we are denizens of the planet. As such we will encounter those who have little appreciation for the things we hold dearest.

Peter counsels Christians to be prepared to explain themselves. This does not mean to be able to recite a treatise on evidences on cue. What it does mean is that *every* Christian should *always* be ready to adequately verbalize why they are sacrificing earthly pleasures for “*an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled ... reserved in heaven*” (1 Pet. 1:4).

In order to do this, the basis of our hope must first be clear *to us*. Have we sanctified God in our hearts? Have we deeply contemplated our sins and their consequences? Do we recognize the significance of Jesus and have we genuinely committed our lives to Him? If our faith is the genuine product of personal, reasoned reflection, then we will be able to articulate it in a useful way.

But another crucial component of this testimony is attitude: our answer must be garnished “*with meekness and fear*.” Christian wives are to display “*a gentle and quiet spirit*” toward their unbelieving husbands (1 Pet. 3:4). The Christian’s position is likely more deliberate and circumspect than that of most unbelievers. It may therefore be tempting to answer with a smirk or superior air. We may win the point and lose the opportunity to gain a soul.

If our hope is not well-defined enough to explain, will it be stable enough to sustain us through days of tragedy or seasons of hardship? JMJ