

# Hope Source

## Home For the Holidays

Did you enjoy Thanksgiving? Did you make it home, or did you go see some of your new friend's families? Have any good stories? (Please send them in – we are always interested in your stories!)

Well, just think, in another few weeks, you get to go home for a long time. Are you looking forward to it? If you are; great. If not, well, you never know. It is not always that bad.

If this is your first time going home for a break, expect things to change. If you are away at school, you have spent the past few months living on your own. You may not see the world in the same way you did when you left home. This is not a bad thing, but it is a hard thing for your relatives to understand. For them you are like a tape in the VCR. Someone pressed the pause button. Now you are back. What they do not know is that you have not been on pause. You have changed, grown, and experienced new things.

The fact that you have had new experiences is a good thing – you will have a lot to talk about. But remember, this is a two way street – they have changed since you were there too. Remember that they have a lot of stories to share, even if you talk regularly on the phone.

But most of all, just don't expect things to be the same as they were. (But that does not mean that they may not be better – siblings have been know to change from the worlds biggest pain into the world best friend.) Just remember to expect change and face it with hope.

- Hope Source is an online publication of [SharingTheHope.org](http://SharingTheHope.org)
  - Feel free to contact us with stories, suggestions, and anything else at: [college@sharingthehope.org](mailto:college@sharingthehope.org)
- If you wish to reprint any of these articles, please feel free to contact us as well.

## A Simple Request

Jesus is the reason for the season!  
Share the hope of Christ with  
someone in your life.

## ADVENT

Christmas is coming. In Christian circles, we call these four weeks of preparation Advent. It is the beginning of the Church year, a time of preparing, and a time of reflecting.

Our church has been talking a lot about this season. We have been talking about being ready for Christ's coming. In fact, our pastor has challenged us with this question: "Is there any evidence of spiritual complacency in your life? If so, how might God help you to change?"

It is a hard question. Topics of discussion have included everything from stewardship to choosing what to buy for Christmas presents. These are hard topics, but some that need consideration, especially on a college budget. How do you get presents for all your cousins, your family, and even your new friends, all on that less-than minimum wage job the school gave you?

One idea – think about little things that you can get. I have been amazed at how far a box of cheap Wal-Mart chocolate cordials can go in lighting my mother's face. I have also been astounded at the response from my Grandmother over a can-opener. It is all about getting things that people like or need. It is not about getting the newest toy or the most expensive thing. In fact, how often can you brag about a present that someone is still using several years later?

Another idea (one suggested at Church) is a set of gift certificates of time. A promised present of time reading to a sibling, freedom to override your choice of TV shows, or time on the computer – who knows – just find things that are meaningful to the other person – and give them a "free" gift. They will never argue about it, even though it did not cost you're a dime.

## Talk-Back

We're waiting! Tells us what you want to read. You can email us at: [college@sharingthehope.org](mailto:college@sharingthehope.org)

## FINAL EXAMS

Well, it's crunch time. Now is when you get the opportunity to demonstrate that all your hard work was worth the money that you will be paying in a few years.

First, remember that this is not an exercise in cramming. (Though that may help!) Mostly, it is an exercise in proving that you have been awake in class and have thought about the material.

Here are some preparation tips:

1. Start studying early (if it's not too late).
2. Review previous tests, if you had them. It will give you a feel for the types of questions that were important in the past.
3. Review someone's notes who is doing well in the class. (Another perspective never hurts.)
4. Work in a study group. Not only are the friendships worth it, but there is some good studying that can go on. (Or use it as a chance to make some new friends.)
5. If the teacher gives possible questions, write out practice answers. It will help you remember the key points while taking the test, even if you can't take the answers with you.
6. Take-home tests are your worst nightmare. The answers had best be well thought out and researched.
7. Ditto with papers.
8. GET YOUR REST. Falling asleep during the test is usually considered poor form. ☺

**ADVICE FROM THE PROF:**  
I AM ASKING YOU TO BRING BACK  
THE MOON, BUT I WOULD BE  
THRILLED IF YOU BROUGHT BACK A  
MOON ROCK.

## Final Exam Survival Kit

- Pizza
- Mountain Dew, Jolt, Code Red, Coke, Pepsi or any other highly caffeinated, carbonated drink
- Power drink of your choice
- Chocolate
- Starburst, Sweet Tarts, or any other source of sugar.
- Doritos, Pringles, Cheese curls, chips & salsa etc.
- Big, baggy sweatshirt
- Index cards, highlighters, blank paper, good pen, text books, notes
- Study guides, sample questions, old test (if legally obtained)
- Computer lab schedule, library hours.
- Alarm clock, watch

**Warning:**  
Avoid at all costs the  
**James Bond**  
**marathon**  
on whatever station is  
showing it.

### Hope Source Update

Hope Source will continue publishing during break so please check your email! Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Carol to Contemplate

For several years I worked as a pianist for a middle school choir. Each year we would go sing at one of the local malls for Christmas. It was during this time, that the words of this old carol were made clear to me. I find that they are very special in relation to the world we live in. Pause for a few minutes and think about the significance of:

### I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

By: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow - 1864  
and Jean Baptiste Calkin - 1872

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet the words repeat  
**Of peace on earth good will to men.**

I tho't how, as the day had come,  
The bellfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along th'un-broken song  
**Of peace on earth good will to men.**

And in despair I bowed my head.  
"There is no peace on earth," I said,  
"For hate is strong and mocks the song  
**Of peace on earth good will to men."**

Then pealed the bells  
more loud and deep:

"God is not dead,  
nor doth He sleep;

The wrong shall fail,  
the right prevail,

**With peace on earth  
good will to men."**

As you prepare to go into the world, what can you do to make it more peaceful? One simple thing, as you celebrate the season, please remember the soldiers that prepare and presently fight to preserve our freedom and peace.

## SCRAWNY SHEEP AND A MOTLEY MANGER

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Have you ever thought of yourself as scrawny? Have you ever thought of that as a good description of anything? Me neither. But then I heard a sermon on scrawny sheep about what it means to be scrawny and what it means to God to be scrawny.

In this passage, it says that God is going to take care of his sheep and he particularly has an eye out for the scrawny sheep. What does He mean?

Our pastor talked about how God is referring to the spiritual condition of the sheep. Some are fat and some are scrawny. Fat, in this case is a bad thing – it means that they are lazy and complacent in their spiritual lives. Others are scrawny - thinned down by continual spiritual growth and conditioning.

While he was talking, I thought of another reason some sheep are scrawny – because they are lost, abandoned and hurt. They are searching for someone to take care of them, wishing there was someone to shelter them.

What does that have to do with us, or with Christmas? It means that those that are scrawny for good reasons need to look for the scrawny without reasons. Christ was born in a place that probably had some pretty scrawny sheep. After all, they were important enough to be the first to hear of his birth. Do you know some scrawny sheep? Is there someone in your dorm, in a class, in your choir, or on your sports team that is looking pretty scrawny about now? Do they need someone to help them find a place to rest and refresh?

You know that place. It's a manger, in Bethlehem. About 2000 years ago, some scrawny sheep found the surprise of a lifetime when Jesus was brought into the world. Do you know someone that might need an appointment there? Can you take them there?

Take courage, knowing that God is with you, to help bring a scrawny sheep into the fold. If God can spend his time looking for scrawny sheep – can't you?

### Bible Verse of the Year:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13