

FAMILY REUNION (LIFE IN HEAVEN)

Lesson 15 – Touching Our Daily Living

A. Heaven's Effect on Earth

1. Knowing that we have a heavenly home awaiting us is great, as are all the wonders and blessings that await us there. But what does any of that matter right now?
2. **Revelation 21:1-5** -- *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*
3. Do you take the above words as "true and faithful"?
4. What thoughts come to your mind in light of the above scripture?
5. Do the promises of Revelation 21:1-5 have any effect on how you live day-to-day? Should it?
6. How can you begin allowing these promises to change how live now?
7. Recall the words of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:1-2 – *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."*

B. An Allegory

1. In his book, *Heaven*, Randy Alcorn offers the following:

Imagine someone takes you to a party. You see a few friends there, enjoy a couple of good conversations, a little laughter, and some decent appetizers. The party's all right, but you keep hoping it will get better. Give it another hour, and maybe it will. Suddenly, your friend says, "I need to take you home." *Now?*

You're disappointed – nobody wants to leave a party early – but you leave, and your friend drops you off at your house. As you approach the door, you're feeling all alone and sorry for yourself. As you open the door and reach for the light switch, you sense someone's there. Your heart's in your throat. You flip on the light. "Surprise!" Your house is full of smiling people, familiar faces.

It's a party – for *you*. You smell your favorite [foods]. The tables are full. It's a feast. You recognize the guests, people you haven't seen for a long time. Then, one by one, the people you most enjoyed at the other party show up at your house, grinning. This turns out to be the *real* party. You realize that if you'd stayed longer at the other party, as you wanted, you wouldn't be *at* the real party – you'd be *away* from it....

One by one, occasionally a few of us at a time, we'll disappear from this world. Those we leave behind will grieve that their loved ones have left home. In reality, however, their believing loved ones aren't *leaving* home, they're *going* home. They'll be home before us. We'll be arriving at the party a little later.

2. As you consider this allegory, what thoughts come to mind about believing loved ones who have passed away?
3. How do you personally relate to this allegory? Do you sometimes find yourself wanting to stay at the “other” party more than you want to go to the “real” party?
4. In our story, it was our “friend” who announced when it was time to leave the first party. What does this suggest?

C. Hope for Present Pain

1. From the perspective of eternity, even our most painful experiences on this earth are temporary setbacks. Our pain and suffering may not be totally relieved in this life, but they will surely be relieved in the next. That's part of the “true and faithful” promise in Revelation 21:1-5 of no more death, sorrow, crying or pain.
2. Agree or Disagree: Knowing that our suffering will be totally relieved in heaven doesn't make it easy, but does make it bearable.
3. Agree or Disagree: Knowing that our suffering will be totally relieved in heaven allows us to have joy in the midst of our suffering.
4. Thought to consider: “Anticipating Heaven doesn't eliminate pain, but it lessens it and puts it in perspective. Meditating on Heaven is a great pain reliever. It reminds us that suffering and death are temporary conditions. Our existence will not end in suffering and death – they are but a gateway to our eternal life of unending joy.” (Alcorn).

D. Victory Over the Last Enemy

1. “To die will be an awfully big adventure.” -- Peter Pan
2. As a believer, do you share Peter Pan's view?
3. Of course, *death* is not the thing, it's what comes *after* we leave this life that should make us excited beyond words.

4. **1 Corinthians 15:25-26** -- *For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*
5. **Isaiah 25:7-8a** -- *And He will destroy on this mountain, the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.*
6. **1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (NIV)** -- *When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"*
7. **Romans 8: 38-39** -- *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

E. Heaven on Our Mind

1. That we are heaven-bound should have direct and discernible effects on how we live on our earthly journey. Consider ...
2. **2 Peter 3:11-14 (NLT)** -- *But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.*
3. **1 John 3:2-3 (NLT)** -- *Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.*
4. **Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)** -- *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*
5. **Hebrews 12:28 (NIV)** -- *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.*
6. Final thought from Alcorn: "Don't let a day go by without anticipating the new world that Christ is preparing for us. God loves the Heaven bound, but he is proud of the Heaven minded: '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).