

Living This Life for the Next Life

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want to talk about some matters that are important but difficult to present.
2. I am going to try not to be misunderstood as I hope to help you think about how we ought to look at some of the issues in our society that obsess, distress, and trouble so many people.
3. I want to show that being a Christian should cause us to look beyond this life to the next life.
 - A. Our faith should cause us to live this life with our eyes focused on the next life.
 - B. The things of a temporal nature that so often trouble people in this life and consume their lives should not consume your life.
4. Hopefully I can do an acceptable job at this and help myself as much as I hope to help you.

BODY:

I. Before we look at some practical examples, I want you to look at some Bible scriptures that teach us to live this life with our eyes focused on the next life.

- A. Col. 3:1-3 – “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
 1. Obviously, most people live their life in opposition to this command.
 2. As Christians we are to set our hearts on things above, seeing we have died to the ways of this world and are now living a life *hidden with Christ in God*.
- B. 2 Cor. 4:17-18 – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”
 1. Christians are to have different views about life’s afflictions and their goal.
 2. For, we know that what is physical is temporary—that the things of faith are what will last!
- C. 2 Pet. 3:10-14 – “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless”
 1. Note how v. 11, 14 stress that what we believe about the future is to affect our lives now.
 2. Our faith gives us a different perspective and different priorities from worldly people.
- D. Phil. 3:20 – “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”
 1. It is interesting that this was written to people living in if a Roman colony where Roman citizenship was prized.
 2. But, for Christians our citizenship in the **world to come** is far more important.
- E. Matt 6:31-33 – “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
 1. Note the priorities of the follower of God and how it contrasts with those of the world!
- F. Heb. 11:13-16 – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and

pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

1. Note their focus was on a heavenly, not earthly, country.
2. This focus caused God to not be ashamed to be called their God—what an amazing thought!

II. The reason I read those passages in the Bible was to remind you that our faith should cause us to live this life with our eyes focused upon the next life.

- A. This is what Jesus meant in John 17:11, 14 when He said that Christians are “in” the world but not “of” the world.
 1. Being not “of” the world is like how a non-citizen living in this country is not of this country.
 2. Although he is “in” this country he is not “of” it, seeing his ultimate interests, concerns, and allegiance are not focused on this country, but another.
- B. But these passages are not saying that we are to be oblivious to our world, that we have no interest in current affairs.
 1. When Col.3:2 says “Set your affection on things above not on the things on the earth” that doesn’t mean Christians have no interest at all in anything happening in this world.
 - a. Some things happening in this world affect how freely we can serve God.
 - b. Some things present significant and ungodly injustices against others.
 2. When 2 Cor. 4:18 says. “...we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” it is not saying Christians don’t care about anything mundane or temporal.
 - a. We must care about things that affect our brethren, families, etc.
 - b. We care about things that bring people sorrow and grief, happiness and joy.
 3. But these passages do mean that our goal is *heaven* and we must not let ourselves become so interested and involved in the mundane things of this world that we are distracted from the pursuit of our heavenly goal.

III. Consider some of the worldly issues that consume many people’s lives today.

- A. Issues:
 1. Will Donald Trump be re-elected?
 2. Will the Affordable Healthcare Act be completely scrapped?
 3. Will our country’s economy continue to be strong or are we headed for an economic slowdown, a recession, or a depression?
 4. Will social security go bankrupt?
 5. How will the stock market affect my retirement, and will I have enough?
 6. What can we do about the problem of illegal immigration and will Trump build the wall?
 7. Should our military continue to be spread throughout the world?
 8. Is global warming real and should I be taxed and hindered in the normal, legal things I want to do to conform to some environmental policy?
 9. Should our tax codes be reformed, or should they be scrapped and replaced with a flat tax?
 10. How much tax money should be used to develop alternative energy sources and what is the environmental impact of these alternatives?
 11. Should fracking be allowed?
 12. What should be done about air, water, and land pollution?
 13. Is the mainstream media fair and objective and what can be done to make it so?
- B. The reason I have mentioned these issues is not to be political.
 1. Now, like most people I have views and ideas about these issues. But I’m not mentioning them to promote a political or social agenda.

2. My reason for mentioning these things is to remind you of the kind of worldly concerns that totally absorb so many people's lives today.
3. As Christians we must not let ourselves become so absorbed in these worldly matters that we take our eyes off our goal of being ready for the *next life*!

IV. Christians must be primarily focused on the life to come.

- A. We should not take on the attitude of "Nothing in this life matters."
 1. Christians can be interested in seeing society improve and be involved in trying to make our society better.
 2. We should not be "so heavenly minded as to be no earthly good" for anyone/thing.
 3. But I am saying to you that the primary focus of a Christian's life is beyond the kind of worldly issues that preoccupy and consume so many people who think there is nothing to live for except the here-and-now.
- B. Illustration: Imagine the elders of a church resigning so they could devote all their time to campaigning for a politician who would change our present system of taxation.
 1. If this happened, do you think they had mixed-up priorities?
 - a. Again, I am not suggesting (1) Christians shouldn't do things to make our nation better, or (2) it's wrong for Christians to vote, help in politics, or run for office.
 - b. What I am reminding you of is that we must not become so preoccupied with worldly issues, even important ones, that we neglect the far more important eternal issues.
 2. I used this illustration because it is a biblical fact that the work the elders is much more important than fixing our tax laws, or saving the environment, or fixing Obamacare.
 - a. I know that's true because if every social problem were solved, it still wouldn't prepare one soul for **eternity**.
 - b. Should we be any less focused on heaven than elders should be?
 3. This next life view must dominate our lives.
 - a. Everything should be challenged with the question: Is this likely to hinder me in my desire to go to heaven when this life is over.
 - b. This involves choices such as...
 - i. Choosing a girl/boyfriend or friends in general
 - ii. Choosing a college to attend
 - iii. Choosing a career or job
 - iv. Choosing a partner in marriage
 - v. Choosing which, if any, social and civic organizations to be involved in
 - vi. Choosing a hobby, etc.

V. Before I finish, I want to call your attention to three more Bible passages that remind us how our faith gives us a different perspective on this life and different priorities in this life.

- A. Heb 10:34 – "For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one."
 1. Point: Living this life with our eyes focused upon the next life affects our attitude toward our material possessions.
 2. Again, I do not mean Christians don't care if they are robbed or if what they've worked for is confiscated by the government.
 3. I am saying that in contrast to people who have nothing else to live for, the main thing in our lives is not accumulating as much as we can and holding on to it.
 4. This view toward material possessions enables us to live better, happier lives here.
- B. 1 Tim. 4:8 – "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."
 1. Point: Looking beyond this life gives us a different perspective on health issues.

- a. That doesn't mean Christians don't mind being sick or diseased, or that we don't mind if we get bad health care.
 - b. But, as important as health, physical fitness and wellness is, holiness and spiritual wellbeing are even more important.
 2. So, because we live this life with our eyes focused on the next life, we do not worship our bodies or become so keenly focused on health and health issues.
- C. 2 Pet 3:10-13 – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”
1. As you reflect on this passage, ask yourself: “How important should the environment be to Christians?”
 - a. I believe the correct answer is that however important those things are, they should not be as important as the things that will outlast the environment.
 - b. In saying that, I don't mean that we should not mind living with pollution everywhere, or that we should be completely indifferent about certain animals becoming extinct, or that it's wrong to do good things for the environment.
 2. I'm trying to say is that we live differently than those who think this world is all there is, who are trying to “save the world” but care nothing for saving souls.
 - a. This difference is found in how we look beyond this life and we know all of this is going to come to an end.
 - b. So, the focus of our life is not to be saving trees, or rivers, or animals, or the ozone that will someday be gone no matter what anyone does.
 - c. The focus and main priority of our life is saving ourselves and others from eternal destruction.

CONCLUSION:

1. So, I hope I have been able to remind you that although we live in this world, and we are not completely detached from this world, as Christians we have a different perspective about this life.
 - A. We live this life with our eyes focused on the next life.
 - B. People who don't share our faith may understandably be distressed and obsessed about many of the social issues in this life, seeing they think this world is all there is and these issues are the ultimate issues of our existence.
2. But because we look beyond all this, we have different priorities—priorities that are an outgrowth of the realization that eternal issues are ultimately infinitely more meaningful than worldly things.
3. If we really do believe what God has told us in the Bible, we need to keep our eyes focused on the next life by making eternal issues the focus of our lives.
4. That begins with coming to Jesus in F-R-C-B and then living faithfully! Will you begin your preparation for the next, eternal life that will follow?