

## HEAVEN – LESSON #8

*Cultivating a Mindset that is Uniquely Focused Heavenward*

**Introduction:** Heaven is your home – this world is not! You are a stranger, a pilgrim, an alien in this world. In actuality, you do not belong here, but have been recreated for another city “whose designer and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10) – a city that exists in “a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Heb. 11:16). You do live in this world, yet you are not of it (John 17:11-16).

Do you live with heaven on your mind? Are your pursuits in this life consistent with the future glory that awaits you? How can you cultivate a mindset that is uniquely focused heavenward? Paul helps you – with his exhortation and his example.

I. Paul **commands** you to be heavenly minded with a powerful exhortation.

Col. 3 (1) “If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) **Set your minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth.”



Continue throughout your earthly life to **strive** for those things that are heavenly, and keep your mind constantly **oriented** toward them.

“The thoughts should be occupied about the things where Christ now dwells, where our final home is to be, where our great interests are. Since we are raised from the death of sin, and are made to live anew, the great object of our contemplation should be the heavenly world.”

(Albert Barnes)

A. You will mentally dwell in the heavenlies when your mind is preoccupied with the **Scriptures**.

- You must read the Scriptures and **meditate** on that which you read in the Scriptures: “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and on his law he **meditates day and night**” (Ps. 1:2).
- Scriptural meditation is **sustained** by reading, hearing, thinking, speaking, singing, discussing, and teaching the Scriptures.

B. You will experience some very real **benefits** when you orient your mind toward heaven and think or meditate on that which is real, enduring, infinite and eternal.

- Orienting your mind toward heaven will increase your **strength** to **endure**.

As the Founder and Perfecter of your faith, **Jesus** serves as the preeminent example of this truth: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance the race** that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2).

- Orienting your mind toward heaven will help you **guard** against **covetousness**.

Luke 12:15 - “Take care, and **be on your guard against all covetousness**, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

The Rich Fool Parable (Luke 12:16-21) serves as a dire warning against living life with a materialistic mindset that **covets** more and more, resulting in the accumulation of earthly goods that you will neither possess nor enjoy in eternity (laying up treasure for yourself) – at the expense of being “rich toward God” (laying up treasure in heaven).

- Orienting your mind toward heaven will nurture a biblical view of money.

Matt. 6 (19) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Jesus commends the use of financial assets for purposes that are heavenly and eternal ("where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal") rather than earthly and temporal ("where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal").

- Orienting your mind toward heaven will encourage you to not love this world.

1 John 2 (15) "**Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) **And the world is passing away along with its desires,** but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

"The idea here is of the **world** of men in rebellion against God and therefore characterized by all that is in opposition to God. This is what we might call 'the world system.' It involves the world's values, pleasures, pastimes, and aspirations. John says of this **world** that the world lies in the grip of the evil one (1Jn 5:19), that it rejected Jesus when He came (Jn 1:10), that it does not know Him (1Jn 3:1), and consequently that it does not know and therefore also hates His followers (John 15:18,19, 20, 21; 17:14). It is

in this sense that John speaks of the world in the passage before us." (James Montgomery Boice)

God forbids you to give affection and devotion to anything that is opposed to Him.

- II. Paul challenges you to be heavenly minded with his personal example.

Paul never lost sight of heaven, even though he faced overwhelming persecution on earth.

2 Cor. 4 (8) "We are **afflicted in every way**, but not crushed; **perplexed**, but not driven to despair; (9) **persecuted**, but not forsaken; **struck down**, but not destroyed; (10) **always carrying in the body the death of Jesus**, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."

What propelled Paul forward on such occasions?

2 Cor. 4 (16) "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, **our inner self** is being renewed day by day. (17) For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an **eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison, (18) as we look not to the things that are seen but to **the things that are unseen**. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are **eternal**."

Paul's mind was so oriented toward heaven that his thoughts were consistently centered on the future glory he would experience with the Lord rather than on any present hardship he was experiencing during his earthly life.

**Conclusion:** Whenever you can still see heaven and the future glories that await you as a believer during the most trying circumstances you could experience in this life, then you are beginning to **strive** for those things that are heavenly, and are beginning to keep your mind constantly **oriented** toward them.