



Why an Eternal Perspective Changes Everything

by Randy Alcorn

Having an eternal perspective is in many ways the key to living a true Christ-following life. Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 4:18, “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (NIV). If we let this reality sink in, it will forever change the way we think and live.

In our ministry, we encourage believers to look at life differently—like Elisha’s servant whose eyes were opened so he could see the angels surrounding and protecting them (2 Kings 6). It wasn’t that suddenly those angels were there. They were there all along. He finally had the eyes to actually see the invisible realities.

I’m *not* saying that we’re going to be seeing angels and demons if we have an eternal perspective! What I am saying is we need to ask God to open our eyes to what’s at stake—to the unseen world and the reality of Heaven, our eternal destination. Most of us see no further than the horizons of this world. To correct our shortsightedness, God prescribes a vision correction that allows us to look through the lens of eternity. Suddenly we realize this present life is but a brief window of opportunity to invest in what will last for eternity.

Knowing that this present world will end and be resurrected into new heavens and a New Earth should profoundly affect our daily behavior. “...You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God. . . . In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him” (2 Peter 3:11-14, NIV).

If we understand what “a new heaven and a new earth” means, we’ll look forward to it. (And if we’re not looking forward to it, we must not yet understand it.). Anticipating our homecoming will motivate us to live spotless lives here and now.

Joni Eareckson Tada writes in *Heaven: Your Real Home*,

When a Christian realizes his citizenship is in heaven, he begins acting as a responsible citizen of earth. He invests wisely in relationships because he knows they’re eternal. His conversations, goals and motives become pure and honest because he realizes these will have a bearing on everlasting reward. . . . He gives generously of time, money, and talent because he’s laying up treasure for eternity. He spreads the good news of Christ because he longs to fill heaven’s ranks with his friends and neighbors. All this serves the pilgrim well not only in heaven, but on earth; for it serves everyone around him.

When we view today in light of the long tomorrow, the little choices become tremendously important. Whether I read my Bible today, pray, go to church, trust Christ through suffering, share my faith, and give my money—actions graciously empowered not by my flesh but by His Spirit—is of eternal consequence, not only for other souls, but for mine.

After all, what will last forever? God. God’s Word. People. Spending time in God’s Word and investing in people will pay off in eternity and bring me happiness and perspective now. This life need not be wasted. In small and often unnoticed acts of service to Christ, we can invest this life in eternity, where today’s faithfulness will forever pay rich dividends.

Not only will an eternal perspective change our actions, it will also change our attitudes. Living with eternity in mind will infuse us with a joy and purpose that can sustain us in daily life, even as we face hard things. Recognizing our future life on a resurrected Earth can help empower us to stick with a difficult marriage, to persevere in the hard task of caring for an ailing parent or child, or to stay with a demanding job. Moses stayed faithful to God because “he was looking ahead to his reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

Christ-centered righteous living today is directly affected by knowing where we’re going and what rewards we’ll receive there for serving Christ. After all, if we really believe we’re going to live forever in a realm where Christ is the center who brings us great joy, and that righteous living will mean happiness for all, why wouldn’t we choose to get a

head start on Heaven through Christ-centered righteous living now? Do we really want to miss out on the true happiness that Jesus offers us here and for all of eternity?

Father, you tell us not to fix our eyes on popular culture, not on fleeting accomplishments and wealth, but upon what is eternal, what will still matter a billion years from now. Give us the eyes of faith, and remind us to focus on you, our soon-returning Savior, and on eternity with you that awaits us.

Spend Your Day with Eternity in Mind by Adoniram Judson

A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated for eternity. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, will exhibit forever. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness? It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us then each morning resolve to spend the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night, let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone indelibly marked.

Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) was America's first foreign missionary. He served as a missionary to Burma for almost 40 years, through great personal suffering and sacrifice. Judson also translated the Bible into Burmese, as well as established a number of Baptist churches in Burma.

Learn more of his story in John Piper's short ebook [Adoniram Judson: How Few There Are Who Die So Hard!](http://www.desiringgod.org/books/adoniram-judson), available for free at www.desiringgod.org/books/adoniram-judson.

See also:

Adoniram Judson: Endurance Personified at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Adoniram%20Judson.pdf>