

7 Characteristics of Living in the Light of Eternity

A primary distinctive of the early church and the original apostles was the fact that they were fully apprehended by things of eternal value.

Their lives were lived in such a way that they maintained a passion for the Lord that went far beyond mere religious practice, noble ministry expressions and Christian discipline. Jesus was everything to them, and He had consumed their passions!

They also understood and were apprehended by the declaration of James 4:14b, which says, "For what is your life? It is just a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." This reality governed them and caused them to live for the things that do not fade away with time. Several of them literally gave their lives for the gospel as an expression of their love-based obedience to Jesus and His eternal purposes.

Often in modern church culture, sadly, we learn to acclimate to earthly or carnal surroundings, which in turn become more real to us than the things of eternity. When we fall into the trap and cycle of only living for the temporal, we lose sight of what is valuable and eternal. The tragic result is that we cease to see with a heavenly vision or paradigm and temporal existence dictates our existence, decisions and destiny.

The truth is that all this world has to offer is fleeting and temporary at best. Beyond that, Scripture reveals that it will all fade away eventually. Therefore, what will we invest ourselves in while passing through our vapor of time here on this earth?

The reality of the Christian life and the call of God is one that must be lived in the light of eternity, or it easily

becomes a journey of shallowness and selfishness. The apostle Paul considered his earthly existence as nothing in comparison to the eternal rewards for which he was destined. He was completely consumed with knowing Jesus and making Him known, and everything he did and accomplished was predicated on these two primary goals.

Even in the midst of intense persecution, Paul never lost sight of eternity and said this regarding sufferings, "Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). He was owned by eternity!

The world and the satisfied religionist look at the lives of those that burn for Jesus and their eternal reward as if they were strange and out of touch with reality. However, to those of us who live with eternity in constant view, the things of this world grow strangely dim, and only intimacy with and complete obedience to the Lord makes sense to us.

The child of God who lives in the revelation of eternity is distinctly aware of the end of their earthly existence and the reality of their works being revealed and reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:10). With this revealed truth, they willingly invest themselves into elements that have eternal results and rewards.

Here are seven characteristics of living in the light of eternity:

1. The subject of eternity must develop a spiritual reality within the people of God in such a way that what lies beyond this present existence in tabernacles of flesh is more real to us than the element of measured time (see Eph. 2:1-7).
2. We must adhere to seeing eternally if we are going to effectively minister to a world that is blinded by Satan, sin and self.

3. To really apprehend eternity is to apprehend God Himself. God in His triune makeup abides and exists in eternity and is not limited to or relegated by the confines of time. Therefore, to be in Him and to have Him in us is the very essence of walking in a realm that is not governed by natural surroundings.
4. To become a people motivated with unseen riches and eternal rewards causes us to become misfits or strangers in a world given to self-gratification and temporal pleasures.
5. Our gaze must be continually upward, which in turn will grace us with a motivation that is beyond noble effort or religious energy. We in turn become pilgrims passing through an increment of time that does not and cannot take a hold of us or cause us to lose our eternal focus.
6. Even though the world and the apathetic church world often look upon us with dismay, we press forward, because we belong to the eternal purposes of God, and in the revelation of this reality, we find our place of existence, purpose and identity.
7. Our eternal perspective and understanding bring us to a place of absoluteness as well. Even though this absoluteness is viewed as offensive to the world, it is this immovable dynamic alone that ushers in the proper paradigm of Calvary's cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that the body of Christ will once again become a people with eternal perception. May we embrace the reality that dictated the lives of the early apostles and much of the first-century church.

Closing Quotes

—"This life is just a dressing room for eternity." —Leonard

Ravenhill

–He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.” –Jim Elliot

–“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me to give to each one according to his work” –Jesus, Rev. 22:12. {eoa}

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