

Biblical Secrets to Enjoying What You Don't Have Yet

This past week, Lindsey, our 11-year-old daughter, became the first child in our family and the first grandchild on either side to win a college scholarship.

Her scholarship, presented at the fifth-grade awards ceremony, was for reading. Earning it involved taking tests over various books of her choice, then accruing points depending on how well she scored on each test. Despite the fact that she only started public school in January, Lindsey had earned the most test points. She had also received credit for 2.5 million words (the first-place student, who had been there all year, had 3.4 million words).

Each of the six students who won a reading scholarship was called up onto the stage, given a medal and presented with a large, foam-board "check" and a ball cap from the college the student had previously indicated he or she would be interested in attending one day.

Lindsey's smile said it all. She was, and is, pretty thrilled—despite the fact that she hasn't actually received the money yet. That's because she won't actually receive it until she enrolls in a four-year university and provides proof of enrollment to the foundation that sponsors the scholarships. When she does that, the money will officially be hers.

Why is she so happy now, if she doesn't have the money yet?

Because she is 100 percent certain that one day, she will.

If Lindsey had any doubts about the commitment of the donor or his ability to follow through, she wouldn't be nearly as excited. She might appreciate that she'd been recognized

during the assembly, and she'd probably feel hopeful that the donor would come through one day, but she wouldn't feel the same joy that she feels now. Lindsey's joy is based on her certainty that one day, she will receive what has been promised.

Life can be hard. Sometimes, it's agonizing. But what if you could be certain, in the midst of the sorrow, that there will come a day when life is no longer hard? That tears of grief will never again wet your cheeks? That you will never again feel lonely, or inadequate, or hopeless?

What if you could be 100 percent certain that someday, someone would take away all your pain forever? That you would never again sin, or be sinned against? That all that's wrong with this world would one day be made right, and that you would experience joy beyond anything you can now imagine?

Actually ... you can. You can be that certain of all those things. That's because Jesus has promised that this world is not all there is. He's promised to come back for us—all those who love Him—and to take us to live with Him forever.

Too often, we make the mistake of thinking of heaven as some kind of eternity-long church service, and we're understandably not too excited about that. But if that's all we think it is, then we just don't understand it at all.

Heaven is seeing Jesus' face with no sin barriers between us. It's never-ending joy. It's eternal fellowship with people who will always treat us right. It's never feeling less-than or unable. It's no more physical limitations. Basically, heaven is the fulfillment of everything we've ever longed for, even if we didn't know that's what we wanted.

Lindsey is completely certain that one day, she will receive what was promised her. And she will—provided there isn't some horrible catastrophe that wipes out the entire eastern seaboard, where the sponsoring organization is based.

You and I can be even more certain that we will receive what we were promised, because nothing can thwart God's purposes or cause Him to be unable to make good on His word.

Whenever Lindsey remembers her scholarship, she will be encouraged that someone invested in her (even at 11 years old, she's already thinking about it this way).

You and I can be encouraged that Jesus Himself said He was going to invest in getting things ready for us.

So when life gets hard—when we're tired, frustrated or grieving—may we remember that this is not all there is.

May we remember heaven, where Jesus is even now preparing perfection for us.

And may we begin to enjoy now what we don't have yet.

"In my Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

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