

BUILT 2 BLESS 9

Focused Living Ministry

“If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on

Col 3:1-2



Listen very carefully. You're driving a school bus with 32 children from Greenville to Columbia. At the 1st stop 11 kids get off, 9 get on. At the next stop 2 girls get off and 7 boys get on.

At the third stop, 12 blond children get on and 16 brunettes get off.

A final stop is the State Museum where 5 kids get on as 3 get off. Question:

What color are the bus driver's eyes?

Think! The answer is found in the first sentence of the story. *YOU* are driving the bus, so the color of the driver's eyes is the same as yours. If you assumed it was critical to keep track of the kids getting on and off the bus *you were* **DISTRACTED** from what was really **IMPORTANT**.

Paul understood how easy it is to get distracted from what is important to God so he challenged the men of Colossae to “*keep seeking the things above where Christ is*” and to “*set their mind on the things above, not on the things of earth*” (Col 3:1-2). **How would you describe a typical week: Focused on what is important to God or distracted by many good but**

nonessential things? Why is staying focused such hard work?

ALIVE by Louie Giglio. To help us focus on “*the things above*”.

1. What was most encouraging while listening to how wonderfully God has created you and how greatly He values you?
2. How might a better understanding that you are “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Ps 139:13-14) change your focus and purpose?
3. Knowing that our physical bodies are miracles of creation and that because of sin they will ultimately break down and die, why is it vital to get our **focus** on eternity and a literal heaven?

4. How will a greater understanding of eternity help you live well in relating to your wife, kids, friends, employees, employers, and those who do not yet know Christ? Why? (I Cor 15:54-58)

BUILT 2 BLESS In Colossians 1-2 God, through Paul, reminds us that the only worthy _____ for life is the Person Jesus Christ. He then challenges us to build our lives on this foundation by walking in Him (2:6-7). Now in chapters 3-4 he teaches that the more _____ we are on Christ, the greater will be God's blessings of grace through us as we step forward in love to bless our marriages (3:18-19), family (3:20-21), friends (3:5-11), churches (3:12-17; 4:7-18), employees (3:22-25), employers (4:1), and seekers (4:2-6).

FACTS ABOUT HEAVEN God loves

and created us to live with Him spiritually and physically forever (Gen 1-2; Eccl 3:11; 2 Cor 5:1; Rom

8:28-39)! But our sin and rebellion has brought separation (Is 59:2) and death (Eph 2:1-4; Rom 3:23; 5:12-14; 6:23).

Our Creator God is *gracious* but also

just so someone must die to pay the penalty of our high treason against His holy nature and moral standards.

Choice: either you can die for your sin or you can give your sin to Jesus who has already died in your place for your sin (1 Pet 3:18; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 5:6-8).

Those who by faith receive God's forgiveness and repent of their sin will receive Christ's un-deserved righteousness and spend eternity with Him (John 1:12; 3:16; Mk 1:14-15) as part of His forever family (John 1:12) in a literal **heaven** (Phil 3:20). Those who do not receive His grace will end up in a

literal **hell** (Mt 7:13-14; 10:28; 25:46). This is why Paul urged the Colossians to “*keep seeking the things above... Set your mind on the things above not on the things that are on earth*” (3:1-2), for many of them had not yet built their lives on the foundation of Christ (Lego theme). He also knew that what we believe determines how we behave. And if there was any chance of exper-iencing life transformation or God’s design and desire for our relationships they needed to focus on Christ (Jn 6:44, Acts 4:12, 16:30-31).



So what will heaven be like? Randy Alcorn in his book *‘Heaven’* says, “When I anticipate my first glimpse of heaven, I remember the first time I went snorkeling. I saw countless fish of every shape, size and color. Just when I thought I'd seen the most beautiful fish, along came one even more striking. Etched in my memory is the sound of a gasp going through my snorkel as my eyes were opened to a breathtaking but unfamiliar underwater world.... Our first glimpse of heaven will cause us to gasp in a similar way... with over-whelming amazement and delight. That first gasp will likely be followed by many more as we continually encounter new sights in that endlessly wonderful place. For *‘no eye has ever seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him’*” (1 Cor 2:9). Although God has not revealed everything about heaven,

Scripture provides many insights that motivate us to live for our eternal destiny rather than this earthly existence. The following short preview of heaven is adapted from Randy Alcorn, Billy Graham, John Piper, Oswald Sanders, John Gilmore, Erwin Lutzer.

1. Our heavenly Father is there as it is His home. (Is 66:1; Mt 5:16; 6:9; Rev 21:3; 1 Cor 13:12)

2. Jesus is there as He existed there from eternity past before Creation with the Father and Spirit having ascended into heaven to reign and rule as risen Savior until we arrive. (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Col 3:1; Rom 8:34; John 1:1-5, 14; Gen 1:1-8; Heb 8:1)

3. Heaven is greater than you can ever imagine and far better than anything we have experienced on earth. (Is 64:4; I Cor 2:9; Phil 1:21-23; 2 Cor 12:2-4)

4. Heaven is a real, literal and prepared place which will be our eternal home. (John 14:1-9; Rev 21:1-6; 2 Cor 5:1-9)

5. Though all will enjoy heaven we each will have rewards or crowns based on our deeds on earth to be enjoyed for eternity. (Luke 6:35; I Cor 4:10-15; 9:24-27; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:8; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10; 22:12; 1 Pt 5:2-4; 1 Thess 2:19; Matt 5:11-12; 25:14-30; 2 John 8)

6. We'll have purposeful work and enjoy responsibilities. (Rev 22:3-4; Luke 19:12-19; Gen 2:15)

7. We will be like Christ yet will have room to grow as did our perfect and sinless Jesus. (1 John 3:2; Luke 2:52)

8. We'll have ultimate rest from our earthly labors. (Heb 4:9-11)

9. We'll rejoice for eternity. (Matt 25:21; 1 Thess 2:19; Eccl 3:11)

10. We will experience emotions. (Lk 6:21; Rev 21:4; 1 Thess 2:19)

11. We will recognize one another and be united with one another for eternity. (1 Thess 4:14-18; Matt 8:11; Heb 11:1-12:1)

12. It won't be boring. (Ps 16:11)

13. Our citizenship is in heaven and our names are recorded there in the book of life. (Luke 10:20; Phil

3:20-21; Eph 2:19; Rev 3:5; 13:8;
20:12-15; 21:27)

14. We'll be free from temptation as well as the power, penalty and presence of sin. (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 20-22; 1 Cor 15:55-56)

15. If our loved ones are in hell, it won't that spoil heaven. (Luke 16:19-31; Rom 1:18-2:16).

16. We will have real, sinless, resurrected, recognizable, glorious, physical bodies perfectly adapted for eternity. (Luke 24:39; Job 19:25-27; Ps 17:15; Ps 73:24-25; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:37-53)

17. Jesus' resurrected body will be a pattern or template for our own. (Phil 3:21-23; 1 John 3:2)

18. At our death the soul of the believer in Christ will immediately be with the Lord (Luke 16:22; 23:43; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8) most likely with a temporary body (2 Cor 5:1-4; Gen 3:19) to await its part in the "first resurrection" (John 11:24-25; Rev. 20:4-6; Luke 14:14; Phil. 3:11; I Thess. 4:16).

19. We might be fearful of the pain and process of dying but with the truth of Scripture should never be afraid of death. (I Cor 15:51-58; Rom 8:31-39; Josh 24:14; I Kings 13:17; Phil 1:20-21; 2:8, 16-18)

20. Trust in the Father's love/mercy toward unborn children and those who die before understanding personal salvation. There will be children playing in the streets of heaven. (Matt 18:10, 14; 19:14; Rom

9:10-13; I Sam 12:22-23 Gen 18:25; 2 Tim 2:19; Zech 8:5)

21. There will be no need for the sun as Christ will be our light. (Rev 21:1, 22-23)

22. There will be no temple for worship (Rev 21:22), no sea (21:1), no death of plants and animals (21:4), no tears or mourning (21:4), no pain (21:4), no hunger or thirst (7:16), and no night (22:5).

23. There will be time (2 Pet 3:8) but no delay (Rev 10:5-6).

24. Heaven will be a worshiping community. (Rev 4:9-11; 5:8-9; 14:2-3; 15:2-3)

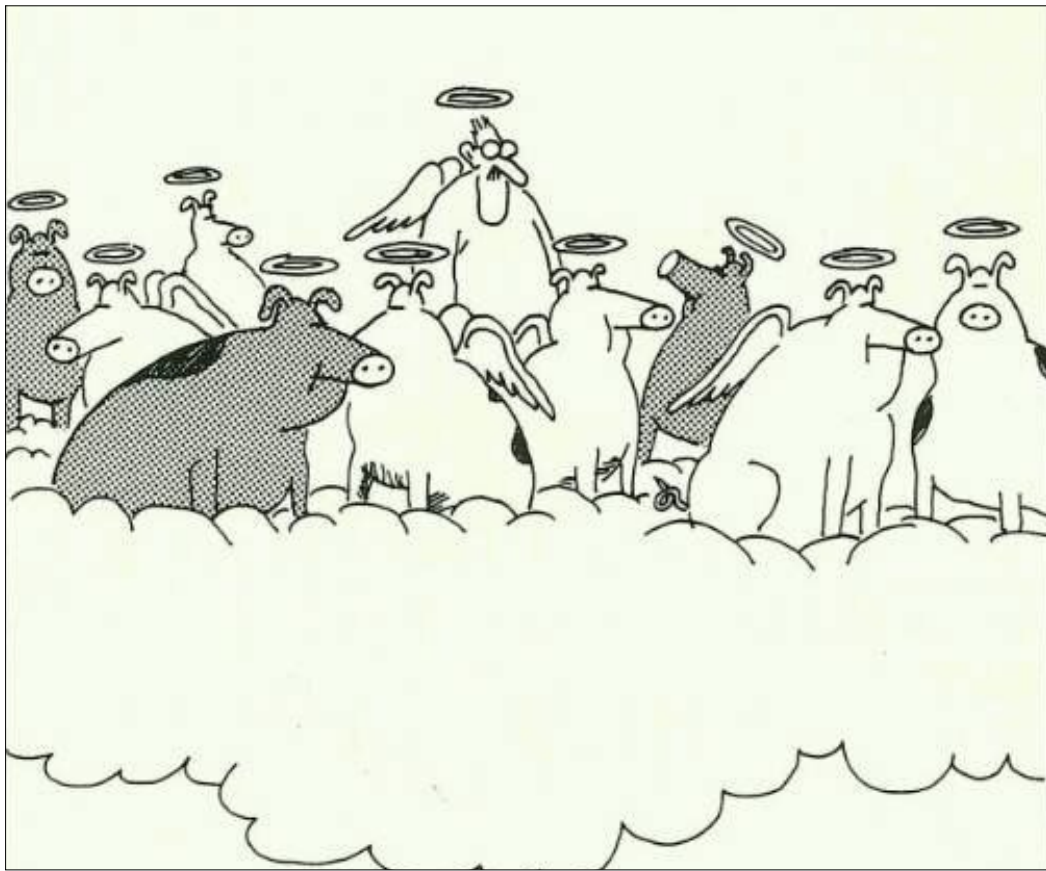
25. In heaven, we'll embrace God's holiness and final justice.

26. Spiritually, believers are already in heaven. (Eph 1:13-14; 2:5-6). **We won't become angels but we'll be with them.** (2 Cor 5:8)

27. **We still won't know everything.** (1 Pet 1:12)

28. **We'll be reunited with every other believer to know and recognize one another.** (Heb 12:22-24; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Phil 4:3)

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION What truth gives you great encouragement? What new insight did you discover? How will these help you to “*keep seeking the things above where Christ is*” and to “*set their mind on the things above, not on the things of earth*” (Col 3:1-2).



“Because of some unfortunate celestial error, David Andes was sent to Hog Heaven.”

Both cartoons from *The Farside*