

# HEAVEN TO EARTH

*Why should we allow our minds to think of heaven?*

The early church walked through some of the most difficult times, including persecution, disease, and famine, yet somehow managed to flourish. We want to spend the next few weeks in this devotion time exploring how the early church's view of heaven was essential to their ability to stand in the face of the unknown.

## HOW TO USE:

**EACH DAY THIS WEEK, READ THE VERSES AND CORRESPONDING REFLECTION INDIVIDUALLY OR TOGETHER WITH YOUR FAMILY. WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS TO THE REFLECTION IN YOUR JOURNAL, ALONG WITH ANY THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, OR CONVICTIONS THAT GOD IS REVEALING. SHARE WHAT GOD IS TEACHING YOU WITH YOUR DNA/MC GROUP.**



In 1952, Florence Chadwick attempted to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and the California coastline. She was flanked by small boats that watched for sharks and were prepared to help her if she got hurt or grew too tired to continue. After about 15 hours, a thick fog set in and Florence began to doubt her ability. She swam for another hour before asking to be pulled out. To her dismay, once in the boat, she found out she had stopped swimming just one mile away from her destination. The next day the news captured her quote, "If I could have just seen the shore, I would not have stopped."

## DAILY DEVOTIONS

### DAY 1 - IF WE CAN JUST SEE THE SHORE.

SOAP & JOURNAL

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21

#### REFLECTION

**Love God:** How might setting your eyes on heaven change your current reality? What might you consider to be examples of "fog" in your life that is hindering you?

**Love Your Neighbor:** With each day bringing changing news on the virus, it is clear we need others in our lives to help encourage us. Who are the individuals in your neighborhood who could use a little encouragement, and what could you and your Missional Community do about it?

### DAY 2 - HEAVENLY MINDED AND EARTHLY GOOD

SOAP & JOURNAL

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

#### REFLECTION

**Love God:** As you focus your mind on Heaven and let your imagination soar, what is God revealing to you?

**Love Your Neighbor:** If heaven was brought to earth, how would your neighborhood be different? What could you do to make that a reality? What are your limitations? Who do you need to invite onto that mission with you?

**IF WE CAN LEARN TO FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS, TO SEE THROUGH THE FOG OF OUR PRESENT TRIALS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, AND PICTURE OUR ETERNAL HOME IN OUR MINDS EYE, IT WILL COMFORT AND ENERGIZE US, GIVING US A CLEAR VIEW OF THE SHORE - OUR EXTERNAL DESTINATION. LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL, WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO FORGET WHAT IS BEHIND AND PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL TO WIN THE PRIZE.**

**GOD COMMANDS US TO SET OUR HEARTS AND MINDS ON HEAVEN WHERE JESUS CHRIST IS SEATED IN HONOR AND POWER. IT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS. BUT IF WE LET THE TRUTH FUEL OUR IMAGINATION AND THOUGHTS, WE CAN BE MORE HEAVENLY MINDED AND EARTHLY GOOD.**

## DAILY DEVOTIONS CONTINUED.

### DAY 3 - SEEING GODS FACE.

SOAP & JOURNAL  
PSALM 27

#### REFLECTION

**Love God:** What do you think it will be like to see God face to face?

**Love Your Neighbor:** 1 John 4:12 says, "No one has ever seen God face to face, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is complete in us" (ESV). How can your neighbors see God's love in you during this season by the way you love others?

### DAY 4 - OUR PRIMARY PLEASURE

SOAP & JOURNAL  
PSALM 47:1-2

#### REFLECTION

**Love God:** How can we learn to see God as the source of every good pleasure? Then think about how this would affect your idea of what is important in your life.

**Love Your Neighbor:** God has not abandoned the world, but He has sent you as a representative of His goodness. What will your neighbors say about the goodness of God through your actions and decisions today? Can they see God's goodness in you?

### DAY 5 - ENJOYING THE PLEASURES GOD GIVES

SOAP & JOURNAL  
1 TIMOTHY 6:17

#### REFLECTION

**Love God:** How can you display God's glory as you enjoy what He has given you?

**Love Your Neighbor:** What is your love for God compelling you to do for your neighbors, co-workers, and friends that will cause them to look back and see your presence in their world as a pleasure given to them by God?

### FAMILY DEVOTION

READ: REVELATION 21: 1-3

#### CREATIVE IDEA:

In verse 1, John writes that he saw "a new heaven and new earth". Take a piece of paper and draw or right out what you think he saw.

#### CONVERSATION QUESTIONS:

1. Does the thought of a new heaven and earth excite, surprise or scare you? Why did you choose that emotion?
2. If you could help construct the new heaven and earth, what one thing would you include? Why?
3. In verse 3, it says that we will dwell with God and that He will live with man. How do you think the new Earth will be different, with God with us, compared to how it is here now?

#### PRAYER:

Spend time thanking God that He has made it possible to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

- Content developed and influenced by Randy Alcorn's book & small group study - "Heaven"

DAVID WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH GOD'S PERSON AND WITH GOD'S PLACE. HE LONGED TO BE WHERE GOD WAS AND TO GAZE ON HIS BEAUTY. TO SEE GOD WILL BE OUR GREATEST JOY.

JOB WAS CONFIDENT THAT HE WOULD SEE GOD AND, ALTHOUGH JOB WAS A TROUBLED SOUL, HE LIVED WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION OF THE DAY HE WOULD SEE GOD FACE TO FACE (JOB 19:25-27). WE CAN CATCH A GLIMPSE OF GOD IN WHAT HE HAS MADE (ROMANS 1:20). AS THE PROVIDER OF EVERYTHING, HE IS THE SOURCE OF EVERY GOOD PLEASURE.

GOD RICHLY PROVIDES US WITH EVERYTHING FOR OUR ENJOYMENT, AND THIS WILL NOT CHANGE WHEN WE GO TO HEAVEN. BUT WHILE WE ARE HERE ON EARTH, THESE PLEASURES SHOULD NEVER ECLIPSE OUR LOVE OF GOD, BUT RATHER ENCOURAGE US TO GIVE GLORY TO THE ONE WHO PROVIDES THEM.