

# Heaven & Hell

## Small Group Series & Study Guide

### **Small Group Guide: Heaven & Hell, Week 1**

#### **Key Takeaways:**

#### **Four Reasons to Learn About Heaven:**

1. To avoid misconceptions about heaven
2. Because God commands us to (Colossians 3:1-2)
3. It inspires us to live for God
4. It removes our fear of death

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. **What were some of the misconceptions about heaven mentioned in the sermon?** Which ones have you heard before or maybe even believed yourself?
2. **Why do you think so many Christians have false ideas about what heaven will be like?** Where do these misconceptions come from?
3. **Pastor Allen mentioned people thinking heaven can't be better than sex, marriage, or Hawaii.** What earthly

experiences or pleasures do you struggle to imagine heaven surpassing?

**Read: Colossians 3:1-2 NLT:** “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.”

4. **God commands us (not suggests) to set our sights on heaven and think about heavenly things.** Why do you think God makes this a command rather than just a suggestion?

5. **The sermon explained that focusing on heaven changes three things:**

- a. Our **perspective** (eternal vs. temporal)
- b. Our **will** (determination to persevere)
- c. Our **priorities** (treasures in heaven vs. earth)
  - i. Which of these three areas do you struggle with most? Share an example.

**Read: Philippians 3:13-14 NLT:** “No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”

6. **Paul made heaven and the "heavenly prize" the focal point of his life.** What are spiritual rewards, and why should they motivate us?

7. **Pastor Allen said, "If you ever grasp just how great heaven is and what's waiting for us when we get**

**there, you'll be just as motivated as Paul is about living for God."** What prevents you from grasping how great heaven is?

8. **Are you living more like a "complacent Christian" or like someone pressing toward the finish line?** What would need to change for you to be more like Paul?

### **Practical Application:**

1. When facing a challenge this week, pause and ask: "In light of eternity, how important is this really?"
2. Write down how this eternal perspective changes your response
3. Share your experience with the group next week

### **Closing Prayer:**

- Clearer understanding of what heaven will be like
- Grace to make heaven the focal point of our lives
- Courage to live with eternity in mind
- Comfort for those struggling with fear of death

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# **5-Day Devotion: Setting Our Sights on Heaven**

## **Day 1: The Reality of Our Eternal Home**

**Reading:** Colossians 3:1-4

**Devotional:** God commands us to set our sights on heaven—not as a suggestion, but as a divine imperative for transformed living. When we make heaven the focal point of our lives, everything changes. Our trials become temporary, our priorities shift, and our perseverance strengthens. Too often we settle for earthly misconceptions about heaven, imagining it as boring or less fulfilling than our present experiences. But Scripture reveals heaven as the ultimate reality where Christ reigns. Today, ask yourself: What occupies the central focus of my thoughts? Challenge yourself to intentionally redirect your mind

toward eternal realities. Begin each morning this week by consciously setting your affections on things above, allowing heaven's reality to reshape your earthly perspective and daily choices.

## Day 2: An Eternal Perspective on Temporal Troubles

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

**Devotional:** Our present troubles, no matter how overwhelming, are small and temporary in light of eternity. This isn't minimizing real pain—it's gaining proper perspective. When our spirits are renewed daily through connection with God, our physical and emotional struggles become bearable. The key is remembering that what we see is temporary, but what we cannot see is eternal. Your current hardship—whether financial stress, relational conflict, health challenges, or grief—is merely a blip on eternity's radar. This perspective doesn't make you passive; it makes you resilient. Instead of giving up when life gets difficult, an eternal perspective motivates you to persevere with hope. Today, write down your current struggle, then write beside it: "This is temporary. God's promises are eternal."

## Day 3: Storing Treasures That Last

**Reading:** Matthew 6:19-21

**Devotional:** Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. This simple truth reveals why many Christians lack spiritual passion—their treasures remain earthbound. Cars, careers, retirement plans, and material possessions dominate their thoughts, leaving little room for eternal investment. But moths, rust, and thieves threaten everything we accumulate here. Heaven offers a secure treasury where our investments yield eternal dividends. Laying up treasures in heaven means investing in God's kingdom through generosity, service, evangelism, and obedience. It means prioritizing spiritual growth over material accumulation. Examine your bank statement and calendar—they reveal your true treasures. Today, identify one way you can shift resources from temporary to eternal investments. Perhaps it's increasing your giving, serving someone in need, or dedicating time to prayer and Scripture that you previously spent on entertainment.

## Day 4: Running Toward the Prize

**Reading:** Philippians 3:12-14

**Devotional:** Paul focused on one thing: reaching the end of the race and receiving the heavenly prize. This singular focus fueled his extraordinary perseverance through persecution, imprisonment, and hardship. He forgot what was behind—past failures and successes—and strained toward what was ahead: heaven and eternal rewards. This heavenly focus didn't make Paul irrelevant to earthly matters; it made him the most effective missionary in history. When heaven becomes your focal point, you stop living as a complacent Christian going through religious motions. You press forward with purpose, understanding that how you live now has eternal consequences. The "heavenly prize" isn't just entry into heaven—it's the rewards Christ will distribute for faithful service. Today,

identify what past regrets or earthly distractions keep pulling your focus backward or downward. Consciously release them and fix your eyes on the finish line.

## **Day 5: Longing for Home**

**Reading:** Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

**Devotional:** For Paul, living meant living for Christ, but dying was even better. This isn't suicidal thinking—it's the perspective of someone who truly grasps heaven's glory. As long as we inhabit these earthly bodies, we're away from our true home with the Lord. Paul felt torn between two desires: departing to be with Christ (far better for him) and remaining to serve others (better for them). This holy tension should mark every mature believer's life. We don't seek death, but we don't fear it either. When we've lived a full life and our earthly service concludes, going home to be with the Lord should bring anticipation, not terror. If the thought of heaven doesn't excite you more than earthly pleasures, you haven't truly understood what awaits. Today, honestly assess your attitude toward eternity. Ask God to give you a growing longing for your eternal home while faithfully serving Him here.