



A PLACE CALLED  
HEAVEN

DEVOTIONAL

100 Days of Living in  
the Hope of Eternity

DR. ROBERT  
JEFFRESS

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To Ben Lovvorn and the staff  
at First Baptist Church Dallas

Thank you for your willingness to go above and beyond  
your job requirements to further the kingdom of God  
throughout our world. It is an incomparable joy  
for me to serve with you as partners in ministry.

## What Difference Does a Future Heaven Make in My Life Today?

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

—John 14:2

A few years ago, I went on a one-week trip to London. The city was somewhat unfamiliar to me, and I needed to make certain preparations. I had to stop the newspaper and mail delivery at my house, make sure my cell phone would work in the country I was going to, and change some of my currency from dollars into pounds. Most of all, I needed to make sure I had a valid passport so that when I arrived, I would be allowed to enter that country.

Now, my trip to another country was brief. But did you

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*Jesus assured us that heaven is a real place.*

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know the Bible says that every one of us will one day make a trip to a distant country? It will be a one-way trip to a place that is mostly unfamiliar to us.

And this destination is not merely a one-week vacation; it will be an eternal destination for every one of us. For those of us who are Christians, that trip will be to a place called heaven.

Contrary to what some people believe, heaven is not just some fanciful myth to help dull the pain of the reality of this world. Jesus assured us that heaven is a real place.

Jesus said to His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2–3). Jesus is in heaven right now, and He is overseeing the largest construction project in history. He is building our future home in this place He calls heaven.

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How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is preparing a place for you in heaven?

What preparations can you begin making today to be ready for your heavenly home?

*Lord Jesus, thank You for preparing a place for me in Your Father’s house. Help me make the necessary preparations in my life today so I will be ready to enter my heavenly home with You.*

# Homesick for Heaven

For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.

—2 Corinthians 5:2

Very few Christians spend time consciously thinking about heaven. Perhaps you don't spend a lot of time reflecting on your eternal destination either.

Although many Christians are missing out on the hope that comes from reflecting on our heavenly home, I'm pretty sure I understand why. The overwhelming responsibilities of this life often eclipse our thinking about the next life. Not only that, but heaven seems remote. It seems irrelevant to those of us who are busy trying to rear a family, keep a job, or make a living here on earth. Why should we be concerned about heaven?

*We all long for that home—that place called heaven.*

Though we do not think about heaven often, there are times in life when we long for a better place than earth. Sometimes we experience a disappointment—betrayal by a close friend, an illness, the loss of a loved one, the breakup of an important relationship—that makes us long for something better.

In his book *Disappointment with God*, Philip Yancey observed,

The Bible never belittles human disappointment . . . but it does add one key word: temporary. What we feel now, we will not

always feel. Our disappointment is itself a sign, an aching, a hunger for something better. And faith is, in the end, a kind of homesickness—for a home we have never visited but have never once stopped longing for.<sup>1</sup>

We all long for that home—that place called heaven.

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Have you ever felt homesick for heaven?

How does the hope of heaven change your perspective on the disappointments of this life?

*Lord, sometimes I feel overwhelmed by the disappointments of this life. Give me Your perspective on my problems to remember that they are only temporary—until I go home to heaven.*

## Our Inevitable Journey to a New Destination

Man does not know his time.

—Ecclesiastes 9:12

Why should we study what the Bible teaches about heaven? One reason is that our journey to heaven is both certain and relatively soon.

The Bible talks about the inevitability of our journey to this new destination called heaven. I have also heard one wag quip, “The statistics on death are very impressive: one out of every one dies.”

Have you come to grips with the fact that you are going to die? The writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, said it this way: “Man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them” (9:12).

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*Our departure from  
this life is certain,  
and it is soon.*

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Death comes suddenly, without any warning. In Genesis 27:2, the patriarch Isaac said, “Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death.” And neither do you. Neither do I. Soldiers on a battlefield and patients whose diseases have been labeled “terminal” may understand the reality and certainty of death more clearly than the rest of us, but the truth is, death is just as real and certain for you and me.

The fact that life on earth is very brief should motivate us to use our time wisely. In Psalm 90:12, Moses prayed, “Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should” (TLB). Our departure from this life is certain, and it is soon.

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Have you ever thought of your life as “terminal”?

In what ways does the certainty of your death affect how you are living right now?

*Heavenly Father, teach me to number my days and realize that, in light of eternity, my time on earth is short. Help me spend every day You give me in this life in a way that honors You.*

## Learning to Number Our Days

Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are.

—Psalm 90:12 TLB

In Psalm 90:12, Moses prayed, “Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should” (TLB).

Several years ago, I had a friend who lived by this verse. He was in his midsixties when I got to know him. I remember going into his office one day and seeing his blackboard filled with chalk marks. I asked him, “What are those?” He said, “The Bible says I will probably live to be age seventy, so those marks represent how many days I have left before God calls me home. Every day when I walk into my office, I erase one mark.” The day after his seventieth birthday, he made a new mark on the chalkboard, and he started doing that every day to remind himself he was living on borrowed time. When we realize the brevity of our lives, we should live wisely.

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*When we realize the brevity of our lives, we should live wisely.*

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Recognizing how brief our time is on earth also ought to motivate us to think about heaven.

You may be familiar with the story of Joni Eareckson Tada. When Joni was a teenager, in 1967, a diving accident caused her to become a quadriplegic. Since then, Joni has spent a lot of time thinking about heaven. In her book *Heaven: Your*

*Real Home*, she wrote, “Heaven may be as near as next year, or next week; so it makes good sense to spend some time here on earth thinking candid thoughts about that marvelous future reserved for us.”<sup>1</sup>

Why should we spend time thinking about heaven? Because the choices we make in this life drastically impact the next life God has prepared for us.

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If seventy years is the average life span, how many “chalk marks” are left in your life?

Are you living on borrowed time?

How does this perspective affect the way you will live today?

*Lord, the future You have reserved for me is beyond what I can imagine. Help me make choices today that will positively impact the eternal life You have prepared for me in heaven.*

## Perspectives from the Past

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

—Philippians 1:21

Throughout history, great Christian writers, thinkers, and philosophers have written about heaven. C. S. Lewis wrote,

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. . . . It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in”; aim at earth and you will get neither.<sup>1</sup>

The more we think about the next life, the more effective we become for God in this life.

I have experienced this personally. Three times, I have been serving in a church when God called me to serve in another church. Each time that happened, there was a period after the new church called me during which I had to go back to my old church and finish my work there. Ironically, that was usually my most produc-

*The more we think about the next life, the more effective we become for God in this life.*

tive time in that church. I was highly motivated to finish my work because I wanted things to be in good shape when I left. Not only that, I had a certain freedom. I could make the decisions I felt were best without worrying about what other

people thought because, after all, what could they do to me? I was already going someplace else.

That is a good metaphor for what our lives ought to be like here on earth. The fact is, we are all leaving here. Our departure is certain. It will not be long until we go to that place called heaven.

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How often do you think about heaven?

What can you do today to allow the certainty of the next life to influence your effectiveness for God in this life?

*God, I eagerly anticipate the day when I will be with You in heaven for eternity! In the meantime, help me be diligent and productive in the tasks You have entrusted to me on earth.*

## Motivation for Effective Living

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

—Hebrews 11:13

Knowing that our future is secure in heaven ought to motivate us to live effectively for God on earth. That was certainly true of the Old Testament saints such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah. Notice what Hebrews 11:13 says about these men and women of faith: “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” These men and women were focused on the future country God had planned for them, and that future country motivated them to live obedient lives.

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*Knowing that our future is secure in heaven ought to motivate us to live effectively for God on earth.*

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The same was true for the apostle Paul. He understood that his citizenship was in heaven, yet he was on earth to fulfill God’s will. In Philippians 1:21, he wrote, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” He was saying, “It works out for me either way. As long as I am living, I will do what He wants me to do. But if God decides to take me, it will be better for me.” Paul

went on to say, “I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake” (vv. 23–24). Paul wanted to go to heaven and be with God, but at the same time, he wanted to stay and fulfill the ministry God had for him on earth.

That is the kind of life God wants us to have—being focused on our future home yet effective in this world until God calls us home.

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What are some challenges you are facing today?

In light of these challenges, how can you focus on heaven while remaining effective on earth?

*Lord, it is hard to live between two worlds—as a citizen of heaven and a citizen of earth. Help me focus on my future in heaven while being effective on earth until You call me home with You.*

## Benefits of Being Heavenly Minded

You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor.

—James 4:14

Our future is in heaven, but God has left us in this world—at least for now. Why should we be thinking about heaven while we are still on earth? What difference does a future heaven make in our lives today?

Focusing on heaven reminds us of the brevity of our lives on earth. Both of my parents died at a relatively young age, and while I certainly miss my parents, one of the benefits of their early departure was reminding me of how brief our time here on earth is. It is over in a moment.

*Focusing on heaven reminds us of the brevity of our lives on earth.*

A few years ago, I talked to somebody who said, “It feels as if God has hit the fast-forward button; things are going so quickly.” Have you ever felt that way? James said this about the brevity of life: “You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).

The apostle Peter observed, “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off” (1 Pet. 1:24). As one preacher said, “Life is like grass: it is sown, it is grown, it is mown, it is blown, and then it’s gone.” Life is over just like that.

King David said it a little more eloquently in Psalm 39:4–5:

LORD, make me to know my end  
And what is the extent of my days;  
Let me know how transient I am.  
Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths,  
And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight;  
Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.

Focusing on heaven reminds us how short our earthly lives are.

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Do you feel as if God has “hit the fast-forward button” in your life?  
How does the brevity of your earthly life affect your priorities today?

*God, help me understand how short my life on earth is. Show me any changes I need to make in my to-do list or priorities so I can make the most of the time You have given me today.*