

Living with an Eternal Perspective

Zoom Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 7:00pm (CST)

Led by Mary Lowman

February 28, 2023

Lesson Eight

2 Corinthians 4:17 – 18:

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Living with an eternal perspective is learning to see what is unseen. Are you willing to be intentional about putting this principle in place?

- How much do you want to get rid of unnecessary stress and frustration in your life?
- How much do you want to have more joy and contentment in your life?
- How tired are you of worrying and getting upset about things that really don't matter?
- Most importantly, how much would you like to be more like Jesus—knowing that you are pleasing him?

That's what it comes down to—are you committed and are you willing to be intentional?

What obstacles get in our way?

A saint of old, Amos Wells, wrote:

Heal me of my blindness that blots out eternity
with this bit of mortal life close pressed.

Mortal versus Immortal

This “bit of mortal life” is a good reminder that the things which blot out eternity from our view are mortal, not immortal.

Loving the World

This “mortal life” Wells refers to is called the “world” in Scripture:

1 John 2:15 - 17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Worldliness is thinking the world is all that ultimately matters—placing it above the Father. We all have the “world” in us.

Obstruction #1: The Lust of the Flesh

When John says “the lust of the flesh,” he’s talking about the wrong focus on things you can see, touch, and feel—things like food, drink, leisure, sex, rest, enjoyment, comfort—anything that appeals to how you feel in your body.

1 Corinthians 9:24 – 27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ **But I discipline my body and keep it under control,** lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (ESV)

Success/Money/Status

The pursuit of these bits of mortal life can blind us perhaps quicker than anything else.

Agur gave us a wise saying, found in **Proverbs 30:8 and 9**:

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Leisure and Enjoyment

Once again, this world system insists that we need to be entertained constantly, and so this worldly entertainment, when it becomes a lust, blots out eternity for us.

God doesn’t mince words about the sin of laziness. The parable of the talents demonstrates this. The guy who received only one talent or bag of gold decided he would make sure he didn’t lose it, so he put it under his mattress and saved it. When the master returned, he was given a very harsh judgment:

Matthew 25:26 – 28:

His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.’

As Jesus tells this parable, he makes it abundantly clear that laziness is not some little something that doesn’t really matter spiritually. Laziness blots out eternity and can cause you to miss the good things God intends for you to do.

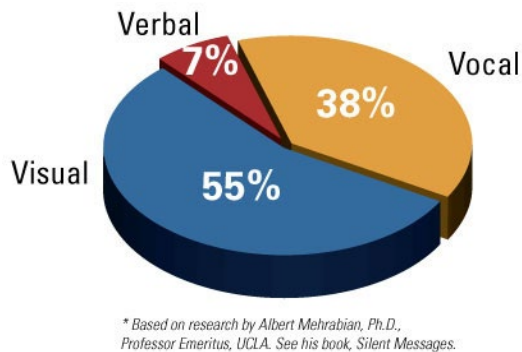
Fear also blots out eternity. Fear can cripple you and make you a quitter. Then you miss out on what matters in eternity.

Obstruction #2: The Lust of the Eyes

The lust of the eyes can cause you to be very *short-sighted*, which means lacking foresight, lacking an eternal perspective.

The Power of Eyesight

Information and impressions enter our minds through the avenues of verbal communications (choice of words), vocal communications (tone of voice) and non-verbal or visual communications (what we see). The non-verbal or visual is larger than the other two combined.



Matthew 6:22 -23
“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

In his book *The Holy War*, John Bunyan depicts the war of the believer against our enemy, Satan. In this allegory Mansoul, representing a person, is a town besieged by the enemy, Diabolus. And one of the enemy’s chief avenues of entrance into this town is **Eye-Gate**.

Television/Movies/Internet

In a sermon on our entertainment industry, my former pastor, Dr. Erwin Lutzer gave us three tests for discerning whether to watch something or not – to determine if it will “blot out eternity” and cause us to be short-sighted.

1. Check out the content.
Ask yourself: “Would I look at this if Jesus were sitting right here beside me?”
2. Check out its control over you.
Could you stop watching this at any time, or have you become addicted to it?
3. Check out the amount of time it takes from you.

Ephesians 5:15 – 16:

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (KJ)

Obstruction #3: The Pride of Life

The pride of life refers to self-exaltation, thinking what you have and what you are is of your own doing, pride in possessions, financial means, property, livelihood.

How much does pride drive what you do?

Busyness/Misplaced Priorities/Endless Activity

It came as a shock to me when I realized that I took great pride in my busyness, my endless activities. It was the pride-of-life worldliness that John identified as part of this world system, and it subtly blotted out eternity. How seductive and deceptive it was – and can still be.

What blots out eternity for you?

Are you willing to remove any obstacle that “blots out eternity” from your eyesight, so that you can see the eternal perspective?

Forever Eyes – a Daily Choice

Life is so daily – have you noticed? The will of God is lived out one day at a time. Therefore, if you and I are ever to live now in the light of eternity, we must begin today and continue on a daily basis.

Titus 2:11 - 14

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹²It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

What is your take-away from this study?

**I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
Romans 8:18:**

Worth it all – Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

Often we don't understand
The trouble in this life
Though we trust His perfect plan,
We sometimes question why.
All the tears we've cried,
Every sleepless night.

It will be worth it all,
It will be worth it all.
Every fear erased on that day
It will be worth it all.
We'll find our resting place,
The moment we see Jesus' face,
We will behold Him
It will be worth it all.

For every heartache
And pain that we feel,
Earth has no sorrow
That heaven cannot heal.
We will wear a crown.
Lay our burdens down.
When the storm has passed,
We'll be home at last.

It will be worth it all.
It will be worth it all.
Every fear erased, on that day,
It will be worth it all.
We'll find our resting place,
The moment we see Jesus' face,
We will behold Him
It will be worth it all.

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