

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living  
Leader's Guide

## CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

### LESSON 4: LIVING WITH AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Disciplines. This series of lessons introduces the disciplines of a Christian life, including prayer, Bible study, as well as fixing our mind on eternal things. This is exciting content that should energize and renew the spiritual life of mature Christians and propel newer Christians into deeper faith. The material is practical in nature, yet focussed on the many spiritual rewards of a life devoted to God.

#### INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).

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# CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

## LESSON 4: LIVING WITH AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to communicate the basic principles of living from God's eternal perspective instead of a temporal perspective.

### LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson helps participants examine the perspective they have on life. We can either think about the things of earth and our lifetime here, or take an eternal perspective and realize that our lives here are very short. Of utmost importance is that we exist to glorify God. This perspective can help us weather the trials and difficulties in this life. They are small things, after all, in light of eternity! This can be a life-changing idea to consider. Help participants see the immediate implications of having an eternal perspective – it should change our identity, our values, our behaviour!

## INTRODUCTION

*Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.*

- ❖ If you believed you would live forever, how would that change the decisions you make, and the way you choose to spend your time?
- ❖ What is a position you have recently changed your mind about? What did it take for you to be persuaded to change your perspective?
- ❖ What is your understanding of what happens to a person after they die? What can a Christian expect? What can someone who does not know Jesus expect?
- ❖ What do you think it means to live with an eternal perspective? How is this different from a temporal perspective?

## STUDY

*Instruct the group on the following points.*

### TEACH

- ❖ **The meaning of eternal perspective:** Perspective is a point of view — a way of thinking about a matter. To have an eternal perspective means to evaluate the beliefs, events, and decisions of



life from God's point of view. It means using God's values as the measuring stick with which to evaluate every aspect of life. It is to recognize that everything done in the present has an eternal consequence, and should be evaluated in that light.

- **The importance of living with an eternal vs. a temporal perspective.**
  - Read Matthew 6:19-34. Our perspective in life will have either a strong positive result in the way we live, or a terrible effect. Jesus taught that our perspective in life affects every detail of our lives.
- **Consider a temporal view and an eternal view concerning the following issues:**
  - Truth (1Corinthians 1:20-25; 2:6-9).
  - The world (1John 2:15-17; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13-16).
  - Personal significance (Matthew 6:19-21).
- ❖ **Important considerations in our view of truth:** We live our lives based on our belief systems. People act on what they believe is true (even if their beliefs are false). Being convinced that a specific belief system is true, does not make it so. (1Corinthians 1:20-25; 2:6-9)
  - **Temporal view:** The wisdom of the world is foolishness. If we live with this perspective, then our measurement of what is true will be based on the world's values rather than God's (1Corinthians 1:20-25).
  - **Eternal view:** Living according to God's wisdom will appear to be foolishness to the world, but it's based on the true measure of reality — God's eternal truth (1 Corinthians 2:6-9).
- ❖ **Important considerations in our world-view:**
  - **Temporal view:** Instead of desiring the things of God, we want what the world has to offer and hope to find satisfaction from these things. We will then feel a part of this world (1John 2:15-17).
  - **Eternal view:** If we are Christians, we do not belong to this world. Therefore, we will not want to have anything to do with the world's values (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11: 13-16).
- ❖ **Important considerations in our understanding of personal significance:**
  - **Temporal view:** We find significance in worldly accomplishments such as acquiring wealth, having possessions, being influential, enjoying successful careers, and having social status (Matthew 6:19).
  - **Eternal view:** We realize that significance comes through understanding that we are loved by God, and through Jesus Christ we can be personally related to Him. The only accomplishments of true, eternal significance are those that serve to advance God's kingdom and not our own worldly interests (Matthew 6:20-21).



### ❖ **Benefits of living with an eternal perspective**

- Our treasure (the true significance of life) cannot be stolen or destroyed (Matthew 6:19-20). It is secure.
- We can live without anxiety (Matthew 6:25-34).
  - Because we understand how much God values us.
  - We do not have to worry about the future or try to find our sense of importance from a false value system.
  - Because we understand that God will take care of us.
  - If God values us so highly, He will care for us according to His plan.
  - Because we are free from the pressures of the world.
  - People and the media are constantly telling us what things we need to make us significant. True believers with eternal perspective are free from those pressures and are thus able to pursue things of eternal significance.
- We are able to endure trials and difficulties joyfully (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) because:
  - God is renewing our inner, eternal nature day by day, even though our temporal bodies experience weakness and will finally die.
  - We recognize that enduring earthly afflictions produces an eternal value (reward) that far outweighs the present discomfort.
  - We have learned to live for the true reality of the unseen eternal kingdom.

### ❖ **How to develop an eternal perspective:** No one is born with an eternal perspective. The world in which we live influences our thinking. We need to change the way we think from the world's perspective to God's perspective. This involves both taking in the truth and acting on it (James 1:22).

- **Choose to study and meditate on God's values** (Romans 12:2).
  - We cannot know God's values or perspective apart from His Word. The Bible gives an understanding of who God is, what God is like, and what His perspective of life is.
- **Choose daily to evaluate your principles and decisions in light of God's Word** (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).
  - The spiritual battle takes place in our minds and it is a battleground of ideas. We are responsible for developing the habit of continually evaluating these ideas which bombard us. Are they our own thoughts or from other people? Are they contrary to the teaching in God's word?
- **Choose to seek God's kingdom first and lay up eternal treasures** (Matthew 6:20-21, 33; Colossians 3:1-3).



- **Choose to walk by faith, not by sight** (2 Corinthians 5:7).
  - We need to walk by faith not sight, trusting God even when we cannot see or understand what He is doing.

## DISCUSSION

- ❖ What are some benefits of living with an eternal perspective? (Matthew 6:25-34 and 2Corinthians 4:16-18.)
- ❖ This week, pay close attention to what is being communicated around you. There are implied values in contrast to God's Word within media, social structures, school, and workplace. What are some sources of temporal ideas that you should be on guard against?
- ❖ How can having an eternal perspective allow us to survive times of difficulty?
- ❖ How can you work towards developing an eternal perspective? What are some practical things you can do this week to work towards this goal?

## PRAYER

*Close in a time of prayer. Pray that participants would walk by faith and not by sight this week. Pray they would develop an eternal perspective, have a heart for the things of God, and make godly choices. Pray they would store up their treasure in heaven and not on earth.*