

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living Study Guide

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

LESSON 4: LIVING WITH AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple 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 focused on the many spiritual rewards of a life devoted to God.

The Student's Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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LESSON 4: LIVING WITH AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

We can either choose to think about events from a temporal perspective – that is, how it affects the here and now, or from an eternal perspective – what eternal consequences will an action have? This lesson looks at these basic principles which are important to the life of a Christian.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Some people naturally think about the present, some dwell in the past, others are always looking to the future. As Christians we should consider that everything we do, and every event that occurs can have an eternal significance. The most important thing that can happen to a person is not marriage, parenthood, or an important position but rather being saved by Jesus. This has eternal consequences. 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.

GETTING STARTED

1. If you believed you would live forever, how would that change the decisions you make, and the way you choose to spend your time?

2. 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?



STUDY

❖ **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.

- What did Jesus teach on having an eternal perspective? Read [Matthew 6:19-34](#). What did Jesus say is important to spend our time, money and energy on in light of eternal things?

- Consider the following three ideas, and write down what the temporal view and the eternal view of those things might be. Verses are provided to help you consider the eternal perspective.

	Temporal View	Eternal View
Truth (1 Corinthians 1:20-25, 2:6-9)		
The World (1 John 2:15-17, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 11:13-16)		
Personal Significance (Matthew 6:19-21)		

❖ **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **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.



- **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).

➤ **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).

➤ **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 AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE:** When we train our minds to have an eternal perspective, we consider God's desires and plan in all things instead of our own immediate comforts. It has many benefits for us as well:

- Read Matthew 6:19-20. What does this passage say about the security of our 'treasure'?

- According to Matthew 6:25-34, why can we live without anxiety or worry?



Because of an eternal perspective, we can understand how much God values us, and not worry about the future because we know God will take care of us.. We don't have to find our importance in some false value system, and we are free from the pressures of the world.

- Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What does this passage tell us about our ability to endure trials and difficulties joyfully if we have an eternal perspective?

God is renewing our inner eternal nature day by day, even though our temporal bodies experience weakness and die. We recognize that enduring earthly afflictions produces eternal value. We learn to live for the true reality of the unseen kingdom of God!

- ❖ **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.

- **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.



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Our perspective is our point of view, a way of thinking of a matter. An eternal perspective means to evaluate the beliefs, events and decisions of life from God's point of view.
- ❖ Living with an eternal perspective is different from having a temporal perspective. One looks at everything as it matters in the long run, the other is consumed with the details of the here and now.
- ❖ Having an eternal perspective helps us to re-evaluate truth, our world-view, and our personal significance.
- ❖ Living with an eternal perspective means that we do not have to be consumed with worry and anxiety because we trust in God and His plans.
- ❖ With an eternal perspective, we rejoice that our treasure is in heaven, and our most important relationship with our relationship with God which will not come to an end or decay.
- ❖ We can develop an eternal perspective by choosing to study and meditate on God's word, to evaluate our principles and decisions in light of God's Word, to choose to seek God's kingdom first and to walk by faith and not by sight.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. 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?

2. How can you work towards developing an eternal perspective? What are some practical things you can do this week to work towards this goal?