

# Living for Eternity while on Earth

## -Pete Briscoe

### Day 1 of 5 • This day's reading

- Colossians 1:1-2
- 2 Corinthians 4:18

Devotional

Living Your Now With The Next World in Mind

***If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world. — C.S. Lewis***

### **Believers in Jesus live on two planes of existence**

**simultaneously.** Don't worry, I'm not about to go science fiction on you. (Actually, this is even *crazier* than sci-fi!) The truth is that we live in Christ... and we also live in Dallas/Phoenix/London, or wherever. We are *in* Christ spiritually, and yet we are *in* our physical location, living our lives with work, family, and other commitments.

Yeah, it sounds nuts, but the New Testament is full of this dual reality. Consider Paul's salutation in Colossians 1:1-2:

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers in Christ.*

Notice the words near the end of this verse. IN Christ IN Colosse. **He is saying that they are in Christ, but that they are also in Colossae.** How can someone be in both places? Think about what Paul wrote in another letter, 2 Corinthians 4:18:

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

The words “temporary” and “eternal” are key here. The world we live in can be seen; it's physical and visible, and we interact with it continuously. It's also temporary. It's here for a while, but then it will go.

Then there is the invisible world. It is Christ and all that comes with Him. He is our purpose for being, the reason we go about things in the physical world.

We like to compartmentalize and sort things. That's why label makers and organizing software sell well. (Unfortunately, it's also

why Christians tend to think they can do church on Sundays, head to lunch, and that was their Jesus fix for the week!)

**We can't compartmentalize the eternal and the temporary. The two are interchangeable for believers. We live in both right now! And if we're paying attention to the eternal, our temporary life will show it.**

*Jesus, thank You for putting eternity into my heart. Thank You for the timeless perspective You give me. Help me, Holy Spirit, to know and understand that I have a temporary life and an eternal life. Help me live in such a way that my temporary life points to Your eternal work! Amen.*

## Day 2 of 5 • This day's reading

- Exodus 3:14

Devotional

Take Regular Time to Marvel at God's Greatness

***What we do in life echoes in eternity. — Maximus, Gladiator***

**I often think of the galaxies in outer space as being symbolic of God's eternal vastness.** No doubt, it's hugeness beyond our comprehension. Light from the closest star takes 2,000 years to reach earth. But that's just the physical world.

Eternity is *infinitely* bigger than that! It's changeless, timeless, and it's the realm of spirituality and God's mighty attributes. It's the realm of ultimate reality of completeness and wholeness, where things are finished and settled. And, it's the realm of *right* now.

When God called to Moses at the burning bush, He told Moses to tell the people that "I AM" sent him. (That's terrible English grammar, but perfect theological grammar, so I suppose theology wins out over English!)

I AM is the way God wanted Moses and the people to think about Him. I AM is eternity past, right now, and always in the future—all

at the same time. Yep, it's pretty baffling. **That's the point! God is so infinite and vast that to describe Him is an exercise in futility.**

Is God that infinitely large in your prayers and worship—in your life?

*Lord Jesus, how awesome is Your eternal vastness. Praise Your mighty name. Keep eternity fixed in my heart. Keep my mind set on things above. I need to be reminded all the time of Your greatness. Do whatever it takes, Holy Spirit, to keep You first in my heart, as the Lord beyond measure in all ways. Amen.*

## Day 3 of 5 • This day's reading

- 2 Corinthians 4:18

Devotional

Prioritizing the Eternal Over the Temporary

***Happiness is neither without us nor within us. It is in God, both without us and within us. — Blaise Pascal***

Have you noticed how certain seasons of life seem to flash by in an instant? Couples get married and before they know it, they're celebrating 20 years of marriage. Kids are born and seem to graduate college and leave home practically over night. It's funny how that happens, isn't it?

**But so it goes with *everything* in the temporary realm. It has a timeline, a beginning and an end.** It's a realm of activity, of processes, and of physical needs. It's the realm where we see both good and evil. There is birth, growth, and death. With all our senses, we can experience God's gift of creation in mountain ranges and valleys full of wildflowers. With our hands and our minds we can joyfully receive all the great stuff He has given us in the temporary realm.

But this is actually the danger of the temporary realm:

It *does* have a lot of great stuff. **And it's really easy to love stuff—to love stuff more than the One who made it.** (That's like telling God, "I like You, but what I really love is Your *stuff*, as long as You give it to me.")

Ouch.

What parent yearns for *that* reaction from their kids? **When we lust after the temporary pleasures of this temporary realm, we trade the best for the stuff that's not even going to last a moment in eternity.**

*Father, I want more than just Your stuff. I want Your heart, not just Your hand. Thank You for the temporary realm that You have created and the joy that it brings, but I want to live for what is above it. I want my life to be a pursuit of the eternal. Transform my heart; enable the eyes of my heart to see the things above that will last forever. Give me the humble wisdom to allow You to live through me in a way that makes my temporary pursuits be a reflection of all that is eternal. Amen.*

## Day 4 of 5 • This day's reading

- 2 Corinthians 4:18

Devotional

Prioritizing Your Relationship With Christ

***Reality is the leading cause of stress amongst those in touch with it. — Jane Wagner***

When I was twenty-two years old, you could say my life was characterized by ESPN and the Golden Arches. I watched sports when I got home and ate McDonald's while I did. If that would have been the rest of my life, I'd probably have been pretty cool with that.

Then one day, I was standing in the church lobby and I noticed this beautiful blond named Libby. I'd known her since I was seven, but I'd never *noticed* her before. Fifteen years later, she looked a lot different. Fifteen years later, I could see a lot different.

The rest is history. After the knot was tied, we basked in euphoria and bliss as newlyweds... for a while. Several years into our marriage we started pastoring and the kids started coming. We spent less and less time together, until one day we had to sit down and say, "We need to change some things. We are growing



apart.” **The urgent things had taken over the essential things, and we realized that we had failed in our priorities.**

Do you remember those early days when you came to Christ? How it felt like you couldn't soar any higher in your spirit? Then life took over, and you still loved Jesus, but the blinding excitement of it eventually faded.

**On earth, there is constant tension between the temporary and the eternal.** This tension is known to God, too. It's natural and normal to feel this tension. Our hearts should long for the Lord Jesus, and we ought to feel the pangs of yearning for the eternal. At the same time, we need to be busy seeking joy in Christ as we go about the normalcy of today.

In the same way that Libby and I sat down and made it a priority to talk about our relationship, you need to do that regarding your relationship with Christ.

**Overcome the tension and cut through the clutter of the temporary. Sit down, be still, and listen to the Holy Spirit as you read the Word.** His eternal love never fades; not even the noise of this temporary world can drown it out.

*Jesus, I feel tension. Sometimes I have great days, and sometimes I have terrible ones. Teach me and grow me. Give me an awareness of Your presence in me and around me right now. My soul longs for You, thirsty for a drink of Your cool presence. By Your Spirit in me, slow me, let me rest in You. Quiet my soul, that I can be still and know that You are my God, still.*

## Day 5 of 5 • This day's reading

- Luke 22:42

Devotional

Set Your Heart On Things Eternal

***‘Cause I’d rather feel pain than nothing at all. — Three Days  
Grace, “Pain”***

Ask people what makes a song popular and chances are they’ll say, “It sounds real.” **There is a strong desire in the human heart for anything that is real.** Even painful things can be better than the numbness that comes when a temporary high wears off—and that’s all the temporary world has to offer—fast thrills and numbness.

To find out how to live for joy, we need to look to Jesus. How did He survive when He was living on earth, caught up in the tension between the temporary and the eternal?

**Jesus kept His heart and mind set on things eternal. Just read the Gospels and see how often He talks to the Father. It’s constant.** Look at how He alludes to the Father, how often He directs the disciples to think on things above. At every step in His journey on earth, Jesus was *totally* dependent on the Father.

Look at how He cries out to the Father in His greatest hour of need, just before the crucifixion:

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”* (Luke 22:42)

Those are the words of our Lord focused on things above, on things eternal and not temporary. *Temporarily*, He was about to undergo a lot of pain and suffering. *Eternally*, He kept His eye on the glory to come.

May we do the same. May we understand that spiritual growth is about experiencing eternal truths while living in a temporary world. **We are being made new through the grace of Jesus. The Holy Spirit lives in us. The Father’s love never fails us. Desperate dependence on Christ, the Spirit, and the Father is what we are after.** We cannot do a single thing of value for the eternal realm without His power.

***With* Christ comes the fullness of joy—*apart* from Christ, temporary and cheap thrills.**

*Jesus, You are the Great King. This world seeks cheap thrills and tawdry pursuits. I don't want that, and I don't want it for those around me. Teach and shape me. I want to live for eternity while on earth. Show me how much joy You have, Father, when I submit to You.*

Reflection:

1. Is your temporary life compartmentalized from your eternal life?
2. Here in the temporary realm, how might the Holy Spirit be inviting you into the work He's doing for the eternal realm?