

**Chapter 52: Begin with the ~~End~~ Beginning in Mind**

**Life Application Verses:**

**John 3: 16.** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

**T**his chapter might have been best suited to start and end the book. It’s really a simple premise at work here: when you become a follower of Christ, you become an *immediate* citizen of Heaven; your purposeful lingering on Earth becomes a specific journey through this life on the way to your final destination. If you rearrange the words a bit, you might better understand it to be that your old life has passed away and you begin anew with the end in mind—this is a bit of a misnomer: “**begin with the end in mind**” when you are referring to eternity is not an ending at all. So, as you can see, I’ve changed the title to reflect that when we are changed from Death to Life, we become Heavenly Minded—or even better—we **begin with the ~~end~~ beginning in mind** while we remain here to do Earthly Good.

What is this beginning? The most clearly defined terminology for our beginning is found in the Life Application Verses in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” The way I read this verse is as follows: “For God loved Ken so much, that He gave Ken His only begotten Son, that because Ken believed in Him, Ken will not perish, but have eternal life.” Now, folks, I don’t know about you but eternity is a mighty long time! In fact, when we think of what is eternal, everlasting, or never ending, that means it continues year-after-year, eon-after-*eon*, trillions-upon-trillions of years, and from everlasting-to-everlasting. There are no alarm clocks or snooze buttons or retirement or death or separations or false starts. It has beginning without end. That last thought boggles my mind for I cannot comprehend what was before to get to what will never end because it never had a beginning. Only our God knows the reality to this mystery of time. Think about this...with God time just is...no beginning and no end! NO END!!!

Sometimes, we may look out in our future and decide that for us to move from Point A to Point B, the effort is just more than we can handle. As Jesus gave us in John 3: 16, whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. If you have believed in the Son of God,

the ~~end~~ beginning has been defined for us and that ~~end~~ beginning is everlasting life. The difference is made in the word 'begin.' Since I seem to rely on Webster from time-to-time, what does ole' Webster say about the meaning of begin? The meanings for begin are: to do the first part of an action; go into the first part of a process; to do the first part of an action (repeated here); to have a starting point; and, to set about the activity of. I think the operative definition for this discussion is to set about the activity of living Heavenly Minded to accomplish the most Earthly Good that we can to enter into Eternal Life tired. If we live our lives to the fullest, always knowing that the ~~end~~ beginning is to spend eternity in the presence of God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we *should* be 'tired' when it is our time to 'Go Home.'

In Philippians 3: 20-21: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." This verse speaks to our citizenship in Heaven, among several other Heavenly Minded things. It also informs us of our transformation into a Heavenly body, and I believe it reminds us that we will see the Glory of Jesus, as He sits at the right hand of Almighty God the Father. In other words, John 3:16 and Philippians 3:20-21, and the Holy Bible are our source of hope in the ~~end~~ beginning that we look for at the moment of our Salvation. But how does this translate to Earthly Good and what I referred to a moment ago about 'entering into Eternal Life tired.'

As a Christian myself, as many of you, I read my Bible, study, pray, and sometimes I discover something and think that I will never measure up to that verse or requirement because I have failed to remain consistent. I believe God knows that we are weak and Sin is a nemesis that will not go away in this life—thus, The Throne of Grace and Mercy is our refuge (Read Hebrews 4: 12-16). Yet, in His instructions to us in Scripture, our Earthly Good is just what it sounds like: we live on this Earth and at worst, our lives should reflect His Glory, His Will, His Purpose, His Guidance, and His Work. At best, we should do all of these things as a follower who strives to walk in His steps at all times of the day and night, to show ourselves a student of the Holy Word in thought, action, and fellowship. If we do these things for service to our God in Christ, we will (should) be unable to be idle in thought, action, and fellowship. We will be busy

praying for others, taking care of our families, working in our local churches in whatever capacity He has chosen for us, fulfilling community service to our less fortunate neighbors—in essence, at the end of our Heavenly Minded lives, how can we not be ‘tired’ in doing Earthly Good? IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE OTHERWISE! Tired in this context is not without joy or Praising God—just the opposite! Tired = arriving before God ready to receive Eternal Heavenly Rest!

Let’s take a look at something here in terms of God’s Heavenly Minded investment in us and our Earthly Good expectations which suggests that we should be working mightily towards being tired at the ~~end~~ beginning of our Eternal Lives: (Matthew 25: 14-30 NASB)

### Parable of the Talents

<sup>14</sup> “For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own [servants] and entrusted his possessions to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. <sup>17</sup> In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug a *hole* in the ground and hid his master’s money.

<sup>19</sup> “Now after a long time the master of those [servants] came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful [servant]. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

<sup>22</sup> “Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful [servant]. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

<sup>24</sup> “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no *seed*. <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

<sup>26</sup> “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy [servant], you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no *seed*. <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest. <sup>28</sup> Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’

<sup>29</sup> “For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. <sup>30</sup> Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

As a layperson of the Gospel, I thought it best to call in God's Calvary in understanding the verses that we just read. Do they seem harsh, unreasonable, or take away from our Hope in Eternal Life? Read what Matthew Henry says:

**Matthew 25 - Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Bible  
The parable of the talents.**

Christ keeps no servants to be idle: they have received their all from him, and have nothing they can call their own but sin. Our receiving from Christ is in order to our working for him. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. The day of account comes at last. We must all be reckoned with as to what good we have got to our own souls, and have done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed. It is not meant that the improving of natural powers can entitle a man to Divine grace. It is the real Christian's liberty and privilege to be employed as his Redeemer's servant, in promoting his glory, and the good of his people: the love of Christ constrains him to live no longer to himself, but to Him that died for him, and rose again. Those who think it impossible to please God, and in vain to serve him, will do nothing to purpose in religion. They complain that He requires of them more than they are capable of, and punishes them for what they cannot help. Whatever they may pretend, the fact is, they dislike the character and work of the Lord. The slothful servant is sentenced to be deprived of his talent. This may be applied to the blessings of this life; but rather to the means of grace. Those who know not the day of their visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. His doom is, to be cast into outer darkness. It is a usual way of expressing the miseries of the damned in hell. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Savior goes out of the parable into the thing intended by it, and this serves as a key to the whole. Let us not envy sinners, or covet any of their perishing possessions. (Mt 25:31-46)

Serious stuff. It's how we should ***Begin with the End Beginning in Mind***. To me, I think it says that being a Christian is not only a Gift by the Grace of God, it comes with responsibility. As I have noted throughout this meshed 'devotionalbookjournalimprovementguide', the intent was about our ordinary lives—the 'rubber-meets-the-road' lives we live. These lives I refer to are not idle conversation pieces to mark time, but these example lives I have used throughout these chapters refer to who we are as Christians—the real us, not who we want others to see. God already knows who we are because I believe that He sees us in all things. He hears us in all things. Let me ask you to consider two things (among many) about your Christian life, subsequent to the moment you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior:

1. Do you pray? Borders on being a ridiculous question, doesn't it? I don't mean do you say, 'Dear God, please help me to be a better Christian. Amen.' I am talking about the kind of talking to God that is from the depths of your soul—the most personal areas of your life. Do you intentionally allow self-vulnerability and open yourself up before Your God who ALREADY knows you, your messes, faults, and failed attempts to witness. He already knows what you need, the thoughts you had, and what motivated you to do what you did. To my Christian brothers and sisters in Christ, if your prayer life is not what you think (KNOW) it should be, ***make this a priority***. To me, the gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus is the MOST precious gift we have from God; the very next gift of God that is like the 1.1 behind the number one gift, is the privilege to pray to God. Talk to God; speak to Him as a Heavenly Father because our New Life in Christ makes us the Children of God. When my daughter or granddaughter doesn't talk to me (or my little grandson doesn't grunt at me), I must admit, I take it to heart—it stings. A few years ago, my granddaughter came over to visit. Taterpop (her name for me) was cutting the grass and had a bit of funk to him (in her angelic voice, she informed me that "Taterpop, you stink!") After that, she refused to give me hugs and any kisses, which is always a part of our Blessings from her. I know it was her way of responding to what she was experiencing, but she refused to hug or kiss Taterpop and that was so not like her. The point is: God is not out cutting grass, nor does He have anything offensive about Him. I believe that He wants Prayer to be a high priority with us as a means to deepen Fellowship. If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, Pray to God who is the Father of Jesus Christ and the Author of our Salvation. Pray without ceasing.
2. Do you read your Bible? Okay, you know what I am about to say after item #1 above, right? Well, if you know, then do you read it like it is the absolute User Guide to Life? Have you ever put together something at Christmas or other times of the year? When you read the instructions, they are written in English (or Spanish or French nowadays), but the logic or graphics left you ready to call the toll-free number and yell, "HELP!" Well, life is precisely like that item you are trying to assemble. Life is not a cookie-cutter experience. It has nuts, bolts, hex wrenches, scratches from assembly, but it is NOT complete. It is built as we go. The Christian life is no exception. It is built as we go, even though we begin with the ~~end~~ beginning in mind. God's User Guide to Life has been with us for many years. The words have the logic we need to make sense of our lives. Christianity is not a shield from a headache, sore throat, pneumonia, or the other ills or tragedies in life—it is a way through. When these occur, you should be practicing #1 above before, during, and after. Even as we pray, we should be reading the Word of God—did you get that—WORD OF GOD. More apropos, Words of God. The words found in the Holy User Guide to Life. IF you don't, God is saying to you, "Did you read the memo I sent you?" His memo is the Holy Bible and if you don't read it, study it, and heed its Truths and make application to your life, Wow! Read it, make notes in the margins, take study notes in a journal, seek to understand how it applies in the rubber-meets-the-road life you live, and PLEASE take the time to read it cover-to-cover. When I stand before God, if He asks me if I read his Best Seller, I want to be able to respond: "My God, I read it from cover-to-cover and I want to Honor You for what it did for me. *You gave me Life in Christ Jesus, and then you gave me a Guide for that Life.*"

3. Practice #1, Practice #2, and then start over again and build a habit that is never broken.

**Finally, if you are reading this and have never given your life to Jesus, the risen Son of the Living God—maker of all things, I would ask you this very moment to ask Jesus to become your Savior and then follow Him. Read the Book of John and you will begin to know Him and the Father. Jesus said to know Him is to know the Father because God sent Him to this world to save the lost and teach the world about God by the example life and words of Christ Jesus.**

**A Question of Curiosity:**

IF you understand that the beginning of our Eternal Life begins when we received Jesus as Lord and Savior, does this knowledge inspire you to reach out to the lost? Unless they accept Christ, they have no beginning, only an end; unless they hear, how can they begin with the ~~end~~ beginning in mind? Eternity is forever, whether in Eternal Life or Eternal Separation from God. We are to be Heavenly Minded always to always do Earthly Good. We are ordinary Christian living ordinary [extraordinary] lives for a purpose. This life is not by accident and it is of consequence to our Eternal destination.

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**"If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them." ~ C. S. Lewis ~**

**Many men would be religious if they knew where to begin; many would be more religious if they were sure where it would end. It is not indifference that keeps some men from God, but ignorance. "Good Master, what must I do to inherit Eternal Life?" is still the deepest question of the age.**

*~ Henry Drummond ~*

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**My Prayer For You:**

Heavenly Father, as we understand our lives as Christians, may we begin our journey with the beginning of our Eternal Life in mind so that we might live our lives pleasing unto You. I offer the words of our Savior: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6: 35-40).

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*In the item below, where is the Beginning or the End?*

This is the idea of "perpetuality", or eternity, or something that has no start nor end. This is how Eternal Life can be represented. When you begin with the beginning in mind, subsequent to being Born Again, does it matter where it started? What matters is that it has no end—that is, your Eternal Life is forever; it goes on and on and on. Just like this circle, it is a line that is unbroken in form, function, or finality. It just starts and goes on forever. Those of us who served in the US Navy, might say that this circle has a 0 Degrees mark, and a 360 Degrees function. True...in this life; but NOT TRUE in Eternal Life. So, from this day to forever, every time you see a circle, think of your Eternal Life; and if you have not Eternal Life, find a Believer and ask them how to get Eternal Life in Christ. Once that is done, you live in this sphere--- perpetual, Eternal, and forever. And let me remind all of us something...what is in the center of this image? That's right...God the Father and Christ Jesus seated at the Right Hand of the Father. Every time you see an image that contains a circle, let me remind you of God's Eternal Love for us in that while we were yet sinners, He loved us and allowed Christ to die for our sins. The Circle ... a sign of Eternity in Heavenly Living...Forever.