

Chapter: Epilogue

Life Application Verses:

The Holy Bible: Genesis 1: 1 – Revelation 22:21. Author: The One True God.

Let's recap: We have walked through 52 topics and then some, read several pages of Holy Scripture, and we have been to many places in our lives to evaluate our existence in the domain of *Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good*. That about sum it up? Not quite: life can't be summed up in a single book or volumes of books, because God is not finished with us while we live here on this Earth. I think it will take an Eternity with God to put the finishing and perfect touches on our lives! Eternity...have you ever thought about that? It has no end; it goes on forever, never starting, never stopping. I don't know about you, but that gives me Hope and puts a smile on my face. Imagine Eternity with God and Jesus Christ seated at the right-hand of God as we Worship in the Eternal Light of Christ! Wow! And we get to see our loved ones again!

No more pain in my knees, or sore throats, or vision issues, or sleepless nights, and worry about something happening to my daughter, granddaughter, grandson, dad, wife (Mom is safe in Heaven)...I do not even in my best vernacular know the details of Heaven, such as what it will be for those of us who Believe in the Son of God and have received this Gift from God. I hope it is a transition from this life to Eternity in the Twinkling of an Eye that is as simple as 'what is comfortable' when we arrive. Let me restate this a bit: those of us who are the Children of God, not the perfect Children of God as there are none, will someday—tomorrow, in a month, in 4.9 years, in 2.74 decades, or when Christ returns to claim us from this world—be in the Presence of God. I don't even truly, as an Ordinary Christian, grasp all of the Judgment and so forth, but I know that we will live with Jesus in Eternity. When we arrive, what will we do, what will our new bodies be like, how will our loved ones look to us, will our beloved pets be there, and so forth? All I can tell you is what the Word of God says about Heaven: Revelation 21, 1-4: ¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and

He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

Sounds almost like a Hollywood special-effects movie, does it not? But it is to be and we as Christians believe this to be true, whether we understand it to the level of Scholarship or we accept it by Faith. What I find so very comforting, is that God said there will be no death, mourning, crying, or pain—and He Himself will wipe away every tear. I think of this to mean that in Heaven, God has removed the need for tears because of our presence with the God of All Creation, the Son of God seated at the Right Hand of the Father. Because we are with Him, in Heaven, He has removed death, mourning, crying, and pain from our existence. Is not that the very definition of Heaven? Hey, I can't carry a tune in a bucket—as the saying goes—but I bet when we are in Heaven our voices will be pure and beautiful as we Sing Praises to the Lamb who is Worthy of our Praise! *Think about that—NO MORE death, mourning, crying or pain!*

Our time in Heaven will no longer be about Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, but it will simply be, Heavenly Minded, Eternally Minded—for all Eternity. I look forward so much to seeing my Granny Brannen, who was a living book because she read so much and could talk to you about most any subject—and was close to an expert in many topics. I want to see all my family gone before me and who have been in the Presence of God all these years, and see my wife rejoice as she sees her mom and dad who both left us in years past. I especially want to see my grandchild that did not make it to full term and left us much too early and my dear Mom. I have no description of what those meeting will be like, but as we are told by Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13: 12: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” I cry from unbounded joy and hope when I think of these Heavenly meetings...

This book that you have been reading has been written to cause you to prepare for this future. Its intent has been to allow us as Ordinary Christians to think a bit deeper about our relationship with God, Jesus, our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and the Lost Person that passes us by every single day. It was written to engage you in the process of parenting, employee-ship,

leadership, politics, and just the everyday events that we all live through. None of us are immune to pain, suffering, tears, aggravation, bosses, other employees, and lest we forget—our very selves as we struggle with our thoughts, actions, and outcomes. Not a one of us on this Earth has the advantage of being in Heaven—yet! That day is on the horizon, but it has not arrived yet. So, we are the Children of God, we cry, we hurt, and we love. We are Saved by Grace, and we bring our Petitions and Prayers before the Throne of Mercy and Grace to find help in times of need. ALL of us who believe in the Son of the Living God talk to God about what we face, the challenges to our health, and our relationships between ourselves and our spouses. And this list of things in life is a litany of concerns and issues with which we all face.

Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, is not a pie-in-the-sky, feel-good, book. It's about what is real to each of us. What is real? It's that part of life that we experience every day in our ordinary and casual existence as we strive to take care of our families, keep our sanity, and Be Faithful to our God. Sometime ago, I was reading scripture in Matthew 24. When I had finished, I began to Pray and in these quiet moments just between me and God, I heard that 'still, small voice' of the Spirit say to me, "Be Faithful in All Things." That's what *Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good* is all about. Be Faithful in All Things every day of the week, in every situation you and I face, and in service to God. Be Faithful in the small things of life, the ordinary things that don't seem to matter much because these things are so mundane, and in the big, extraordinary things of life. Be Faithful when no one is looking because when we are Faithful As Unto God as the fundamental premise from which we live, God must surely be Smiling From Heaven! Remember: *Think about NO MORE death, mourning, crying or pain!*

There are a few challenges that I would like to leave with you (and challenge myself as well):

Challenge #1: TREAT GOD AS YOU WANT HIM TO TREAT YOU. Here are a few suggestions: a) if we want God to hear our Prayers, make them known, don't assume. He tells us to Pray without ceasing, and that is precisely what He wants. Don't talk 'at or near the issue', just jump in there and tell God—OUR HEAVENLY FATHER—what it is you are facing, the concerns, the struggles, the very real thing that is of concern! Don't hide any details, because God already knows them all. Treat God as The One Who Made ALL of Heaven and Earth and Universe! Honor Him, give Him due Worship and Honor for the Most High Gift of Salvation in Jesus Christ. Bow before Him, but Pray Boldly before the Throne of Mercy and Grace. Talk to God as a Heavenly Father who is always seeking our Praise, not as a source of Help only in times of need. Treat God as you want Him to treat you—with Love, knowing and remembering that this Challenge is not to bring God

down to our level of existence, but to raise up our existence to the Level of God's Expectation—with remembrance that we are sinners saved by Grace. *Treat God as I Am That I Am.*

Challenge #2: PRIORITIZE: GOD IN CHRIST FIRST, FAMILY SECOND, AND ALL OTHER NEXT. Funny thing on the way to prioritization...if you give God the first and best of everything, He will return to you tenfold! Give Him the first and best of what you have financially, and I believe that He will meet your needs, and many of your Heart's Desires. Put God and Christ Jesus first, and your family will be Blessed beyond your understanding. Give your children to God, and watch what He does in their lives. Give to God Faithfully in all areas of your life, and I believe God will be Faithful to return to us more than we can imagine. Oh, don't think for a moment that we will walk a path of Roses and Nirvana—no, we will still have our afflictions, sinful nature, and so forth. The idea in this Challenge is to remember God first in ALL things, and watch what He will do in our lives. Our God is not a God of leftovers because He wants our best. We might not be able to give millions of dollars, but give from the Heart that which you can give to God and watch what He can do with it; dedicate your Children and Spouse to the Lord, and see how He magnifies that dedication. Build and strengthen your family in service to God, Prayer, and action. Take care of each other and do so as you put God in Christ first in your family. And, all other things will be added to you if you Seek God first, dedicate your family to Him, and let God guide you in all other things. *Prioritize!*

Challenge #3: READ YOUR BIBLE EVERY DAY AND PRAY EVERY DAY. Yeah, I know, you've heard this all your life—in church, from your own parents, from your Pastor, and ad infinitum. But, in terms of Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, if you have let this life-changing practice go by the wayside or have been sketchy on this path, let me Challenge you to refocus and get it done. Now, let me caution you: if you take this Challenge, you will suddenly find yourself busier than before, discover that your free time to Read and Pray has evaporated, and you'll experience a plethora of things that can only be described as 'distractions.' Don't believe it? Take the challenge and see what happens. On the flip side, if you persevere, you will discover a 'fulfillment' in your life that has not been there before. Now, I'm not talking about this: "Get up, rush through breakfast, open your Bible, skim your Chapter or verses, bow your head and tell God your worries, and off you go to work or whatever you are about." That is not the Challenge I am alluding to... This Challenge is a conscientious event in your life on a daily basis. Remember Challenge #1? How would you like it if God said, "Hey, I've got a lot of people to take care of today. I'll get back up with you just as soon as I can!" And, whoosh, He's gone and you don't know when He will be back to see about you. This Challenge is about you taking the time to stop what you are doing, find a time for yourself, maybe write in a journal your thoughts and feelings and your prayer, and get alone with God. Talk to Him about your hurts, concerns, failures, sins, and Pray with intent for your family, yourself, your friends and coworkers, and for those who have wronged you. Ask God for guidance in your very thoughts, actions, and your future. Seek His Path, not your own. Read to Know God, to learn of The Son of God, and to understand the Truths in the Bible that have actual application to our lives. In one of my classes that I teach—Open Source Technologies—I teach a Linux class. In that class, there are two items (among many) that have implications that are important: 1) the test file; and, 2) the

actual file. The test file is that which you can access to validate that what you expected happened; the actual file is that which you use in the world of Information Technology. The same is true here: 1) the test file is the study of the Holy Bible and Prayer; and, 2) the actual file is what you do with the scripture and what you hear from God when you Pray. I Challenge you—and myself—to Study the Word of God like never before, Pray to God like you have never prayed, and to take what you have learned and heard and put it to use in your life. APPLICATION!!! APPLICATION!!! APPLICATION!!! APPLICATION!!! APPLICATION!!!

Challenge #4: LEARN TO SHAKE YOUR FEET OFF. In Luke 9: 3-5, Jesus told his disciples this: **3** ‘He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. **4** Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. **5** If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them”.’ This Challenge, you might opine, is not Christian. I think it is precisely Christian. Here’s what it’s about: as you live your life, there are times and places in which you will bring to the organization, group, or individual something that is of value. This value may be a suggestion, the sharing of experience, or your contribution. As a Christian, I would like to think that our suggestions, sharing of experiences, and contributions, are based on our service to God (Colossians 3: 23-24¹). If this assumption is correct, then when we are in the World of Work—in all its capacities and outcomes—when the organization, group, or individual is unwilling or indifferent to our input, learn to shake your feet off—and keep right on truckin’. Your message might be secular or Christian, but in all things, we as Christians bring to the table our input as a matter of Service to God. If our contributions aren’t welcomed, then shake your feet off, Pray about the matter before God for guidance, and then move on. IN other words, don’t put blame on yourself or feel guilty as if your contributions aren’t of value. Let me give you an example: I attended a conference call about a leadership planning event. In this call, the ‘self-appointed leader’ was so caught up in his ideas, that he didn’t acknowledge or accept the input of the other team-members. He just talked and talked and created his own agenda. So, I applied “LEARN TO SHAKE YOUR FEET OFF” and after the meeting, I simply sent this person my input and left it at that. I didn’t carry the burden of not being accepted or that the ideas were of no value, and so forth. In essence, if you will do this in the right context before God, you will save yourself **so much self-imposed burden** as being unaccepted. Do what you can as you can and give the rest to God. IF someone doesn’t want your sincere input, feedback, or contributions, SHAKE YOUR FEET OFF and keep-on-keepin-on! Give your feelings of inadequacies and guilt to God and let Him do what He does best! How He deals with people is within His Divine providence! Oh, and this applies to our Witness for God; if we open ourselves to others to give them the Plan of Salvation in Christ, and they reject us, give that to God—don’t carry it as a failure! Dust your feet off and look for the next lost Soul—it won’t be long before another one comes along! Remember—give that lost person the Saving Knowledge of Christ Jesus; then if they reject that Gift, dust your feet off, never stop praying for them before God, and leave it with God! If that rejecting person then returns, give them Jesus a hundred-fold!!!

¹ “²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

Challenge #5: NEVER BE AFRAID TO CRY. A man (or woman) who is afraid to cry is a man (or woman) who will never know the absolute depths of God's Grace and Love. Tears of Joy, Sorrow, and Life are some of the most profound events in all of life. I can think of nothing more to add to this Challenge and I Pray you will find the Truth in this if you have not found it at this point in your life. Even Jesus wept! Imagine what it must have been for The Son of God to weep for the City (the people) He loved! ***NEVER be afraid to cry before the Throne of God!***

Challenge #6: DON'T LEARN TO FORGIVE, SIMPLY FORGIVE AND LET GOD. So many times, someone hurts us. Maybe our spouse, child, friend, coworker, father, mother, brother, sister, Christian brother or sister, and so on. In Psalms 103: 7-12, we are given the assurance of: "7He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: 8The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." My Challenge to you here is learning to Forgive is not what God wants, He wants us to intentionally Forgive and Give Him the hurt of the thing that has harmed us. This means that we FORGIVE the event in its entirety and leave its outcome to God—LET GOD DO WHAT HE DOES! He will make it right in His time and in His way. If you harbor unforgiveness towards others, **YOU** WILL SUFFER in ways that you cannot even imagine! Don't **learn** to forgive, simply forgive, let go, and let God take the burden. Scripture is replete with the teachings of Christ about forgiveness!

Challenge #7: REMEMBER CHALLENGES #1 - #6? CHALLENGE #7 IS TO REMEMBER THEM, DO THEM, AND REDO THEM TOMORROW, THE NEXT DAY, AND THE NEXT...BE FAITHFUL TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!

A Question of Curiosity:

Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, is my challenge to you. Stand out in this world as a person of Faith in Jesus Christ and be counted in ALL things Heavenly to make this Earth a better place to live, raise a family, and express your Christianity. Take the name of Jesus wherever you go, and never be ashamed of the Lamb of God who is worthy of our Praise—before ALL men, women, children, and beliefs!

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The Holy Bible: Genesis 1: 1 – Revelation 22:21. Author: The One True God.

"The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'"

"The framers of our Constitution meant we were to have freedom *of* religion, not freedom *from* religion."

~ Dr. Billy Graham ~

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My Prayer For You:

My Holy and Heavenly Father, As I conclude this book, let it be used to Glorify You, to Lead others to Christ, and to Shine Your Light into the lives of my Christian Brothers and Sisters. If I have erred in my use of words, ideas, or statements, the fault lies with me. Let my words never hinder anyone who is a Follower of Christ or a person who is in dire need of Salvation in Christ Jesus. I have strived to motivate others to be Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, not for the sake of reading a book, but for the Truth of Your Words in our lives. May we as the Ordinary Children of God stand firm in our Faith and in our Service to You, Oh God. This world in which we live is NOT our home and it is fraught with temptations and snares of ever-present dangers. You alone are God, and only You know what our futures hold for each one of us. Give us a renewed sense of what it means to be Heavenly Minded before You, and to carry Your Word in our Hearts to be Earthly Good before our family, friends, and those we meet. The Holy Bible is not just a book, God, it is as it has been said, "The Wonderful Words of Life." As we live day-by-day, Guide us, I Pray, to keep us from falling into traps of the enemy. Be our Shield against the temptations of the ordinary and the extraordinary kind, as these events are devised to trip us up and cause us to step out of our Fellowship with You. When this happens, we suffer in Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit. Make us Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good, for You. In Christ, Amen!

EVERLASTING LIFE NEVER ENDS; FOR IT IS EVERLASTING
PERSEVERE IN CHRIST TO THE END AND YOU PERSEVERE
IN JESUS WE TRUST; HE ALONE IS THE ONE WE TRUST IN
LOVE IS AMAZING GRACE; YET IN SIN GOD GAVE US LOVE
OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD OR YOU WILL BE OVERCOME
GREAT MUST BE OUR FAITH; JESUS SAVES BY OUR FAITH
URGENT IS THE DAY OF OUR SALVATION; OH HOW URGENT
EVERYDAY THANK GOD FOR HIS MERCIES, GRACE & LOVE