



Driven by Eternity

WITH

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DAY ONE

Eternity

Concepts like eternity and the size of our universe are too big for us to understand with our minds. Our logic cannot grasp them. Our words cannot accurately define them.

Think of what the outer limit of the universe might be like. Would you find a wall there? If so, what is beyond the wall? Would it simply be more empty space where no stars or galaxies can yet be found?

If so, wouldn't this be a continuation of the universe—not really the end? Where is the end? Can your mind take in the endlessness of the universe?

The same is true for the eternal. We cannot grasp with our minds the endlessness or the enormity of it. However, God has placed it in our hearts. Even those who have hardened their minds to convince themselves there is no God still often, at the end of their lives, come to realize a deeper knowledge that has always been there.

They find they always knew there is something more beyond death. They know there is an eternity, even if they don't know what it holds.

Truth be told, we are eternal beings now, yet its reality awaits all of us. Every man, woman, and child will one day leave this world defined by time and enter God's realm of eternity. Scripture tells us that God is the Creator of eternity (Psalm 90:2), the Father of eternity (Isaiah 9:6), and the King of eternity (1 Timothy 1:17). Eternity is bigger than we can comprehend, yet somehow we might say God is bigger still.

Since we cannot grasp eternity intellectually, we will have to listen with our hearts for anything meaningful to happen. In fact, this is necessary for you to get any benefit out of this reading plan.

Two steps will help you learn to do this. First, acknowledge that you need the Holy Spirit to help you, and ask Him to do so. Second, stop to ponder and meditate on truths that grip your heart. Don't rush past them or you will limit what this book can do for and in you. Don't just read for mental understanding, which is easily forgotten, but hide these truths in your heart.



DAY TWO

Success That Lasts

Most people want to succeed in life. This desire is placed in each of us by God, because He also wants us to succeed.

Look at Psalm 90:17 again. This prayer of Moses asks God to not once, but twice, "Make our efforts successful." Hebrew writers didn't waste words. They didn't repeat things just to fill in extra space.

In fact, when they did repeat something, it was to intentionally bring emphasis, much in the same way as we might write something in bold, italics, or with all capital letters.

More than that, those words come from God's holy Word, revealing to us His purpose, heart, and intent for our lives. Yes, God's desire is to help us be successful! Yet we must remember that God has a much different perspective than ours.

God is eternal. He therefore does not view our lives the same way we often do. He knows that even the longest human life cannot be measured against the immensity of the eternity that waits for us beyond this life. For this reason, God's definition of success is not our earthly, human definition.

Our world is continually changing. Names are remembered for a time and legacies endure for a season, but history eventually moves on. Even the things we consider to be most certain now will vastly transform or cease to exist only a few hundred years from now.

It is not so with God. He never changes and He never will. From beginning to the end, throughout all eternity, God will remain the same. His standard will never change. His heart toward us will never change. His definition of success will never change.

If we are to truly succeed in life, we must succeed by God's eternal definition. All other success will one day fail. Only success by God's definition will endure.



DAY THREE

Confidence at the Judgment Seat

It's shocking how many people base their lives on what is not eternal. They build their lives on everything from complete falsehoods to partial truths, but anything less than the full truth is a setup for disaster.

Jesus made it very clear in John 12:48–49: Everyone will face judgment one day, including Christians. No one is exempt. This day is fixed by God and it will surely come for both the Christian and the non-Christian.

The basis for God's judgment is equally fixed. No human can bring their own standard to that day. No one can say, "I tried my best to live a good life." It will do no good to claim that Jesus' mercy as Savior prevented you from also knowing Him as Judge.

Moreover, the term of God's judgment is firmly decided. It is eternal (Hebrews 6:12). His verdict is final and there is no appeals court. No higher authority can challenge God's eternal ruling. There is no second chance. All the choices and decisions from your life will then be final—eternally final.

Does it shake you to know these things? By God's mercy, we can face these truths with confidence.

Look at John 12:48–49. These verses tell us the basis of God's judgment. It's no secret, God's own words that He has already spoken will judge us on that day. It is simply a question of whether we have taken care to examine God's entire Word, and not just part of it, to see what God commands. We demonstrate His love by carefully following the precepts He has clearly laid out for us, living them by the grace He gives us.

The topic of God's judgment may not be pleasant for many people. But while we approach it with reverent fear, we do so with confidence. Many students fear their final exam, knowing they are unprepared. But those students who have been diligent to know what their teacher requires will approach that day with confidence.

We cannot discuss eternity without discussing God's judgment, for His judgment is what decides the fate of our eternity. Do not be shaken. As you continue to study eternal judgments, God's Word will show you everything you need to become confident for that day.



DAY FOUR

Eternal Decisions

The author of Hebrews referred to the subject of eternal judgments as one of six elementary stages of Christian teaching. Really think about that for a moment. Consider what "elementary" means in our education system.

The elementary principles of our education system are reading, writing, and arithmetic—the things you absolutely must know in order to move on to more specialized subjects. These subjects form the foundation of our education. This is what eternal judgments should be like for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

If we do not have eternal judgments firmly established in our understanding, then we will not be capable of building a proper life in Christ. It could be compared to trying to advance your high school or university education without being able to read, write, add, or subtract.

God has blessed me with the opportunity to travel a lot to minister for Him over the past thirty years. One thing I have found is that understanding the matter of eternal judgments is far from common. In fact, it is rare, and I'm even talking about deeply committed Christian leaders. This is even worse when we see that the author of Hebrews writes, "These are all matters of which you should have been fully

aware long, long ago." As an elementary principle of our faith, eternal judgment is a subject we should know fully and completely.

Believers have not continued to emphasize this truth as the early church did, because when we see that word "judgment," we think it means "condemnation." But let me tell you what it really means.

The word judgment used in Hebrews 6:2 is the Greek word *krima*. The base definition of this word simply means "a decision." Read through the verse again and exchange the word judgments for decisions. That has a much different feel to it, doesn't it?

What we know then is that there is an appointed day—a day of judgment. On that day, God will make decisions about every man and woman who ever lived on Earth. Those decisions are going to be eternal decisions. God is going to weigh our lives, and the decisions He makes, based on His careful investigation, will be eternally firm.

These truths are foundational for all Christians. They will impact our lives forever.



DAY FIVE

Living Your Unique Calling

Everyone has a divine calling. Knowing this, and keeping with God's eternal decisions, there is something very important you must understand: In regard to your calling, you'll not be judged according to what you did, but according to what you were called to do.

I have met several examples of this throughout my years in ministry. I have a close friend who pastors a thriving church he started in 1991 with twenty-two people. Now there are almost four thousand people attending this church.

As the church grew, they needed a building to meet the needs of the growing congregation. After a number of years, my friend noticed a distinguished, white-haired man regularly attending their services, and he would weep every week. Finally, the man approached one of my friend's associates.

He shared that in 1981 the Lord gave him a dream, telling him to start a church, and showing him the building in which the church would meet. It was so vivid, in fact, that he had a professional draw a rendition of the

building. He worked to establish a church for a while, but stopped because of difficulty. After a few years of traveling ministry, he ended up back in the business world.

He unfolded the picture he had drawn up so many years before and showed it to the associate, who almost went into shock. It was an exact picture of the church my friend now pastored. The man clearly saw God was serious about this assignment, needing someone to faithfully build His house. He knew the Lord had given his assignment to someone else because of his failure.

My friend has since ministered to this man to help bring restoration, as obviously God doesn't want him to remain broken, but to learn from his mistake. I tell his story here so you may also learn from his mistake.

Each of us has a calling. Some have gone into business who were called into ministry. Some have gone into ministry who were called into business, government, or education. There is no universally right answer to the question of your calling, except that we are all accountable only for our own.

Discover your calling. Then live it to the fullest.



DAY SIX

Discovering Your Call

When someone discovers the truth that they can choose a different path for their life than the one God intended for them, and they will be held accountable by God for that choice, it can be justifiably terrifying! This understanding quickly moves us to ask the question, "How do I know my calling?"

Once you begin asking this question, you must also seek God for the answer. He is the only one who knows why He created you, so you cannot find the answer anywhere else. I remember clearly when I first came to the Lord when I was in college studying to earn a degree in engineering. I was also interning at IBM.

While interning, I attended a celebration for a retiring employee who had worked there for thirty-eight years. He revealed he had hated every day working for the company, and as I looked around the room I was shocked to discover all the other employees felt the same way. I determined then and there, no money, security, or anything else is going to keep me from my reason for being placed on the earth.

With this determination, I began to seek the Lord. As I sought God, I felt increasingly drawn to ministry. While I didn't like that idea, I was thankfully smart enough to know I would find fulfillment and

satisfaction if I obeyed God. Before I was even out of college, God had made clear to me that I would one-day influence many nations with the Word of God.

This blew my mind. I had no connections and no idea how to do this, but I was willing.

God's ways do not normally align with our understanding, but if we seek Him He will reveal our calling. As we continue to seek Him, He will lead us in the path to fulfill it, even if it does not make sense to us. What matters is not whether it makes sense, but whether we are obedient.

What will you do to pursue your calling today?



DAY SEVEN

Putting Down Roots

I have discovered that God will give you the overall picture for your life, showing you the end from the beginning while not revealing all the details in-between. God speaks to us this way so we must continue to rely on faith instead of reason. We must trust in His understanding rather than our own.

After God revealed to me that He had called me to ministry, He led me on what looked as though it went in the opposite direction—just like Joseph going into slavery in order to become a great leader or Moses running into the wilderness before saving his people. God led me to take an engineering job in Dallas, far away from any ministry school I knew at the time.

He told me which church to go to, and He told me to plant myself there. This was the church where I was raised up through serving, which was the start of the path that brought me to where I am now.

Have you planted yourself in a local church? If you haven't, it's to your benefit to get connected to one. This is one of the most important steps to discovering and living out the call of God on your life.

The early believers we see in the book of Acts were truly planted in the local body. They met together, devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, ate together, and visited each other's homes every week. In other words, they held a common vision and did life together. When need arose, they considered the seven men chosen to serve as honored among the rest.

One of these seven, Philip, eventually grew into a well-known evangelist. Yet even after his reputation and influence grew, he was still known as "one of the seven" (Acts 21:8). He was still recognized for where he planted all those years before, where he unglamorously waited on tables to serve food to widows.

In looking for your calling, be like Philip. Plant in the local church where God leads you and serve there. This is God's prescription for learning to flourish in His kingdom.

