

DAY 1: "Heaven, Not Earth, Is My Home"

Read: Hebrews 11:13-16 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1433)

Read: The Treasure Principle, p. 44-46

Reflect: The Bible tells us we were made to live in heaven with God, and that life on earth is temporary. We are here on earth to tell others about Jesus. We are his ambassadors. When or where do you feel at home? Why? When have you been God's ambassador?

Dig: Jesus commands us to give. We know that he will reward us for giving. But it is still hard for us to give at times. Randy Alcorn calls the reasons that it is difficult for us to give "roadblocks to giving." Can you think of any roadblocks to giving? Have you ever experienced these roadblocks?

Randy Alcorn says that the biggest reason it is hard to give is because we keep thinking that the earth is our home. In Hebrews 1:13b it says that we are pilgrims, strangers, aliens on this earth.

Look up these verses that tell you where we are from.

Hebrews 11:16 (FICB, p. 1433)

Philippians 3:20 (FICB, p. 1370)

Where are we from? Why is heaven our real home?

Why is it pointless to save up a lot of treasures while we are here on earth when our real home is in heaven? If we use our treasures here on earth to bless others by giving them away, where and how will we be rewarded?

Apply: You've learned that God tells us to put our treasures in heaven instead of on earth. One of the biggest reasons to do this is because they are safe in heaven, our home. You can put your treasures in heaven by giving your time and your money (treasures) to others. Ask God what he wants you to give to him. Here are some examples:

- Give 10% of your allowance to the church's offering.
- Give free will offerings above and beyond the tithe. Give them to the church or to another ministry that God has given you a heart for.
- Volunteer in the church's nursery.
- Help your parents clean the house.
- Spend some time reading to a younger brother or sister.

For younger children, ages 5 - 9, and their families . . .

Read: Philippians 3:20 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1370)

Dig: Talk to your child(ren) about what it means to be a citizen. Tell them that even though we live on earth, we are really citizens of heaven. Life on earth is more like a vacation-- we're only here for a little while. Brainstorm ideas of how Jesus is making your home in heaven special for you. Tell them that when we give to others we give to the Lord. When we serve others we are serving the Lord. Though we give up time or money here on earth to do that we are storing up more treasures in heaven each time we do that.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving me so much that you are making my home in heaven special for me. Help me to show other people your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Treasure Principle -- Devotions for ages 9 and up

WEEK 4: "Roadblocks to Giving"

DAY 2: "The Most Toys"

Read: Matthew 6:19-20 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1083)

Read: The Treasure Principle, p. 47 - top of 48

Reflect: Jesus says to "build up your treasures in heaven." Do you think that you have more earthly treasures or heavenly treasures?

Dig: Have you ever been tempted to hoard something or witnessed someone else doing it? One situation where I have seen several children yield to this temptation is at a party where there is a piñata. When the piñata breaks those children work diligently to gather candy--- disregarding those who aren't as quick or as greedy. Then when they get their candy home, they stuff themselves with candy almost to the point of making themselves sick. But then perhaps a parent intervenes and the rest of the candy is stuck away and often forgotten about. Sometimes it's not discovered again until the candy is old, hard, and the paper sticks to it. So then the candy isn't good to enjoy anymore. How is the end of this treasured candy like so many of our other earthly treasures? What happens to all of our earthly treasures?

What is the difference between treasures in heaven and treasures on earth? Which are better?

In The Treasure Principle, we are reminded of a bumper sticker that says "He who dies with the most toys wins." Is this true? What does Jesus say about treasures on earth?

Apply: In Matthew 6, Jesus said that material things, or our treasures on earth, are not as important as knowing him. One reason is because these treasures always get broken. Because they don't last, we say they are temporary. Have you ever fought over a temporary treasure? Have you stored away any treasures that were once very special to you that are now sitting and collecting dust in the back of a closet? Maybe you could unbury these treasures and pass them on to someone who would be blessed by them. Ask God to help you transform you into a giver: One who blesses others with the extra and the unused not one who stores away things. In doing so you will be blessing others and storing up treasures in the right place -- heaven.

For younger children, ages 5 - 9, and their families . . .

Read: Matthew 6:19-20 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1083)

Dig: If possible, take a family field trip to a junkyard, as suggested in The Treasure Principle. Look at all the broken things that are there, and imagine what they were like when they were brand new. Ask your kids to think of some of their favorite toys, and remind them that this is how

they will eventually end up. That is why we should not get caught up with treasures on earth. Here, everything will be broken eventually, moth eaten, or destroyed. In heaven, Jesus has even better stuff saved up for us and those treasures will last forever.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to store up my treasures in heaven. Help me to focus on you, and not get caught up in my toys here. Help me be willing to share your blessings with others. Amen.

The Treasure Principle -- Devotions for ages 9 and up
WEEK 4: "Roadblocks to Giving"
DAY 3: "Living for Heaven"

Read: John 5:24; Matthew 19:29 (Freedom in Christ Bible, pp. 1205, 1105)
Read: The Treasure Principle, p. 48- top of 53

Reflect: William James said, "The best use of your life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." Do you live for life in heaven, or do you want to live life so that you're comfortable on earth?

Dig: In The Treasure Principle, Randy Alcorn uses a picture of a line and a dot. The dot stands for the here and now. The line stands for eternity. The fourth key of The Treasure Principle says "I should live not for the dot, but for the line." What does that mean?

What would your life look like if you were living for the line?

In Matthew 19:29, it says that God will reward people with heaven's treasures. Which people will he reward? What can you do to get heaven's treasures?

Apply: It's hard to understand forever, but that's how long life goes on in heaven. Pretend your mom or dad gives you a new toy, then tells you that if you give that toy away, then she will give you something even better, like three new toys. The only catch is that you have to wait a year before you will get the three toys. When you give away the first toy, you are getting something better in the long run. You only have a little while to have your earthly treasures, and if you give them away, Jesus will give you treasures that you can enjoy forever. Ask God to help you to live for Heaven.

For younger children, ages 5 - 9, and their families . . .
Read: John 3:16 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1202)

Dig: Bring your child(ren) a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask him or her to draw a dot on the paper. Next draw an arrow coming out of it. Ask your child to tell you which (the dot or the line) is longer. Tell them that the small dot is like life on earth now, and that the long arrow is like life in heaven. Life in heaven goes on forever and ever.

It's hard to understand forever, but that's how long life goes on in heaven. Pretend your mom or dad gives you a new toy, then tells you that if you give that toy away, then she will give you something even better, like three new toys. The only catch is that you have to wait a year before you will get the three toys. When you give away the first toy, you are getting something better in the long run. You only have a little while to have your earthly treasures, and if you give them away, Jesus will give you treasures that you can enjoy forever. Ask God to help you to live for heaven.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live for you today and not for myself. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

The Treasure Principle -- Devotions for ages 9 and up
WEEK 4: "Roadblocks to Giving"
DAY 4: "Chasing the Wind"

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1337)
Read: The Treasure Principle, p. 53-57

Reflect: 2 Corinthians 9:7 says that God wants us to be cheerful givers. How many times have you not wanted to share your money or other "treasures"?

Dig: Make a list of all the problems that come with money that the author notes:

Vs. 10
Vs. 11
Vs. 12
Vs. 13
Vs 14
Vs. 15

In one sentence, write down what Solomon said about money. (Hint: Read pages 53-54.)

Why do people think that money or treasure will make them happy?

How can earthly treasures become heavenly treasures?

An antidote is something that heals a sickness. If loving earthly treasures is a sickness, then what heals this sickness?

Apply: Pray this prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to be generous with the treasures you have shared with me. Help me to stop loving things, and making my earthly treasure more important than you. Help me to be a cheerful giver. In Jesus' name. Amen.

For younger children, ages 5 - 9, and their families . . .

Read: Luke 21:1-4 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1188) or the story of the widow with the two coins in a story book.

Dig: Give your child(ren) a small allowance (\$1-2 in coins). What did the widow do with the money God had given her? How much money did the woman give? Why did this make Jesus happy? Explain that God gives us all the money that we have, and he only asks that we give him 10% back. Have your children put 10% of their allowance in the offering on Sunday.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for all of the money you've given to me. Help me to be a cheerful giver to others like you are to me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Treasure Principle -- Devotions for ages 9 and up

WEEK 4: "Roadblocks to Giving"

DAY 5: Lectio Divina

Using the lectio divina process (described below), meditate on this Bible verse:

"Set your minds on things that are above, not here on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 2:20 (Freedom in Christ Bible, p. 1378)

To help yourself meditate on this verse:

- 1 Find a quiet, comfortable spot to sit where you won't be disturbed
- 2 Take a moment to pray the prayer of protection (in bold) below
- 3 Close your eyes and be still in God's presence for a moment
- 4 Slowly read the scripture aloud
- 5 Read it again, emphasizing the first word as you read out loud
- 6 Next time, emphasize the second word
- 7 Keep going, emphasizing each word in turn . . . take time for God's words to sink in
- 8 Take time to answer some of these questions: Which reading gave you new thoughts? What did it make you think? What does this verse mean for you in your life now? Does it tell me that I need to change anything in my life -- my attitudes, my actions, my thoughts?
- 9 Take time to pray and confess any sins that may have been shown to you. Ask Jesus to help you have victory in this area. Thank Jesus for anything he revealed to you. Ask him to make it real in your life today.

Dear Heavenly Father, I know you are in this room with me and in my life. I want to know your Word better and have a closer relationship to you. I ask for your complete protection and for your guidance as I meditate and pray now. In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command Satan and all evil spirits to flee. I bind their power in Jesus' name. I ask, Father, that you close my ears and heart to any deceptions that Satan would try to plant in my mind. I want to hear only your voice, Heavenly Father. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and lead me into all truth. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

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A Word about Meditation in General

Lectio divina is a form of contemplative prayer and meditation on Scripture. It's different from other forms of meditation that people today practice. We need to understand that many kinds of meditation (such as Transcendental Meditation) can allow the enemy, Satan, to get a foothold in our lives. Just because we are learning here a specific type of meditation doesn't mean that any kind of meditation is OK to practice. We need to be careful.

Lectio Divina -- Background

Lectio divina [LEK sio di VEE na] is an old form of prayer that early Christians used. Through lectio divina, which means "sacred reading," we take time to read God's holy Word over and over again until we memorize it and allow it to sink deep into our heart and mind. The early Christians believed that as they read the Word in this manner, they would hear from God -- hear him speak to their heart through his inspired Word.

In our busy society today, we like to do everything fast. It takes discipline for us to slow down and devote time to meditate on God's word and to pray. If you want to develop a deeper prayer life and have a more intimate relationship with your blessed Savior, Jesus, then you will do well to use lectio divina as part of your weekly devotional time.