

CHRIST MAGNIFIED

GLORIFYING JESUS BY YOUR LIFE

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Chapter 6

Developing an Eternal Worldview

Have you heard about the treasure of Forrest Fenn? It is a bronze chest filled with jewelry, figurines, precious gems, and piles of gold coins and nuggets — the kind of loot you might expect to find in a pirate’s treasure chest. Mr. Fenn hid the chest somewhere in the Rocky Mountains, and he offers it as a prize, “with no strings attached,” to whoever finds it. Are you ready to go treasure hunting? Let me first tell you the backstory.

Mr. Fenn, an elderly multimillionaire businessman and decorated Vietnam veteran from Santa Fe, New Mexico, decided after receiving a cancer prognosis to pass along some of his wealth to mankind in a unique way. He packed the treasure chest full of the highly valuable items and concealed its whereabouts in the year 2010. Then he wrote a poem in his autobiography, giving numerous clues to help seekers find the treasure box. As of the writing of this book, the treasure remains undiscovered, despite an estimated crowd of thirty thousand treasure seekers having searched for it since it was hidden.¹

That is quite a story, and a true one. Let’s talk about those treasure hunters for a moment. They are obviously driven by several considerations. **First**, they believe there is, indeed, hidden treasure. **Second**, they are convinced it can be found. **Third**, they individually expect they will be the one to find it. **Fourth**, they willingly expend an enormous amount of time and resources hunting for it. **Fifth**, they search eagerly — with great diligence, perhaps even night

and day — to obtain their potential reward. We might even suggest the treasure seekers are obsessed with finding the treasure.

Spiritual Treasure Seekers

God expects the same intensity from *spiritual* treasure seekers, when He uses the word *seek* in the following verses:

- 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:1-4

But **seek** ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6:33

Intensity is implied in the word *seek*. God wants His children to believe there is actually a special treasure we can obtain, and He wants us to pursue it. Furthermore, He knows it will require an enormous amount of time and resources on our part as we seek the things that are above. Nonetheless, He wants us to strive for it — seeking eagerly, with great diligence — that we might inherit our reward.

Unfortunately, not all of God's children expend the effort. Some don't see the significance of seeking things that are above; they don't believe there is a treasure to be found. Others believe they already possess it by default of their salvation. They are, of course, mistaken. Perhaps others know there is treasure to be found, but they are unwilling to pay the price to obtain it. Are you willing to seek those things that are above? The reward is beyond comprehension. In one word, at the end of v. 4, it is called *glory*. We might say it is *glorious*.

We are to seek things that are *above* — things that are otherworldly — things of the heavenly realm.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. John 8:23

An Eternal Worldview

So we are to seek the things of His world, the world from whence He came, things that are above. God wants us to develop an eternal worldview. Someone may wonder, "Don't all Christians already possess an eternal worldview?" If all Christians possess an eternal worldview by default, then God would not need to remind us, *Seek those things that are above*. Sadly, very few Christians truly have an *eternal* worldview. What we all should have, by default of our salvation, is a *Christian* worldview. Incidentally, by *worldview* I mean the framework by which you interpret life and the world, your philosophy of life.

Everyone has a worldview, of course. You may not be able to articulate it, but you have one. As a Christian, you believe in God and Satan and Heaven and Hell and angels, even though you can't see those beings or those places. You believe God created the heaven and the earth. You believe in morality and absolute truth as taught in the Word of God. You believe Jesus is fully God and fully man. You believe He left Heaven's glories, became virgin born, lived a sinless life, and willingly submitted to be crucified. You believe He rose again and that today He is seated at the right hand of the Father. You believe you should share this message with other people. Because of those beliefs you interpret life and the world through that lens. It is your philosophy of life, your way of viewing things, and it drives your thinking and your assessment of all that happens in this world. It is your Christian (some may call it *biblical*) worldview.

All Christians *should* have a Christian worldview. But that is not what Paul is calling us to in Col. 3. He assumes you already believe these things and you, therefore, view life through a Christian perspective. Based on that foundation, the apostle is calling us to something greater, something higher, something we could call an eternal worldview.

Christ is magnified when you adopt an eternal worldview, a heavenly way of thinking. Lightfoot says, "You must not only *seek* heaven; you must also *think* heaven."² How does one develop an *eternal* worldview?

Perceiving Eternal Realities

All Christians should believe in God and Satan, angelic beings, Heaven and Hell, and so on. Those are the planks of a Christian worldview platform, as described earlier. *Perceiving* eternal realities, however, is more than merely believing in the existence of eternal things. Perceiving eternal realities is seeing the *interaction* of the eternal realm with your daily life in a human body on Earth. So often, even as Christians, we go along in life believing in eternal things, but we don't perceive eternal realities at work — everyday — in our lives. Rather, we tend to forget about the eternal world, believing it doctrinally, but not interacting with it practically. One who has an eternal worldview *never* forgets about the spirit realm. It is continually on their mind, for they live as if it were real and interactive.

A classic illustration of this point can be found in 2 Kings 6. By way of background, the King of Syria is waging warfare against Israel. Elisha the prophet is given revelation by God as to the enemy's position, and he conveys this intelligence to the King of Israel, who is spared being attacked on numerous occasions because of it. The King of Syria gets quite upset about this and — hearing from his generals that Elisha is the one giving away their position — sends horses, chariots, and a massive army to surround the city of Dothan where Elisha dwells.

Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 2 Kings 6:14-15

The response of Elisha's servant represents the response of the typical Christian who may have a Christian worldview but not an eternal worldview. *Alas, how shall we do?* In modern colloquial it would translate, "Oh no! We're doomed!" The tendency is to look upon the temporal crisis at hand and panic or get anxious or angry, rather than see

the provision of God in the eternal realm. Elisha, on the other hand, views things quite differently.

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 2 Kings 6:16

Elisha sees more than just the problem at hand. He doesn't merely believe in the eternal realm. He sees the eternal realm and interacts with it.

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2 Kings 6:17

After Elisha prays, the servant sees. His perspective is broadened so that he not only believes in the spirit realm, he now perceives those realities and sees their interaction in his life, as Elisha does. The eternal realm can be just as real to us, not through physical eyes, but through eyes of faith. While perception of *physical* realities is through the senses, perception of *eternal* realities is through faith. *For we walk by faith, not by sight*, 2 Cor. 5:7. Incidentally, this is typically not something one comprehends instantly. It is learned, over time, as God teaches us the realities of the eternal realm and how it intersects with our physical life.

We need to stop living as Elisha's servant, who was certainly aware of the spirit realm (how could he *not* be as Elisha's servant?), yet he was not seeing the interface between that realm and this. But when Elisha prayed — when Elisha interacted with the spirit realm, asking for his servant's eyes to be opened — the servant came to understand realities that he had never grasped previously. We need to see the same through eyes of faith, not merely believing in the reality of Heaven and Hell and God and Satan, but perceiving how all of that relates to everyday life.

Believing Eternal Verities

Verities are truths of critical importance. *Eternal* verities are truths of critical importance that transcend *earthly*

verities. Eternal verities are Bible truths about the eternal realm and our interaction with that realm. Putting it another way, eternal verities are the *modus operandi* of Heaven, a Latin term meaning the mode of operation, or the way something functions or operates. The *modus operandi* of the heavenly realm is entirely different than the *modus operandi* of the earthly realm. The way Heaven operates is different than the way Earth operates. Heaven's way of doing business is God's way, not man's way.

God says, "I will supply all your need." Man says, "I have to supply my own need." God says, "Nothing can separate you from God's love." Man says, "Bad things in my life make me feel as if God doesn't love me." God says, "You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you." Man says, "I can do this." God says, "Put on the whole armor of God so you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Man says, "What's the use; the armor doesn't help; I've tried it and failed," or worse yet, "I can withstand temptation." God says, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Man says, "My prayer wasn't answered." God says, "If you confess your sin, I am faithful and just to forgive you of your sin and cleanse you." Man says, "I still feel guilty."

The point is eternal verities are not naturally accepted by saints. Do you see that? Our flesh is predisposed to oppose God's *modus operandi*. Only those who truly believe eternal verities have an eternal worldview; all others have an earthly worldview. Here's an illustration. God says, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Virtually all saints would say they believe that, but only some really believe as if it were the case. When troubling things come along in life, do you recognize that God — who is of the eternal realm — is using difficult people and circumstances in the earthly realm to make you better? If so, you will trust God completely amidst your overwhelming trials. Other believers don't seem to accept their trials as of the Lord, intended to make them better. So they chafe at trials and tribulations and complain and do everything in their power to try to escape the pressures. Does that describe you? If so, your wrong response of fear, discouragement,

worry, or whatever, betrays your statement of belief that all things work together for good. It does no good to *say* you believe eternal verities such as Rom. 8:28 if, in reality, you don't *act* as if you believe them. That's really the point James is making in chapter two of his epistle. You can talk all you want about your faith in the Lord as a believer, but "where the rubber meets the road" is your actual response when the going gets tough. Do you believe eternal verities? Do you evidence your belief by your responses and actions?

Why is it that you struggle with eternal verities? It is because you really do not believe; you require sight. The world system dictates against believing in the eternal realm because it cannot be seen. It insists that *seeing is believing*. God, on the contrary, says that *believing is seeing*.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. John 4:48

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. John 6:29-30, 36

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? John 11:40

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20:29

Man says one must see in order to believe; God says one must believe in order to see. What a radical difference! Those who have an eternal worldview do things in God's order. They believe first and then are enabled by God to see.

Embracing Eternal Values

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. God has to command this because our natural tendency is to have affection for earthly things. He wants us to have heavenly, eternal values. Your values are what you hold dear — those things you consider to have worth or impor-

tance in your life. The things you value are the things you love, the things you really care about. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Your heart follows what it holds dear.

What we tend to hold dear is not what God holds dear. His values and our values are often not synchronized. Consider Jesus: Though He lived on Earth, His values were entirely heavenly. He said to His disciples, *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work*, John 4:34. Jesus was consumed with the Father's will. Indeed, He cried out in prayer to the Father, *Not my will, but thine, be done*, Luke 22:42. In the Lord's prayer He asked, *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*, Matt. 6:10. He embraced eternal values, and He asks the same of us.

Multitudes of saints have set their affection on things on the earth, temporal things — money, possessions, prestige, even relationships. If we are to set our affection on things above, then we must disavow earthly values. Perhaps you are driven by money and possessions. God wants you to be willing to give up everything and be content in Him. Maybe you enjoy your comforts. God wants you to be willing to endure anything for His sake. Could it be your agenda is driving your life? God wants it to be *His* agenda. If you are attached to *your* music or *your* fashions or *your* media or *your* entertainment or *your* possessions, then you do not have eternal values. When you, dear saint of God, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."³

A Personal Testimony

I will never forget when God first began teaching me about the eternal realm. When I was in my mid-twenties, I was focused on making money in the business world. My college degree was in finance, the Lord had given me a solid corporate position in a major Chicago corporation, and I was just starting to experience some success toward my personal goals. I was a Christian and had a solid Christian worldview. I was active in my local church and living a decent

Christian life. But, unfortunately, my values were wrong. I was not setting my affection on things above, but rather on things of Earth.

Thankfully, God arrested my attention with a verse of Scripture — a verse that seemed to “pop off” the page when I read it one morning while having my devotions. It has since become my life verse:

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18

Little did I know this verse of Scripture would radically change my life. However, I dismissed it as nothing significant at the time and went on with my temporal values. Then my pastor preached a message on that same verse shortly thereafter. The Lord grabbed my attention once again, but I foolishly dismissed it as not relevant to my life situation. The last straw was when I heard the verse quoted on Moody radio on my way to work one day. Then it struck me: My values are earthly and temporal, not heavenly and eternal. I confessed my sinful attitude to the Lord and yielded my heart to Him. That was only the first step in what has become an ongoing pilgrimage toward an eternal worldview. Shortly after submitting my values to the Lord, He called me to pastoral ministry. I am so thankful for the Lord’s patience and continued working in my life.

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Many do not know the story behind the words of the well-known chorus, *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*. In the nineteenth century a Welsh missionary traveled to Assam in northeast India to give the gospel to the tribal peoples of that region. One of the first he saw converted to Christ was an Indian man, along with the man’s wife and children. The newly-saved man was persecuted by the people of his village, and the day came when his faith was put to the ultimate test. The village chief called upon the man to renounce his faith in Christ or be put to death. The man said, “I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back.” The chief

ordered the execution of the man's wife and children before his eyes. They were instantly massacred by a shower of arrows. Tearfully but confidently, the Christian man responded, "Though no one join me, still I will follow; no turning back." Furious, the chief demanded that the convert recant immediately or die. Without hesitation, the man said, "The world behind me, the cross before me; no turning back." The man was brutally put to death, but his Christlike response reportedly led to the conversion of many in that village.

When a child of God has an eternal worldview, nothing else matters in life.

¹ "Fenn Treasure," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (accessed Dec., 2015).

² J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 1995), 209.

³ Helen H. Lemmel, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (No. 204) in *Great Hymns of the Faith*.

