**Make Heaven Your Goal For 2018**

**Introduction**

1. Upon entering a new year many goals are set, and resolutions made.
   1. Many of these goals and resolutions are good, and even important.
   2. For the Christian, there is one that should stand above the rest.
2. We should always have heaven as our focus. It should always be our main goal in life.
3. **Upon entering the year 2018, we should have heaven at the top of our list. This should be our aim every day.**
4. **Philippians 3:7-14** – Paul gave up all to gain Christ, and attain to the resurrection. While he lived, the goal was not yet realized, so he strove for it continually.
   1. **(v. 11)** – The ultimate end is ATTAINING to the resurrection.
      1. All will be raised – both just and unjust.
      2. **However, Paul wants the GLORIOUS resurrection to LIFE.**
      3. **That is something we must ATTAIN to, that not all will receive.**
   2. **(vv. 12-14)** – Yet, Paul recognized he had not attained, so he pressed on.
5. That goal is heaven, which corresponds to the attaining of the resurrection, for ***“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:50).***
6. **What does pressing on toward the goal of heaven look like? How will we make heaven our goal for 2018, and always? 🡪**
7. Having Heaven as Our Goal
8. When tempted – make heaven your desire.
   1. **Philippians 3:17-21** – Paul gives a reason for the urgent tone of his admonition, using himself as an example of pressing on.
      1. **(v. 18)** – There are enemies of Christ in the midst of the Philippians – they are the ***“dogs…evil workers…the mutilation” (v. 2).*** (*He does not want the Philippians to be influenced by them.*)
      2. **(v. 19)** – Their false doctrine affects the way they live.
         1. **God is belly** – they serve their fleshly appetite.
         2. **Glory is shame** – they glory in shameful things.
         3. **Set mind on earthly things – an EARTHLY DOCTRINE inevitably creates an EARTHLY MINDSET.**
      3. **(vv. 20-21)** – However, the Christian’s focus is on heaven.
         1. There are fleshly desires, but we must not satiate them.
         2. **When tempted to do so, we must remember our true goal.**
   2. **Matthew 26:41** – Jesus to disciples in garden after finding them asleep the first time.
      1. Our desire is truly for the spiritual – to make it to heaven.
      2. However, our flesh is weak – **the temptations/desires of our flesh are a CONSTANT and REAL struggle.**
      3. **James 1:14-15** – temptation – drawn away by desires. (Flesh is weak.)
         1. How do we keep the desire from drawing us away, conceiving, and birthing sin and death?
         2. **MAKE THE DESIRE FOR HEAVEN GREATER – MAKE HEAVEN YOUR DESIRE.**
   3. **1 John 2:15-17** – Recognize the fleeting nature of all that is in the world.
      1. **(v. 16)** – World passing away, **and LUST (desire) of it** – It won’t even be a desire in the future…
      2. **(v. 17)** – Those who do God’s will last, as will their reward. **(NOTE: *“does the will of God”* as opposed to yielding to temptation, and sinning.)**
      3. **Cf. Hebrews 12:16-17** – Recognize what Esau failed to – what has greater substance, and is lasting?
   4. **Thus, make heaven your OVERWHELMING desire when tempted.**
9. When suffering – make heaven your relief.
   1. **2 Timothy 3:12** – Suffering as a Christian.
   2. Or, suffering as just a way of life – all are subject to the imperfections of this earthly life.
   3. **When suffering for any reason, how should we react?**
      1. **Job 2:9-10** – In suffering, Job’s wife suggested he finally turn on God. Job knew better.
         1. God had shown Himself to be Job’s provider, and benefactor. Job trusted in Him.
         2. **(v. 10) – Should Job lose trust in Him simply because not everything is going right for him?**
      2. ***“If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10)***.
      3. **James 1:2-8** – Instead of cursing God, count it joy and turn to God!
         1. **(vv. 2-4)** – Such suffering may not COME from God, but is ALLOWED by God to strengthen you on your journey to heaven.
         2. **(vv. 5-8)** – If we lack wisdom to see the good in the trial, and endure it, ASK GOD FOR WISDOM.
            1. **Ask in faith** – in regard to your faith – to the end of your faith being strengthened – **in the INTEREST OF FAITH BEING PERFECTED**.
            2. ***“with no doubting”*** **– wavering or hesitating** – to submit to such wisdom in serving God through the trial.
   4. **Romans 8:18-21, 24-25** – The suffering is far outweighed by the glory we will receive!
      1. **(vv. 18-21)** – Creation – spiritual in Christ Jesus – Christians – ***“children of God”*** – ***“we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2).***
      2. **(vv. 24-25)** – During suffering we have this hope, thus, persevere waiting for it.
      3. **We acknowledge the relief that is ahead, and wait for it!**
10. When sorrowful – make heaven your joy.
    1. **Many things can cause us sorrow in this life. However, we must continue to look to heaven to get through such.**
    2. **Philippians 4:4** – Rejoice always.
       1. ***“in the Lord”*** – a matter of spiritual nature.
       2. Spiritual blessings in the Lord are a surety, and their ultimate fulfillment is independent of outward circumstances – thus, ALWAYS REJOICE.
       3. **The one who makes the spiritual things preeminent in their life always has reason to rejoice, even in sorrow.**
    3. Consider the sorrow of those in Thessalonica **– 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
       1. **(v. 13)** – Sorrow is appropriate in time of loss, but NOT AS OTHERS – have no hope.
       2. **The Christian who has passed has hope – loved ones who mourn should realize such 🡪**
       3. **(vv. 14-18)** – We will be with them once again in the most wonderful place imaginable – in heaven with the Lord. (**Because Christ conquered death, so will those who sleep in Jesus!**)
    4. **Even in sorrow there is reason to rejoice – ultimately because of what lies ahead – our ETERNAL HOME WITH GOD.**
11. When weary – make heaven your reward.
    1. **Ephesians 2:10** – We are God’s creation for good works.
    2. **As long as we are on this earth we are to be given to the work of God – CHRISTIANS HAVE NO VACATION. HOWEVER 🡪**
    3. **Hebrews 4:9-10** – There is a rest for God’s people – THEN WE CEASE WORKING.
    4. Until then, we MUST NOT GROW WEARY – **Galatians 6:7-9**
       1. **(vv. 7-8)** – God is not mocked in any way – sowing to flesh, or spirit.
       2. **If we live a spiritual life according to God’s will, we WILL RECEIVE reward.**
       3. **(v. 9)** – We must PRESS ON so that we will reap our reward.
12. We must continually look to the goal of heaven throughout our life. This will DRASTICALLY affect how we live***. But how do we grow the desire for heaven to live acceptably throughout life? 🡪***
13. Feeding Our Desire For Heaven – **Psalm 63**

**(v. 0)** – David in the wilderness either when fleeing from Saul, or from his son Absalom.

1. Seek God Early **(v. 1)**
   1. Early in regard to priority – **BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE**.
   2. But also, **START YOUR DAY OFF WITH GOD** – Bible reading/study, prayer, etc.
2. Worship God Often **(vv. 2-5** – thus be filled spiritually, **v. 5)**
   1. Seek God always, but **ESPECIALLY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY TO WORSHIP HIM.**
   2. ***“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” (Psalm 122:1).***
   3. **(v. 5)** – Your soul will be fed, and filled with spiritual sustenance.
3. Remember God Constantly/Meditate **(vv. 6-8)**
   1. Spend time in MEDITATION about God and His goodness.
   2. **(vv. 7-8)** – He is our help, and He upholds us.
4. Grasp God’s Judgment **(vv. 9-10)**
   1. Know that those who **OPPOSE GOD WILL BE CONDEMNED**.
   2. **Avoid being numbered with the ungodly to avoid being numbered with them in judgment.**
5. Anticipate Glory **(v. 11)**
   1. ***“Everyone who swears by Him”*** *– i.e. dedicate lives in service to Him*.
   2. Glory awaits those who trust in God, and serve Him.
   3. **We should daily anticipate that promised glory.**

**Conclusion**

1. **Above all New Year resolutions, making it to our goal of heaven should be the top of the list.**
2. If it is, this will drastically affect the way we live, as we are living to secure an eternal dwelling with God.
3. **Make heaven your goal for 2018, and ALWAYS!**