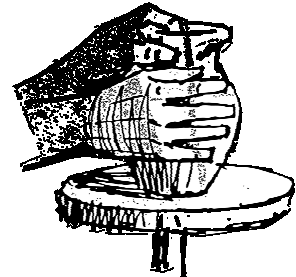


His Workmanship: Westside

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

Lay Hold of Eternal Life Today, by Mark Copeland

Eternal life is a major theme in the gospel of Christ. Jesus was crucified in order to offer eternal life, Jn 3:14-16. Eternal life in Christ Jesus is the gift of God, Rm 6:23. The gospel tells us to "lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim 6:12, 19, "lay hold of the hope set before us," Heb 6:18, "lay hold" of the resurrection for which Christ has "laid hold" of us, Phil 3:12.

In His "High Priestly Prayer," Jn 17, Jesus said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify You. For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom you have sent," 17:1-3. This statement summarized Jesus's entire mission.

But what exactly is eternal life? Is it simply a future blessing, pertaining to life after death? Or is it a present possession, something to enjoy in this life?

I. Eternal Life: Present or Future?

A. Eternal life as a future blessing.

Many scriptures refer to eternal life as a future blessing. Jesus spoke of it as occurring after judgment, Mt 25:46, or in the age to come, Mk 10:28-30. Paul wrote of it as a future promise, cf. Tit 1:2; 3:7; Rm 6:22. Thus many think of eternal life as a future blessing, an everlasting existence in heaven in the presence of God, free from death, sorrow, and pain, cf. Rev 21:1-7. They think that, as a future hope, eternal life is

available in this life only as a hope.

This view is scriptural, although limited. It is certainly scriptural to conceive of eternal life as a hope for the future.

B. Eternal life as a present possession.

But John often wrote of eternal life as a present possession—something that abides in a person (or not), cf. 1 Jn 3:14-15. In this sense, eternal life doesn't start when you die and go to heaven. Eternal life starts when you come to Jesus. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him," Jn 3:36. God has already given Christians eternal life, 1 Jn 5:11-13. John chose to use the phrase "eternal life" in a special sense. Eternal life refers to the quality of our new existence in Christ as well as the unending character of that life. The early disciples lived this life; they knew who they were in Christ and what they had in Christ. Jesus describes a quality of life (and not just length of life) which comes by knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ, Jn 17:3. In this sense, eternal life is a present possession!

When we come to "know" God and Jesus, we experience a quality of life that surpasses what the world has to offer. As a present possession, this quality of life is a foretaste of the future blessing we shall experience with God. This blessed life includes peace with

God, power over sin, communion with God, love and joy in Him, acceptance by God, knowledge of His will, forgiveness of sins, grace, an incorruptible inheritance, and "all spiritual blessings" which are found in Christ, cf. Eph 1:3-14; 1 Pet 1:3-5. This quality of life, as a foretaste, can rightly be called eternal life. For isn't our life with God now really the beginning of eternity with God?

Since Jesus spoke of eternal life in both ways, it is both a future blessing and present possession. As we come to "know" God and Jesus, we begin to experience the blessings of eternal life. This naturally raises the following question:

II. What Does It Mean to 'Know' God and Jesus?

There are two different words for 'know' in the Greek: 1) *oida* suggests a fullness of knowledge, coming from observation; 2) *ginosko* suggests a progression in knowledge, frequently implying an active relationship between the knower and the object known. In Jn 17:3 the word is *ginosko*. So to *know* God and Jesus goes beyond knowledge of facts about the Godhead; it implies a progressively growing knowledge, experience, and understanding which come by having an active relationship with the Father and the Son. It's knowing God in an intimate daily relationship and giving our lives wholly to God's care and God's

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Life-Changing Geography: a Land of Blessing, by Philip Williams

Have you noticed the vast amount of geography in the Bible? The Bible describes thousands of cities, lands, and geographical features. Are all of these details included merely as background information? I don't think so. When we focus on the concept of land, a compelling story emerges from the pages of God's word.

A Land Lost and Found. This story is most clearly seen in the first six books of the Bible, which tell of a beautiful land that was once lost and then finally found. Seeing that narrative will shape the way we read our Bibles, the way we view our world, and the way we live our lives.

A Land of Blessing. The first land of blessing was a beautiful garden called Eden. We often picture Eden as a little flower garden, but in fact it was a massive area of rich abundance stretching across the Fertile Crescent, Gen 2:14. Four large rivers wound through a lush forest that was teeming with life, Gen 2:9-14. If you journeyed very far, you might even discover piles of gold and precious stones, Gen 2:11-12. Eden was where you had everything you needed and then more on top of that. It was a good land.

Leaving the Land of Blessing. But all those wonderful blessings dried up as sin entered the world. Satan knew that the only way to get humans to sin was to destroy their trust in God. With the simple words, "You shall not die," Gen 3:4, Satan led Eve to doubt the goodness of the One who had given her this great land.

"Cursed is the ground because of you," God said as he drove them away from their beautiful home, Gen 3:17. Life would now be difficult. The lush, fertile soil was replaced with painful thorns poking out of the dry dirt. Humans would labor in dust until they returned to dust. If only humans could find their way back to that good land once more.

But the way was blocked by a supernatural being armed with a sword.

There was no return.

In Genesis 4 Cain murdered his brother; this led to further waste and ruin of the land. As Abel's blood soaked into the earth, God's words rang out, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground," Gen 4:10. Cain's sin further polluted the land and brought an even more intense curse. "When you work the land," God said, "it shall no longer yield to you its strength," Gen 4:12.

As sin increased, the land became more devastated until in Genesis 6 man's sin led to the destruction of all the earth in one massive flood. The lesson is very clear. Man's sin is so potent that it destroyed even the ground on which he walked.

A New Land of Blessing. Finally, we see a glimmer of hope in Genesis 12. God spoke to Abram and gave him a promise of a new land. It would be a land where God would again give blessings, Gen. 26:1-5. It would be a land of grain, wine, and abundance, Gen 27:26-28. And it would be a land worth more than all of the riches of Egypt, Gen 50:24-26.

Failing to Enter. But when we open Exodus, the land of promise feels a million miles away. The Hebrews were now enslaved in a foreign land where they endured the pain and sweat of excruciating labor. But God again extended the promise that He would bring them up into a "good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey," Ex 3:8. Through powerful plagues God soon rescued the Hebrews and brought them right to the doorstep of the beautiful Promised Land. As the twelve spies entered the land, they discovered it was just as beautiful and abundant as God had told them. It was a land filled with life, fruitfulness, and prosperity. A single cluster of grapes was so enormous that it required two men just to

pick it up. This truly was a blessed land! There was only one thing that could keep

them from enjoying that land. Once more Satan tried to lure God's people away with the very same trick

that he had used thousands of years before. If he could simply get the people to lose their trust in God, then he could once more keep them out of God's land.

Satan's plan worked flawlessly. The people failed to trust God and were again driven back by the sword of judgment. They were once more banished to a land devoid of all life. And there in the heat and the dust they wandered year after year until their lifeless, sinful corpses fell and returned to the dust of that cursed ground.

Finally Entering the Land. Then finally a new generation arose, and God lovingly extended the Promised Land opportunity to them as well. Can you imagine Joshua's joy as he finally set foot on that beautiful Promised Land? All history had led towards this one pivotal moment, the time when man would enter the wonderful land of blessing! Joshua had barely entered the land when he met a foreboding stranger holding a drawn sword, Josh 5:13-15. Joshua approached the man and tentatively asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" The stranger answered, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord." What was the significance of this mysterious sword-wielder?

As Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, the last thing they saw was a terrifying supernatural being with a sword. Now in Joshua's day the en-

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Psalm 133:1

God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

A Land of Blessing, from p. 2
 trance to God's land was finally re-opened and the entry was again marked by a supernatural being wielding a sword. But this time it was not a sword to keep God's people out. This was a sword that would lead them back into the land. No longer the sword of judgment, it was the sword of victory! God's people could finally reenter that wonderful land of blessing.

The Real Promised Land. According to Hebrews, Joshua's entrance into the Promised Land was just a shadow of a more ultimate rest that is still to come. "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on," Heb. 4:8. And so today, as God's people, we are looking forward to the ultimate Promised Land.

Paul explained this when he said the Holy Spirit is "the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory," Eph 1:14. This echoed Old Testament language for "We're headed for the Promised Land!"

We too are on a journey back to that wonderful land of blessing.

We live on an earth that is polluted by sin. We cry tears, and we suffer pain as we toil in this sin-torn land. Yet God holds up a beautiful promise of a new land, a land of blessing, a land of abundance that is symbolically pictured with gold, precious stones, rivers, and teeming life, Rev 21:5-21. Satan will try every ploy to keep us out of that land, but if we choose to trust God and follow Him, we will enjoy that beautiful land of blessing. He has promised it, and He will do it!

Discipleship Here At Home

Eternal Life Today, from p. 1
 wisdom. Paul knew this when he said, "For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain," Phil 1:21. Eternal life is to live in intimate contact with God in Christ. To die to my old life is necessary, a matter of entering into another form of reality. "To know the Father and Jesus Christ (for He is the only way to the Father) refers not to merely abstract knowledge, but to joyful acknowledgment of His sovereignty, glad acceptance of His love, and intimate fellowship with His person (through Scripture, that is, through His Word to us; and through prayer, that is, through our word to Him)," Hendriksen.

A. What is involved in "knowing God"?
 As suggested by Hendriksen, it involves communication through the Word and prayer. It is also directly related to keeping the commandments of the Lord, as emphatically stated by John in his epistle, 1 Jn 2:3-4: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Keeping His commandments is how we know that we know (*ginosko*) Him. Otherwise we lie if we say that we know (*ginosko*) Him. As explained by Jesus to His apostles, Jn 14:21, 23, keeping His commandments results in being loved by the Father and the Son, and keeping His word results in the Father and Son dwelling in us. Thus, by keeping His Word, we will "know" (*ginosko*) God: ever progressing in knowledge because of an active relationship with God and Jesus!

Eternal life is more than just a hope for a future blessing—it is a present possession, an unparalleled quality of life available in this life. It is a blessing that comes from "knowing" God and Jesus in a personal and ever-increasing way. It is enjoyed only by keeping the commandments of God and Jesus! Our inheritance of eternal life doesn't start when we die physically, but it starts when we die to the old life and are born to the new life as God's children—and this is possible because Jesus died and left His will for

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Judy Strand**—fell and broke arm, surgery last wk; at home for weekly evaluations re: liver implant
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, recent diagnosis of neuro-muscular disease
- **Patricia Ward**—infection
- **Danny Dodd**, formerly of Westside—home after full brain radiation in Denver; 275 Country Meadow Rd, Ignacio, CO 81137
- **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, cancer; improving, in Memphis for treatment, but furloughs from hospital
- **Bill Dennis**—home recovery following rehab
- **Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; back on oxygen; port to be inserted in Nov for dialysis
- **Aubrie and Aaron Andrews**, friends of **Boyd's**—Aaron lost leg in motorcycle accident; pray they will be receptive to the gospel
- **Larry Campbell's** FL partner **Terry Hargadine's** wife **Michelle**—cancerous lymph nodes removed, latest scan shows improvement; picc line inserted for chemo
- **Kayla Knighten, Christine Adams's** daughter—needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; Brett's grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Bonnie Doss**—cancer returned
- **Brittany Tope's** mother—breast cancer, improving; grandmother—on dialysis
- **Ed's** son **Rodney Schulz**—pray he receives gospel

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr.; Pat Wilkes**—asthma
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Jonathan Hadders**—RA
- Kirk Johnson**—MS
- Menards**—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers; **Virginia**, blindness from mac degeneration; high bp
- Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
- Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis trtment

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Rejoice Levi Cox put on his Lord in baptism last Thursday. He will join himself with this church to serve. **Sheryle McNeill's** daughter **Tiffany** began a Bible study in John recently—thank you for your prayers; continue to pray she will receive gospel

Travel **Michael Fryman** is in MN for 2 weeks. **Sarah McMurray** is in CA for work. The **Campbells** will travel to AR Thurs for 2 weeks.

us, Gal 3:27-29.

B. How important is "knowing God"? In the course of our short sojourn in this life, "knowing" God is most important—more important than wisdom, more important than

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Exposing current thoughts & trends *abortion*

States Take Action after Senate Fails to Defund Planned Parenthood

Alabama announced last Thursday that it was cutting off state funding to Planned Parenthood, joining Louisiana and New Hampshire. And Thursday four PP facilities in Florida were cited for violating the law, including performing illegal second trimester abortions, which they have been ordered to stop immediately. This action came after pro-life Gov. Rick Scott launched an investigation into PP.

AL Governor Robert Bentley (R) said, "As a doctor and Alabama's Governor, I respect human life, and I do not want Alabama to be associated with an organization that does not." In the Alabama state senate, leaders are starting to move a bill that would make it a Class B felony to offer or accept money for aborted babies or parts of aborted babies. "The federal authorities may allow this type of thing," said Sen. Bill Hightower, "but Alabama won't."

The financial dominos are starting to fall for PP after Gov. Bobby Jindal (R-LA) severed ties earlier last week. In the GOP presidential debate, he continued his public crusade, warning, "Planned Parenthood better hope Hillary wins, because I'll sic the DOJ and IRS on them."

All across America, people seem to be realizing what a critical moment this is for the US. Just as Kermit Gosnell's atrocities pulled back the curtain on the horrors the Supreme Court opened in 1973, people are starting to understand that this is not an isolated incident. In the dark underworld of abortion, there is an enormous black market for human tissue—and Planned Parenthood is at the head of the pipeline. God, in his mercy, may have given us an opportunity to respond by ending our complicity in this inhumane enterprise. We are being shown in vivid detail how callous we've become as a society. There's absolutely no excuse for Christians not to speak on such a moral and spiritual crisis. . Will we choose life? Or will we rebuff God's hand, become more hardened to our sin, and pave the path to our own destruction?

Lay Hold of Eternal Life Today, *from p. 3*

power, more important than riches, Jer 9:23-24. Jesus came to show us the only way to "know" God truly and to experience the eternal life that He made possible through His death on the cross. Because of Christ's intimate relationship with God, He lived in "eternal life" throughout His earthly life. His earthly life became of no consequence to Him in light of knowing His Father and doing His will, Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38-40.

Are you walking in the commandments of the Lord so that your experience of obedience causes you to know God and His Son Jesus truly? Does knowing God through obedience cause you to experience eternal life? To know God as God—not as an idea or a concept, but to know Him intimately and personally—is to experience eternal life. God promises it for the next life, but God also offers it in this life. May you know God, and may you experience the abundant, eternal life now, Jn 10:10.



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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, "*A Life-Changing Encounter with God's Word from the Gospel According to John*," Jonathan Hadders

- **Sermon**, "Edification through Giving," Jim Reingrover

- **Sunday afternoon**, "Answering Questions about Prayer," Jim Reingrover