

Making Today Count for Eternity

Discussion Guide

By Kent Crockett

Chapter 1

What Makes God Smile?

Do you think that most people think like Cindy when she said, “Sometimes I feel like I’m not doing anything for God”? Why do people feel this way?

Review the “Presumed Hierarchy of God Pleasers.” How is it possible for a custodian or stay-at-home mother to be as pleasing to God as a missionary?

How could God the Father be pleased with His Son before He had done any ministry? (Matthew 3:17) In what ways do you think Jesus pleased His Father before He began His ministry?

How can Paul’s letter to slaves be an encouragement to those who think their lives are unimportant? (Colossians 3:23-24)

God created earth as a temporary world where He would choose His family (1 Peter 2:9, Titus 2:14). What has He prepared for those who love Him?

God created planet earth for another purpose. How can our time on earth be training for the next life?

Chapter 2

Joining God’s Family

How can Old Testament animal sacrifices be compared to credit cards? Why did God establish the sacrificial system?

What makes Jesus’ death on the cross different from the other world’s religions?

After Jesus died on the cross, where did He enter with His blood to obtain eternal redemption? (Hebrews 9:11-12) How does Moses’ tabernacle help us understand this truth?

Salvation is a free gift that can’t be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9). What is the only thing left for you to do when someone buys you a gift?

What is the problem with planning a deathbed conversion?

What are some things that happen to you when you pray to receive Christ?

Salvation determines your eternal destination—heaven. What will determine your eternal occupation?

Chapter 3 The Unseen World

What are the two kinds of things that God created? (Colossians 1:16) What is a key difference between the two? (2 Corinthians 4:18)

How can we believe in things that we can't see? (Hebrews 11:1 KJV)

Why won't God reveal His entire blueprint for eternity?

Using the example of the time capsule buried in 1896, explain why God speaks to us in elementary terms about eternity future?

Why is planet earth like a kindergarten class?

God purposely designed some objects on earth to teach us about the unseen things in heaven. How do the following things teach us eternal truths?

- Moses tabernacle (Hebrews 8:5, 9:11-12)
- Money (Luke 9:16)
- Jobs (Matthew 25:21,23)
- Rewards (1 Corinthians 9:25)

Chapter 4 Life is a Test and Only a Test

How can our lives on earth be compared to sorting through the old junk box in the attic?

How did the nobleman reward his slaves for their faithfulness? (Luke 19:12-19) What does this teach us about the relationship between this life and the next?

How do our earthly lives serve a dual purpose?

Why is it important to view our life experiences from an eternal perspective?

What did Paul tell the Corinthians to change their perspective? (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)

How is God training us for something spectacular in the next world?

What will be determined by the few brief moments you live on earth?

Chapter 5

The Opportunity beyond a Lifetime

Explain how Holly's and Kent's talents and roles affected their ability to please their parents. How does this relate to our various talents and assignments in life, and our ability to please God?

The five-talent slave and two-talent slave had unequal abilities, but were equally pleasing to their master (Matthew 25:14-23). How does this truth apply to us today?

Although we don't have the same abilities or responsibilities, what do we all have—that puts everyone on a level playing field?

What is the “Envy Trap” and how can it keep us from fulfilling our callings?

If aren't using our abilities to glorify God, what is the effect? Why are one-talent people notorious for burying their talents?

What are two wrong concepts that one-talent slave had about his master? (Matthew 25:24) What is everything we do for God is based upon?

Why do many people today have a distorted view of God?

Chapter 6

Heaven's Headlines

Jesus could have kept the truth about eternal rewards a big secret to be revealed to all on Judgment Day. Why did God give us so much information about rewards?

Why did Jesus say to be “glad *in that day* and leap for joy” when we are persecuted? (Luke 6:23)

How can we lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven? (Matthew 6:20-21)

When is giving easy? When is giving extremely difficult?

How is it possible to love those who hate us? What does God promise when we love our enemies? (Luke 6:35)

Explain why the Christian mother who changes her baby's diapers will be rewarded in eternity (Mark 10:44).

How can you get a new perspective on your earthly occupation?

How can having information about eternal rewards change the way we treat people?
(Ephesians 6:7-8)

Chapter 7 The Final Exam

If God forgives our sins, why do we have to face the judgment?

What three areas will God's final exam cover?

Why is the foundation the most important part of stage of construction? (Matthew 7:26)
How can our earthly lives be compared to building a house? (1 Corinthians 3:11-12)

Our post-conversion deeds will be divided into two categories. Why are these categories described as building materials? Discuss some the examples listed under each. (1 Corinthians 3:12-14)

Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned, but how we live after being saved is important. What will God do in response to the "gold, silver, precious stones" deeds that survive the test of fire? (1 Corinthians 3:13-14)

Explain what will happen to the "wood, haw, straw" deeds when they are tested by fire? (1 Corinthians 3:15)

What are the five different crowns mentioned in Scripture? What will these unique rewards probably signify in heaven?

Chapter 8 Graduation Day

Why did Jesus say to invite the crippled, poor, lame, and blind to dinner? (Luke 14:12-14) On what day will God reward His children for their kind deeds? (v.14)

Our bodies need to be changed to prepare us for our eternal assignments. What did Jesus say our resurrected bodies will be like? (Matthew 22:30)

How will our resurrected bodies differ from our earthly bodies in terms of glory? (Matthew 13:43, Daniel 12:3)

How will our resurrected bodies differ from our earthly bodies in terms of power?

When we see Jesus face-to-face, what will we understand? (1 Corinthians 13:12)

What does the Bible say about food and fellowship in heaven? (Revelation 22:2, Matthew 8:11)

How can our resurrection bodies be compared to a metamorphic rock? (1 Corinthians 15:46)

Chapter 9 Happily Ever After

Why will God destroy this present world and create something entirely new? (2 Peter 3:10-13)

What does “And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind” mean? (Isaiah 65:17)

How are the Old Testament and New Testament ages represented by the wall around the New Jerusalem? (Revelation 22:12,14)

In the future kingdom, how will God decide who will rule in the highest positions? (Luke 14:11, 19:17)

We live in houses on earth, but what awaits us in heaven? (Luke 16:9)

The twenty-four elders in heaven cast their crowns before the throne of God. (Revelation 4:10) What does this tell us about our ability to worship God in eternity?

How will our job assignments in heaven be different from our work on earth? (Revelation 22:3)

Chapter 10 The Biggest Head Won't Get the Biggest Crown

Humility means we see ourselves realistically—as God sees us. Without humility, how do we start thinking about ourselves?

What is one of the first indications that pride has slithered into our lives? (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Discuss the statement: “Pride loves to be worshiped, craves attention, and is greatly offended when it is overlooked.”

What mistake did King Nebuchadnezzar make? (Daniel 4:30) How did God humble him? (Daniel 4:31-32) How does this apply to us today?

How is humility manifested when it encounters authority? (1 Peter 2:13,18) What is the difference between obedience and submission?

Does being a servant mean having a lowly position, or a lowly heart? How do the examples of the waitress and the horseback rider demonstrate this truth?

What does it mean to regard others as more important than ourselves? (Philippians 2:3)

Why did Paul boast about his weaknesses? (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Chapter 11 God's Upside-Down Kingdom

Why is God's kingdom upside-down to the natural mind?

James and John know what they were asking for. What didn't they understand? (Mark 10:37-38)

How did James and John have the wrong spirit? (Luke 9:52-56) How can zeal be dangerous without love and humility?

How did the disciples use the wrong measuring stick to determine their greatness? (Mark 9:34-35)

How can we modify our strategy to overcome our incorrect way of thinking?

When did the good and faithful slave do his best work? (Matthew 25:21) How does this apply to our service for God?

Why is it important to have a joyful attitude when we serve God? (Psalm 100:2, Deuteronomy 28:47-48).

What does "slave *of all*" mean? (Mark 10:44)

Chapter 12 Little Things Are Big Things

How did Martha Berry demonstrate her faithfulness with something little? Discuss some "little things" that you are now managing.

What does managing little things indicate? (Luke 16:10) What does faithfulness prove about our attitudes and actions?

How does our faithfulness in handling “unrighteous wealth” prepare us for eternity? (Luke 16:11)

Read the story about Pablo and the missionary. Discuss the inconsistency of sacrificing in theory, but not sacrificing in reality.

Discuss the differences between the baseball player and Oseola McCarty. Why won’t more money make you more faithful? (2 Corinthians 8:12)

Faithfulness means excellence, integrity, dependability, and perseverance. Write a one-sentence definition for each of the four terms.

Chapter 13 It’s a Wonderful Life

When George Bailey returned to his earthly life in the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*, what had changed? How can our perspective affect the way we live on earth?

How are our priorities like the buttons on a shirt? Which priorities should be the top two buttons? (Matthew 22:37-39)

How does the story about the wife’s relationship with her two husbands portray two opposing ways of serving God?

Discuss four things that thankfulness does.

What does it mean to have “abundant life”? (John 10:10)

What does God want us to do with the ministries that He has called us to? (Colossians 4:17)

Conclusion: The Riddle

What is the most important thing you can do with your life?

Within the next week, tell at least two people about God’s wonderful plan for eternity through Jesus Christ.