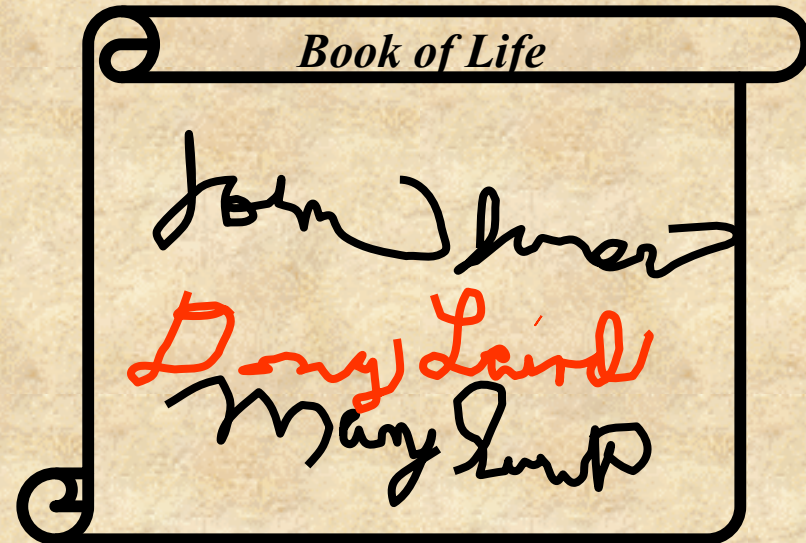


Things To Do Before You Die

By Pastor Douglas R. Laird

“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- Rev. 20: 15 NASB ”



“If any man’s work which he has built on remains, he will receive a reward (1Cor. 3: 14 NASB).”



If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved...(1Cor. 3: 15 (NASB).”

R E C E I P T	
Bank of Eternity	
Date	___/___/___
Divine Good	___
Divine Good	___
Total Deposit	___
Account Bal.	___

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Introduction

No, this is not one of those books that leaves its readers with a warm and fuzzy feeling. It is not a wish list of desires of a dying man.

Never the less, life is short, and may be even shorter than what many of us anticipate. There are some issues that need to be recognized and addressed **before** we die.

With the free will that God gives to every soul He creates, we have the freedom to choose, but we are not free from having to make choices. This book explains how those choices determine both **where** and **how** every soul will spend all of eternity.

Table Of Contents

Title Page	1
Copyright Page	2
Introduction	3
Table of Contents	4
Chapter One: The Appointment That Will Not Be Rescheduled	5
Chapter Two: Good People Go To Heaven, Bad People Go to Hell	11
Chapter Three: Where Souls Experience Eternity?	16
Chapter Four: The Purpose Of The Post Salvation Spiritual Life	21
Chapter Five: The Power Source	28
Chapter Six: The Daily Intake And Application Of The Word Of God.	32
Chapter Seven: Spiritual Gift(s)	35
Chapter Eight Distractions of Blessings And Adversity	40
Chapter Nine: Receiving Or Losing Rewards	45
Closing Comments	49

Chapter One

The Appointment That Will Not Be Rescheduled

Our biological parents may or may not have intended to bring a “baby” into the world when we were conceived, but it was God who creates the soul, and places “us” in the body of His choosing at birth (John 3: 6/Gen. 2:7)

God, not our biological parents, determines into which body He imputes the soul He creates. In doing so, He reveals our gender, race, national origin. Secular sociologists concur that in more cases than not, our birth even determines the socio-economic class

in which most individuals will spend their entire lives, with only a few exceptions. The date of our birth determines in which dispensation of His plan our earthly life is to be experienced.

God could have placed our soul in any body He chose in the course of human history, but this was not a random choice. Our birth date reveals much about the specific plan that He has for each soul He creates. The body and circumstances of our birth was precisely the one we need to fulfill His plan, regardless of how long or how short our life span turns out to be, or what potential or limitations our individual bodies present.

The same can be said of the “appointed” time of our departure. Since nothing can happen to anyone without either the direct will of God arranging it or at least His permissive will allowing

for it, even suicide and homicide do not alter the timing and circumstances of one's earthly departure. The omniscience of God knew of all the events that are to happen before we were even born.

This can be a hard pill to swallow when challenged by faith to accept the things that we have no earthly explanation for, or when we lack the capacity to understand "why" God does what He does. The bottom line is that God was not created to fulfill the plan(s) of Man, it was the other way around. Everything has a divine purpose.

God does not violate the free will He has given to each soul He has created. If He does not choose to intervene, then the evil plans of others or our own negative decision may very well be what God allows in order to fulfill His ultimate will.

I believe we will be amazed to learn just how many times God has in fact intervened to prevent a premature earthly departure for

all of us. That flat tire, dead battery, traffic delay, or last minute change in plans may have in fact been God's way of preventing some tragic accident. While such things may have been the source of much aggravation at the time, we just never know how such things may have preserved our lives or how many times such things have happened in the course of our lifetimes.

Even the death of a child, or being victimized in some awful way has a divine purpose. We may never come to know many of the "why's" that events in life bring to us. Such events will either dramatically bring us closer to God, or will be used by the Kingdom of Darkness in an attempt to drive a wedge between us and the Lord in our walk with Him.

We do not know the time nor the circumstances of our earthly departure. Whatever the circumstances turn out to be, how we

look at the issues of death reveal much about where we are in our relationship with the Lord at any given time.

Reincarnation is totally contrary to the dying “once” principle clearly revealed in Scripture (Heb.9: 27). Reincarnation serves no purpose as we would never “get it right” and “earn” salvation if we were given a million opportunities to do so. If man, apart from God, could eventually earn salvation or save himself, there would have been no need for our Lord to have paid the sin debt for us.

Regardless of the circumstances, physical death (or the Rapture 1Thess. 4: 17) is not the end but the means in which we depart this world and enter into the eternal state. Every soul that God creates has everlasting life and will live on for all of eternity in one of two ultimate locations and accompanying environments.

The real question is not “if” there is life after death, but rather

where and how that life will be experienced.

The inevitability of our personal appointment with death, that cannot be rescheduled, is what should motivate any thinking person to accomplish all that he or she must (John 3: 3) in order to make certain that he or she is personally prepared to enter the eternal state at any time.

Many persons will find themselves in Heaven or Hades today, whose deaths were the last thing that they or others had thought possible.

As we will see, the Bible teaches that how and where we will spend all of eternity is determined by the decisions made during the course of our time here on earth. Every day we get closer and closer to our personal appointment with death.

Chapter Two

Good People Go To Heaven, Bad People Go to Hell

Wrong! For some of us, we have been told since childhood that everyone from Santa Claus to God is keeping a list of good and bad people and rewarding them accordingly, with Heaven or Hell being the final outcome. Heaven or Hell will be the final outcome, but not because we were good enough to deserve Heaven or bad enough so as to end up in Hell.

The truth is that some very “bad” people, as far as human viewpoint is concerned, will find themselves in Heaven while some very “good” people will find themselves in Hell, or what the Bible calls the “lake of fire (Rev. 20: 15)”. Old habits die hard, and so do errant concepts about God that we have either been erroneously taught or self conceived.

Entrance and residence in Heaven can never be earned, no matter how “good” one aspires to be (Romans 8: 8). Relatively good behavior will be the **result** of spiritual growth, but has never been the **means** to acquire it.

Scripture (Isaiah 64: 6 NASB) teach that “our righteous deeds”, while impressive to self and others, “are like a filthy garment” in comparison to the blood of Christ that saves us.

Adam and the woman, later called Eve, were created as three dimensional beings, having body, soul, and spirit. On the day they sinned, they died spiritually. Spiritual death is not a state of nonexistence, but existing while being separated from a relationship with God.

Every human being, with the exception of the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ (via the virgin conception/birth) comes

into this world physically alive, with a soul that **will** live on in one of two ultimate eternal locations, but spiritually dead as a result of the sin nature that is passed down at conception (Ps. 51:5). This nature becomes an inherent part of us when our soul is imputed at birth (Gen.2: 7). In this state of spiritual death, the soul of the individual is separated from God and head-ed for an eternity in Hell. The only remedy is to to be “born again (John 3: 3)” upon reaching the age or stage of moral accountability with a consciousness of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that we **must** be born again (John 3: 3) to resolve the spiritual death condition in which we were born .

Infants or individuals who do not reach an age or stage of moral accountability go to Heaven (2 Sam. 12: 23).

The entire sin debt of the human race (1John 2: 2), with the exception of the sin of **disbelief** in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:18), was **paid for in full** by the Work (spiritual death) of

His Humanity while physically alive on the cross. This Work, fully accomplished, becomes personally applicable to the individual soul if and when that soul exercises the free will that God gave him/her and believes in what He has accomplished for him/her during His experience of spiritual death on our behalf.

Once born again, the individual is no longer spiritually dead as he/she was at birth. He/she is spiritually alive, and remains so for all of Eternity. He/she is not the old man made anew (Rom.7: 14-24), he/she is a new creation in Christ (2Cor.5: 17).

Confession to God the Father in prayer of all known sin(s) as they occur in the course of the post-salvation spiritual life is for the purpose of regaining **fellowship** with God, not for the purpose of restoring salvation (1 John 1: 9) that cannot be lost.

In summary, it is not the good, but those who become spiritually alive by being born again that will live forever in Heaven. It is not the bad, but those who choose to remain spiritually dead as they were when they were born who end up in Hell.

Being forever saved is not a license to sin. Divine discipline (Heb. 12: 6) while here on earth and loss of heavenly reward (1COor. 3:15) still awaits born again believers who choose to sin. Post salvation sin does not alter **where** we will spend all of eternity, but as we will see in future chapters, post salvation sin can diminish **how** we will experience life here on earth (Heb. 12: 6) and life in Heaven (1Cor. 3: 15). Post salvation sin disables us from producing able divine good that results in receiving certain blessings here on earth and reward in Heaven.

The most important issue that everyone must do **before** he/she dies, is to address the issue of **where** it is that he/she is going to spend all of eternity. The second most important issue is **how** we will experience our eternal location.

Chapter Three

Where Souls Experience Eternity

Prior to resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the departed souls of all **believers** went to Paradise. Paradise is a compartment of Hades that was a place of comfort (Luke 16: 25) for the departed Old Testament believers. Scripture teach that Paradise was visible (at a long distance) to unbelievers, who are in torment, suffering in another compartment of Hades. A great chasm that cannot be crossed separates these two compartments (Luke 16: 23). This is the same Paradise was spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ when He assured the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23: 43), that they would be together in Paradise that day.

After the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, this “Paradise” was emptied and the souls there were brought to Heaven. Souls of believers in the Church Age go directly to heaven (Phil. 1: 23).

Hades presently remains to be a place of torment and the holding center for **unbelievers** until the appointed future time when they will be brought out (Rev. 20: 13) for their final judgment resulting in being cast into the “lake of fire (Rev. 20: 15 NASB).

Departed souls are NOT in caskets, urns, morgues funeral parlors, or cemeteries. Their bodies are there, returning, or have returned, to dust (Gen. 3: 19). The bodies of believers will be raised in resurrection form and reunited with the soul at the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4: 17).

When circumstances of death such as September 11th do not allow for the recovery and burial or other means of disposing of the remains, we need not be concerned with God’s ability to locate and bring the body of any believer back in resurrected form. The disposing of the body is clearly a temporal issue (Matt. 8: 22).

Such things can provide “closure” for those left behind, but post-mortem activity does nothing to alter the eternal destiny of the soul or God’s ability to resurrect the body at the Rapture.

Those who become “overcomers” during the Church Age dispensation are coming back with our Lord Jesus Christ to rule with Him when He returns with the Church at the Second Advent (Rev. 19). Church age believers will be with the Lord Jesus Christ here on earth for His 1,000 yr. reign. During that time Satan will be bound in the abyss. At the conclusion of that period, Satan will be released for a brief period when he organizes his final attack on God’s people. He and those who wage this war will be defeated by the power of God and Satan will be then be forever confined in the lake of fire.

God will then establish a new Heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21) that will forever be free of all evil and its effects.

Whatever else God may have in store for believers (2Cor. 12: 4) remains to be seen, but whatever it involves, believers will experience it in the presence of the Lord (1Thess. 4: 17) for all of eternity.

‘Religious’ teachings of there being a place of Purgatory where a saved soul is required to atone for sin(s) is blasphemy. If it were true, it would mean that the blood (work of salvation) provided for by the Lord Jesus Christ failed to make full atonement (Romans 8:1/John 3: 18) as the Scripture declare. It would also make God a liar who said that the sin debt had been paid in full (1John 2: 2) and that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Romans 8: 28).

Teaching of there being a place of Limbo for the departed souls of infants (or persons who did not reach the age or stage of moral accountability) is contrary to what is revealed in 2Sam.12:23 and is contrary to the character and nature of God.

By believing in the Person (who He is) and the Works (what He did on the cross to provide the means of salvation, **before we**

die, we can live with peace and assurance of **where** we as **believers** are heading for when our appointed time comes.

As spiritually mature disciples, we will not only want to grow in His grace and knowledge, but share the Good News of the Gospel with others and expose the lies concerning where it is that the soul goes when it departs the body at the moment of physical death.

Chapter Four

The Purpose Of The Post Salvation Spiritual Life

Having now covered the most important issue (salvation) that every soul “must (John 3: 3)” address during his/her lifetime, let’s move on to what is next most important issue in this lifetime.

No, it’s not the pursuit of wealth, health, or a personal relationship (Luke 14: 26) with our mate. As important as these things are, they are not “next” on the things we must do before we die. In fact, such things are what causes the majority of believers to become distracted (Luke 8: 14) from what the meaning of life is all about.

Once saved, the next important decision to be made and maintained is what are we to do with the rest of the time we have here on Earth. Note that unlike the one-time decision necessary to be forever saved, discipleship requires a daily decision to execute the true post salvation spiritual life.

As we spiritually mature, our interests, focus, and priorities will change. This world, and all that it has to offer will have less and less of an appeal to us as we renew our minds daily and conform our thinking to the “...mind of Christ (1Cor. 2: 16 NASB).”

Once saved, the quality of our post-salvation spiritual life will be what matters most for the rest of our life here on earth. We will see, more and more, that the purpose we are here is to glorify God, no matter where we are or what we are doing. Where we choose to be and what we choose do, however, may be among the many things that we will desire to change as we become more and more like Him.

Let's take a look at this “post-salvation spiritual life”.

First a definition. The post-salvation spiritual life consists of all the time we have here on Earth, beginning at the moment when we were born again by believing in the Person and the Works of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It must be understood that the post-salvation spiritual life is not a matter of cleaning up the old person we were before we were born again. It is not a matter of becoming “religious”. It is not a matter of performing good deeds with our human, talent, resources, or time. It is not a matter of cleaning up the devil's world.

Why not?

The old “self” that was “hostile (Romans 8: 7)” towards God

and the things of God does not go away as a result of one being born again (Romans 7). The old self, or what Scripture describes as the fallen or sin nature nature, not only remains with us, but intensifies as it competes with the God the Holy Spirit for influence over the soul of the born again believer. The more we grow in the grace and knowledge of God and advance spiritually, more frequent and intense the satanic attacks will become. Attempting to clean up the old man doesn't work.

Becoming religious may impress self and Man, but not God. Religion is anything in doctrine or practice that Man has added to or deleted from what can be Biblically substantiated. Religion appeals to the fallen nature in Man because it appears to offer the means to satisfy his desire to do (or not to do) something in order to either obtain or retain salvation.

Satan, and his spokespersons (2Cor.11: 14, 15), offer an alternative “religious” counterfeit for virtually everything that God has established in the true spiritual realm. Like any counterfeit, it must appear and be accepted as real if the deception is going to succeed.

All of the pageantry and many of the rituals that can be found in the various sectors of the Christian Community suggests that Satan has had considerable success in this area of spiritual warfare. This should not come as a shock to us, as widespread apostasy within the Church as we draw near to the end of the Age was prophesied long ago.

Cleaning up the devil’s world in preparation for the Second Advent has never been the job given to the Church. The Biblical description (Matt.24: 22) of this world’s condition, just prior to the Second advent, hardly describes a world in which good has overcome evil!

So, we have a definition and we have seen what the post-salvation life does NOT involve. But what DOES it involve?

The Great Commission issued to the Church calls for the proclaiming of the Gospel Message for salvation and the making of disciples (students of the Word of God) of those who are born again. The fulfillment of this commission is what the spiritual life is all about.

But what does this mean to me as an individual?

The purpose for the very creation of man is to glorify God in the the midst of spiritual combat (Eph. 6: 12) between the forces of God and Satan that began before Man was ever created.

Under the filling of the God the Holy Spirit, every born again believer glorifies God by learning and applying the principles of the Word of God to the daily events of life that He engineers. In each and every day, God has spiritual objectives and work for us to accomplish.

There will be days of success and failure on our part, but not His. We will succeed when we are Spirit-filled and follow His lead. He will be faithful to us, even when we are not faithful to Him.

There will be days when we will try (and fail) to accomplish spiritual goals by applying our human talents and resources. There will be times when we will allow ourselves to be distracted by prosperity and/or adversity. We will fail when we are not properly motivated.

Failure or success in the execution does not cause us to be any more or less saved than we were at the moment we first believed and was born gain. Salvation cannot be improved or diminished. Success in the post-salvation spiritual life does determine the degree in which we fulfill the purpose of our creation, that being the glorification of God.

In the next few chapters we will see how the post salvation spiritual life is to be executed by the Church at large and how each and every born again believer has been given the means and opportunity to learn of his/her part and to accomplish all that God has called him/her to do,₂₇

Chapter Five

The Power Source

A technician can have the best power tools on the market, but unless they are connected to the correct power source, they are virtually useless.

When executing the post salvation spiritual life, we must be connected to and have the filling of God the Holy Spirit enabling us if we are to accomplish anything in the spiritual realm (John 15: 5). The all-inclusive “anything” of this principle means just that.

The power source being spoken of here is what theologians

call the “filling” or the control of God the Holy Spirit.

There is a significant difference between the “indwelling” of God the Holy Spirit that applies to all believers, and the “filling” of God the Holy Spirit that may or may not apply at any given time.

During the Church Age dispensation, the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit within the physical body of the believer takes place when the human spirit is placed or regenerated at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:13, 14/1Cor.3: 16). The indwelling is permanent.

Sin, via thought, word, or deed committed during the course of the post salvation spiritual life results in the loss of the filling (control) of God the Holy Spirit, and His presence. Until the known sin is confessed (1John1: 9) we are out of fellowship with Him. Being void of His “filling”, we are powerless to produce any divine good (John 15: 5).

The good news is that the time out of fellowship need not be any longer than the time it takes to confess a known sin to God the Father in prayer. The bad news is that if we don't confess known sin(s), the time period can be as long as the rest of our post-salvation spiritual life here on earth. It is for this reason that sins of mental attitudes can be so devastating.

As long as we remain out of fellowship, we cannot produce divine good. At best, we can only produce deeds of human good. Good deeds produced by human power and good deeds produced by the filling of the Spirit can have the same overt appearance. But as will be explained in greater detail in a later chapter, **ONLY** the good deeds performed when filled by the Spirit glorify God and thereby qualify for reward in Heaven!

The forgiveness of God can bring about a tremendous sense of peace to some believers, and can be a source of much challenge to others. God's policy on forgiveness forces the believer to deal with issues that he/she does not like in order to not allow the negativity of others to disable his/her own ability to produce divine good. The **sin** of refusing to³⁰

to forgive others have disabled many believers from executing their own post salvation spiritual life (John 15: 5). Whatever another person has done to us, it is not worth losing our own fellowship with God by entering into the sin of refusing to forgive them.

If we confess, but do not then forsake (John 8: 11) the sin, we spend our walk with God in a revolving doorway, never getting back into the plan of God that requires the filling of the God the Holy Spirit to execute!

The filling of the Spirit is not something that can be experienced in part. Like pregnancy, either you are or you are not filled at any given time.

The filling has nothing to do with retaining salvation, but without the filling of the Spirit, the born again believer is powerless to produce divine good and thereby execute the post salvation spiritual life.

After salvation, decision to execute the post salvation spiritual life is the most important thing to do before we die.

Chapter Six

The Daily Intake And Application Of The Word Of God.

Most people would agree that if we are to get most out of our investment, we would be wise to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for operation and preventative maintenance (2Cor. 13: 5).

Just as the body needs metabolized food for energy and engines require a certain fuel, the soul needs to be nourished with the Word of God on a daily basis.

What one knows (or doesn't know) about the Written Word of God is what one knows (or doesn't know) about the Living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1: 1).

The Greek word for *disciple* in the original manuscripts of the New Testament was “mathetes”. To be a mathetes, means to be a technical student in a teacher-pupil relationship. Contrary to what the arrogance of the fallen nature will lead us to believe, no one every reaches the point where he/she has ever mastered all there is in the Word of God.

To be a Christian disciple means to be a technical student and an applier (James 1: 22) of the Word of God. One can be a born again believer without any knowledge of Scripture beyond the Gospel Message, but one cannot be a disciple without a working knowledge of the Word of God. The Bible must be interpreted in light of the isagogics (historical setting), comparing Scripture with all other relevant passages of Scripture, and exegesis (original language used) of the passages.

If we want to maximize the time we invest in the study of the Word of God, we have to do it **God's** way.

“God’s way” is to be under the teaching authority (Heb. 13: 17) of a **Biblically** qualified pastor-teacher who God has called, trained, gifted, and appointed to do so. Like the ancient Bereans (Acts 17: 11), consistency with the Word of God should be the ultimate consideration when evaluating a doctrine or ministry.

Too many Christians stifle their spiritual growth by placing fellowship, convenience, familial tradition, or the personality of the pastor above the edification of their souls, evidence by the fact that their Scriptural knowledge is no greater than what it was five years ago.

Private devotional time should be a part of one’s daily routine, but this should be a supplementary study time. Believers are to hear the messages that the Spirit is speaking to the Church, and He speaks through the pastor teachers (1Cor. 12: 28) He has appointed for that purpose (Rev. 2: 1, 8 ,12, 18/ Rev.3: 1, 7,14.).

Chapter Seven

Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians Chapter 12 reveal much to us about the specific spiritual gift that God (vs. 11), not the recipient, selects for each and every born again believer.

Identifying one's spiritual gift is an important part in the life of discipleship. The gift will be one that fits the recipient's circumstances, or God will cause those circumstances to change. How, where, and when one's gift is to be exercised may or may not change over time, but the gift itself does not.

The spiritual gift that is given is not for the primary benefit of the one to whom it was given, but is for the service and/or

spiritual edification of the local body of believers or in some cases, the Church at large (Vs. 7). Only the gift of evangelism, that it to proclaim the Gospel Message to unbelievers, is exercised outside of the Church. A local church, however, may sponsor an evangelist or his ministry.

In every local assembly (Church) there are many positions and needs in order for it to function. Some are directly involved with the teaching, while others provide technical or support services, but everyone has a role to play in the function or support of his/her local assembly.

In some cases, a believer may be an active and supportive member of a local Church where he or she receives Bible Doctrine, but has a ministry that operates from home, at a nursing center, on his/her secular job, or anywhere else that God sends him/her. Every Christian is in full time service of God.

This does not mean that we are all immediately trained and or have the spiritually maturity to set sail. God's plan involves preparation and timing.

I was raised in a Christian home. I do not remember a time when I had not heard of the Gospel Message or a time when I did not know God. I cannot cite a specific date when I was born again, but I am sure that it was when I was very young.

I had many difficult experiences to go through as God led me along the way in my walk with Him. He prepared me and developed my gift of communicating principles of the Word of God in the written form beginning in the mid 1980's.

In August of 2008 I completed the last phase of the process and was an ordained pastor-teacher.

My struggles have been many are far from over, but I wouldn't change a thing that has happened to me. In retrospect, I can see the hand of God working behind the scenes in everything that He has caused or has allowed to happen in the course of my lifetime.

Once you discover the gift that God has selected for you, it will become a motivating force to keep you going when everyone and everything else around you would have you throw in the towel. Your gift will give your life purpose, meaning, and definition, and a godly reason to get up every morning. I believe that it is when one's work is done, or one has said "not interested" for the last time, that God calls you home. Until your work is completed, as long as you are willing to continue on, God will provide everything you need to complete the course.

Many Christians never become aware of what their individual gift that God had for them. Needless to say, one cannot exercise, develop, or be rewarded for finishing the work relating to his/her gift until he/she discovers what that gift is.

The gift, and the opportunities to exercise it, will be made known and available to believers who reach the stage of spiritual maturity necessary to execute it. The gift and its ministry will advance at the same rate as one's spiritual maturity.

The mistake that many believers make is to try and develop a plan that pleases or interests one self and then seek God's approval. We are not here to do the work that we choose or that God has assigned to someone else. We are here to discover and do the work He has assigned and gifted us to perform (Matt.25: 15).

Discovering, developing, and exercising the spiritual gift that God has for you is one of the things you want to do before you die!

Chapter Eight

Distractions Of Blessings And Adversity

The post salvation spiritual life is a battle (Eph. 6: 12), and was intended to be so. As we advance in the post salvation spiritual life, we become more and more of a target for the “flaming arrows (Eph. 6: 16)”. If we neglect to make use of the spiritual body armor (Eph. 6: 14-17), serious injury can put us on the disabled list for extended periods of time!

As in any other type of the warfare, the gathering of intelligence plays a vital part in the development of battle strategy and planning.

Satan has had much experience. He has been interacting with the human race since the Garden of Eden. Satan does not have the omnipresence (being everywhere at the same time) or the omniscience (all knowledge) of God, but he has an army of fallen angels or demons (Eph. 6: 12) who do his bidding. He also operates through human beings (Luke 22: 3/John 8: 44/2COr. 11: 15) who knowingly or unwittingly do his bidding.

Only on certain critical occasions (Luke 4: 2/Luke 22:3) has Satan taken the reigns and done or attempted to do the job himself.

He has mastered the art of appealing to the fallen nature in Man that is inherently “hostile Romans 8:7 NASB” towards God and the things of God. He knows what buttons to press and when to press them, often using the tongues of other people to do so,

Satan knows the wisdom of avoiding a direct and frontal strike. No one, Satan knows, is going to do something if he/she knows that the end result will be means of his/her own undoing. However, if can convince an individual that he/she can cut corners, enjoy the liberating freedom and prosperity that the way of his world (Luke 4: 6) offers, he has secured a “opportunity (Eph.4: 27 NASB)” from which he can set the stage for his full attack. This strategy worked well in the Garden of Eden and has had considerable success down throughout the generations of Man.

He primarily operates via deception, with religion being the greatest weapon of mass destruction. Satan has achieved much more success in the spiritual realm through religion than he has through overt acts of evil or what many would perceive to be demonic activity.

Satan, has the ability and willingness (Luke 4: 6) to “bless” as well as to generate adversity in the life of an individual.

It matters not to the devil which one it takes, adversity or blessing, as long as his ultimate goal is achieved.

Satan has had and continues to have great success when it comes to defeating the majority of those who claim to be Christians in their post salvation spiritual life by distracting them with either prosperity or adversity. Satan can do nothing to diminish one's salvation, but can do much to influence us to render our post salvation spiritual life unproductive. In doing so, he/we deny God the glory that He would have otherwise received.

Even though much of the adversity we face in life is self-induced, we are quick to blame God and everyone else for it. In times of prosperity, many give little attention to God or the things of God.

We all claim that we want to glorify God, but when placed in situations of intense adversity where we have the opportunity to ⁴³ glorify God the most, we bemoan our situation and ask God why.

What most of us try to do when adversity comes is to find the quickest means to get out of the situation. What we need to do is to ask God to reveal to us what it is that He wants us to learn in the circumstances we find ourselves in from time to time.

God allows adversity because it is under such circumstances that we have the greatest opportunity to advance spiritually and to glorify Him the most.

Certainly, learning to enjoy but not allowing prosperity to become an “idol” and learning to see adversity as the means of opportunity are among the things we should want to do before we die.

Chapter Nine

Receiving Or Losing Rewards

Disciples do not serve the Lord in order to be rewarded, but being rewarded for the “good” we produce is clearly taught in the Word of God (1COr. 3: 12-15).

Where there is much misunderstanding in the Christian Community is on what basis will the rewards spoken of in Scripture be given.

This brings us back to a principle that was addressed in Chapter Five, “The Power Source”.

Nothing can be accomplished (in the spiritual realm) apart from the filling (control) of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, only the “good” deeds that were accomplished with the power of God the Holy Spirit are going to qualify for eternal reward at the judgment of the believers.

The purpose of this judgment, addressed in 1Cor. 3: 12-15, is NOT to determine who gets into Heaven and who does not. That issue (salvation) was already settled during one’s time here on Earth. The fact that one finds him/herself present at this judgment affirms that fact that you are a born again believer, as no unbelievers will be there.

The purpose of this judgment is to reveal the power source that the “good” deeds under examination and consideration

for eternal reward were accomplished.

Note that no sin or “bad” deeds are bought up.

During their time on earth, unbelievers and Christians are both capable of producing “good” deeds with their human talents and abilities. These “good” deeds are symbolized as the ones that made of “wood, hay, and straw” in 1Cor. 3: 12 (NASB). They had temporal value in and for the life on earth, but have no eternal value and are burned up and dismissed as far as eternal rewards are concerned.

In addition to good deeds that born again believers had the ability to perform, born again believers also had the means and opportunity to produce “good” deeds under the filling

of God the Holy Spirit. These “good” deeds are symbolized as the “gold, silver, and precious stones” of the 1 Cor. 3 passage. They are not “burned up” and therefore warrant eternal reward(s) that are then given to the born again believer to experience for all of eternity.

Note that it is was the filling of God the Holy Spirit in the production of the of the good deeds that qualified them to receive eternal reward.

Learning how to produce good deeds that qualify for eternal reward is certainly among the things to do before we die.

Closing Comments

In this brief e.book, I have attempted to present a brief, but concise overview of the things that everyone **must** (John 3: 3) do, and then **should** do, if they desire to both glorify God and prepare themselves for **all** that God has prepared for them.

If you have never been born again, I would invite you to consider what the Bible teaches concerning your eternal future. We were born physically alive with a soul that is going to ultimately live forever in one of two eternal locations and environment. We were also born spiritually dead, that is separated from God as a result of the sin nature that is passed down from generation to generation. We also have committed personal sins as well after reaching the age or stage of moral accountability. Unless we are born again (John 3:3) we will spend all of eternity in what the

Bible calls the “lake of fire (Rev. 20: 15 NASB).” The lake of fire is not a place of extermination, but one of torment and suffering that never ends or offers any hope of escape or pardon.

The only way to avoid the lake of fire is to believe in the Person (who He is) and the Works (the spiritual death of His humanity on the cross in our place) of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, we not only avoid the lake of fire, but receive eternal life and a regenerated spirit enabling us to live forever in the presence of God with His full forgiveness and blessings.

If you have not so believed as of yet, and hear the voice of God calling you to do so, I invite you to do so now and settle the issue of salvation right now for all of eternity.

If you have been born again, I would invite you to learn about the true post-salvation spiritual life and to execute it. It was for this reason that God created you.

T H E E N D