

Why Eternity Matters Now

By David Feddes

A lot of surveys show that people are not very interested in eternity. They are much more interested in what happens now. And church growth experts will sometimes advise pastors to provide guidance for people now and practical ideas for people to have a better life now. One of the best-selling religious books is *Your Best Life Now*. If your best life is now, then Christianity should be tossed. Paul said, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Corinthians 15:19, NIV).

I want to deal with the question: Why does eternity matter now? This is kind of putting things backward. I think the better question is, Why would now matter in light of eternity? Why would not matter in light of the possibility of an eternal destiny of suffering and horror and being cut off from everything good forever, or else a destiny of delighting in the direct presence of God and the joy of God and perfect fellowship and love and absolute pleasure and delight, that lasts forever? The future holds either everlasting wonder and love and delight or everlasting horror. The main question really is, Why would now matter compared to forever?

But having said all that, I am going to get into why eternity matters now and to show you that even if your concern was how to be practical now and make your life the best it could be now and count for the most, you have to always keep eternity at the forefront of your thinking. The least practical thing you can do is to be overly "practical" and think only about right now.

Why does eternity matter now? I want to look at ten words ending in "y," just as eternity ends in "y," and we are asking "why." Eternity is the key to **bravery**, to the correct sense of **reality**, to real **prosperity** and understanding what prosperity is. Even in this world, it is the trigger for real **generosity**. It is a great incentive for **purity**. Eternity is the source of our ultimate **dignity** as humans. It is a place to discover full **unity**, and anticipating eternity can build unity right now. It gives a sense of **urgency** to all that we do and to being ready for it already in this life. It gives us a good sense of **priority**, one that is based on how things ought to be. And finally, eternity gives us **energy** to make it through this life.

Those are ten key things for having your best life now. You have to keep your focus on eternity, to keep your mind on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and not just on earthly things (Colossians 3:1–2). And when you have your mind on things above and on eternity, it will transform your approach to earthly things as well.

1. Bravery

First of all, bravery. Paul asked this question: "What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought wild beasts in Ephesus?" (1 Corinthians 15:32). If he goes into the arena where they are killing Christians, why would he go out there if there is no eternity? "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (1 Corinthians 15:32). Have a blast while you last. That is the only sensible thing to do if there is no eternity. Why would you sacrifice anything if you are just going to be dead at the end of the day?

Some Christians have been tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life (Hebrews 11:35). These people were just stupid if there is no better life waiting. Some of them were sawed in two, some were tormented, some were burned. All sorts of clever ways of torturing and killing people have been devised, and Christians have borne those things and endured them because they expected to rise again to a better life.

Jesus said, “A woman, when she is giving birth, has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (John 16:21–22, ESV). So Jesus is saying that living in this painful world as a Christian is kind of like being a woman who is going into labor. You are living in those last days between Jesus’ first coming and his second coming. The world is groaning in pain, as Romans 8 says, in the labor pains of giving birth to a new and better world. And one reason you can put up with that pain is you know that the baby is going to be born. And when that new world is born, you are going to forget the anguish because of the joy.

Jim Elliott was martyred as a missionary. He went to an area of the world that he knew was dangerous. He went to a people group that he knew was murderous. And why did he go? Here is one statement from Jim Elliott: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” You are going to die. We are all going to die. Do you want to die for something worth dying for? The key to bravery, to being willing even to lay down your life, is to know that eternity is worth dying for, that you might live again.

2. Reality

A second reason why eternity matters now is it gives you a sense of reality. You can live with a very unreal sense of how things are unless you are aware of eternity. We sometimes say, “Welcome to the real world.” Often we say that when something bad has just happened, or when somebody has been really cruel or nasty, or life has gotten really ugly, and we say, “Oh, welcome to the real world.” Is that the real world?

The Bible teaches that from all eternity, God has existed as a union of love of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The eternal God is a union of love and perfection and beauty. And the destiny of all of God’s people is to be caught up into that love and joy and beauty. That is the ultimate reality. It is not a problem when children are sheltered from what we call the real world of wickedness and vile temptations and all of that garbage. The problem is that so many people are sheltered from the real world of love and encouragement and beauty. We say that somebody is sheltered if they do not know all the garbage. I say they are being sheltered in the wrong way when they do not know all the beauties and all the promises of God and the reality of eternity.

Scripture says, “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17–18, ESV). They last forever. When you fix your eyes on the unseen realities that are coming and on eternity, you realize that is the real world. The real world is one where

Satan and sin are cast down, where Jesus is triumphant, where a new heaven comes to a new earth and all things are made perfect. And when you arrive there, maybe one of the things that Jesus will say to you is, “Welcome to the real world.” In the meantime, live in light of that reality. Do not think that what some people call the real world here and now, with all of its ugliness and nastiness, is what you have got to do, and you have got to do whatever it takes to get ahead and be nasty because that is the way life is in the real world. That is an unreal thing. And the Bible says all of that is going to vanish like a bad dream, as though it almost had never been real at all. The solid things, the eternal things, are what is real and what lasts forever.

3. Prosperity

A third reason to keep a focus on eternity, even in this life, and the way that it transforms our life in this world, is that it gives us an accurate sense of what prosperity is. Jesus says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal [and stock markets crash and things can go bad and you can lose everything]. “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

You are not prosperous unless you have treasure in heaven. You do not have real prosperity if you do not have eternity. Jesus told the story of a rich farmer who planned for everything. He was an expert financial planner. He made a raft of money. He was very prosperous. He had made his retirement plans, and now the time had come to retire. And he said to himself, “Self, you have laid up plenty of goods for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” And God said, “Yes, you are an excellent financial planner. You are a very wise man.” Now, what did God say? “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” (Luke 12:19–20, ESV). You are going to die. Then who is going to get all that stuff that you stored up?

An awful lot of people in this world are really worried about their retirement accounts. They save up. They scrimp. They do what they need to do. And it is fine to plan for retirement. But why would you plan for those few years after the age of sixty-five or so and forget about the unending years of forever?

Jesus told another story about a rich man. This rich man had everything he wanted, and there was a poor beggar at his gate who had nothing. And you would say, “Yeah, that rich guy, he was prosperous. And that poor guy, Lazarus, I feel sorry for him.” Jesus gave a little different perspective. They both died, and the rich man got a fancy burial and Lazarus did not. But the rich man ended up in hell, suffering in the torment of the flames forever, and Lazarus was in the place of the blessed forever. Who was more prosperous, the one who had a few years of poverty on earth but joy forever in eternity, or the one who lived like a fat cat on earth and then roasted in hell for eternity? Prosperity has to be understood in light of eternity. Jesus asks, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36, ESV). That is the prosperity question. What good is it if you get everything you ever wanted and you did not want the right thing, the one thing you needed, eternity with Christ?

4. Generosity

Generosity is also defined and inspired by eternity. Jesus said, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12–14, ESV). That is a funny way of saying things. Jesus says, “You would not want to invite relatives and rich business associates because they might pay you back.” Horror of horrors. You would not want to be paid back. You would not want to get a delicious meal back. You would not want to have a business deal pay you back for the lunch that you had together. You have to find somebody who cannot pay you back.

Jesus’ odd way of arguing is that you want to find people who cannot pay you back because then the only one who can pay you back is God at the resurrection of the righteous. And that is where the big payoff comes. Jesus says, “Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:9, ESV). You have only got money and stuff for a few years, so use what you have to bless other people. And then when you go to glory, those people you have blessed with your substance will welcome you and rejoice with you.

When you give to missions and are generous in your giving to missions, and someday you enter eternity, you find people who were brought to salvation in Jesus Christ because of donations you gave, or people where you gave of your time and of your love to help them and it drew them to Christ. You have friends for yourself there. Or there are fellow believers whose lives you touched and whom you encouraged. You bear fruit for eternity when you are generous with them. If you are only looking out for me, myself, and I, what a tragedy that would be.

Those of us who are called to be leaders in the church are called to show people what generosity accomplishes and what kind of generosity can really bring eternal benefit. It is okay to have your friends and family over and to feed them. Do not expect too much eternal reward for it. That is common decency. That is you scratch my back, I scratch yours. We are nice to each other. Jesus says, “Be nice to those who cannot be nice back,” and it will bring eternal benefits for you as well. Be generous.

5. Purity

Purity depends to a great degree on your view of eternity. Jesus tells us through his apostle John that “when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:2–3, ESV). Keeping your body pure for the Lord, avoiding sexual immorality, is often inspired by a desire for God and for eternity and by knowing that our bodies belong to him.

Some of the most immoral people in history who were religious were people who were part of Christian cults that abandoned Christianity. They were sometimes called Gnostics, and they did not believe in the resurrection of the body. So they thought you could do whatever you wanted

with your body and it had no relevance, because it was only your spirit that was going to live on. And John said those things were false, that Jesus came in the flesh, that Jesus came in the body, that your body is resurrected. And if Jesus is pure, then you want to keep yourself pure so that you may see him then too.

“You ought to live holy and godly lives,” says Peter, “as you wait for and hasten the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:11–12, ESV). In keeping with his promise, “we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13, ESV). If eternity is the home of purity, the home of righteousness, the home of love and godliness, then as we anticipate eternity, as we look forward to our eternal home, we become more and more pure and righteous ourselves, and we have the drive and incentive to do that.

6. Dignity

Dignity is built up by an awareness of eternity. The apostle says, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3). He is speaking, by the way, in the context of Christians suing each other. And he says, you silly Christians going to court with secular judges. That is nuts. You are going to be judging the world someday, and here you are taking your arguments in front of unbelievers over pitiful little matters like money. Do you not know who you are? Do you not know who your fellow believers are? You are people who are going to reign with Christ, who are going to be exalted higher than angels. Act like it, or at least start acting like it a little bit.

There is dignity that comes from knowing our eternal destiny. If you knew who you were someday going to become in eternity, you would consider so many things just beneath you, things so foul and wicked that you would not even want to bother with them, and other things so trivial that they are not worth your time and attention, because you are above that, you are beyond that. Now, you are never beyond serving others and doing lowly things to love them and help them. That is not beneath your dignity, because then you are being like Christ. But to sin, or to swallow up all your life on small, unimportant, trivial things when you are going to be so great, is a waste.

Think of the other people you are dealing with. If you knew that a young man you knew or a boy you knew would someday be president of the United States, how would you treat him? Think about that for a minute. If you knew that somebody was going to be really great and was going to rule, even if they were obnoxious right now, even if they were not very impressive right now, if you had the ability to see into the future and see how great they would be, would that influence you?

You see a young girl with a runny nose, not looking too good, her hair a mess, and yet you knew for a fact that she was going to be a justice on the Supreme Court. You would not want to be one of those in her background who was a jerk to her, would you? So if you knew that this person was going to be president, or that one was going to be a Supreme Court justice, or somebody else was going to be somebody great, even if they were not there yet, even if there were some messy

and unimpressive things about them now, you would deal with them in light of what you knew they were going to become.

The fact is, every believer you know is destined to reign with Christ. So start treating them that way even now, in light of what you know they are going to become someday. And start acting a little bit more yourself as a dignified person of God, someone who does not have to respond to every insult, who does not have to fight back at everything, because you know who you are. You know what God has in mind for you, and you do not have to keep pumping up your own self-esteem or defending your own dignity, which often lowers you and gets you into fights that you would be better off avoiding.

Jesus says, “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne” (Revelation 3:21, ESV). You could skip lots of lectures and skip a lot of other stuff and think about that sentence for a while. To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne. Have you thought about sitting on a throne alongside Jesus Christ? If not, start thinking about it. It is the source of the greatest dignity possible that you can conceive.

It says, “You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10, ESV). Human dignity, your dignity, and the dignity of others is most clearly seen when you know the eternal destiny of people. And even those who are not destined for glory, think of it this way. Some may be destined for hell, but do you want to be the one who helps them, nudges them, or pushes them along that road to hell?

As C. S. Lewis put it, everybody we deal with is either someday going to be a being that, if we could see them now as they will be, we would be tempted to fall down and worship them, or else they would be worse and more miserable than anything we have imagined in our darkest nightmare. So look at people in light of eternity and say, I want to be helping people on the road to glory. I want to be treating people who are destined for heaven as the great persons they are someday going to be. And those who might be on the wrong road right now, I want to witness to them while there is time. I want to do all I can to attract them to the love and the truth of Jesus.

“They will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). That is the summary ending statement of the Bible on the dignity of the people of God.

7. Unity

Next comes unity. Unity comes hard among many Christians nowadays, and sometimes even knowing about eternity, we do not pay enough attention to the unity that Jesus prayed for among his people, that we would be one as he and the Father are one. To dwell above with saints in love, oh, that will sure be glory. To dwell below with saints we know, well, that is another story. I have been talking about the dignity and the wonders of eternity, and meanwhile you have a few bozos in your circle of believers, people in your church that you really cannot stand very much, and they do not like you too much either. It is time to start getting over it and to seek the unity that Jesus prayed for and paid for. He prayed that we would forgive one another as he has forgiven us. He prayed that we would be one as he and the Father are one.

All races in the vision of heaven are a unity, “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes” (Revelation 7:9, ESV). I was part of a broadcast ministry for many years, and its theme song was, “By the sea of crystal saints in glory stand, myriads in number drawn from every land.” That vision of people from every nation drawn to Jesus Christ is a wonderful part of the unity of Christians. Here again, we have to have that vision of eternity, of different people groups brought together, and then take that as a powerful weapon against racism, against discrimination, against feeling superior to people of a different culture or background. Instead, we have that vision of all nations and tribes and languages who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ united and standing before his throne and rejoicing in him forever.

This also means that we should get rid of many of the divisions that exist between Christians and between different churches and different denominations. Maybe you have heard the story of an angel giving someone a tour of heaven. They visited various sites, and then they came near a particular group of people who were together. The angel said, “Shh, do not make any noise and do not let them see you.” So they sneaked around that particular group and did not make any noise and stayed low until they were past them and then moved on. Then the person getting the tour asked the angel, “Who were those people?” And the angel said, “We did not want to make any noise because they think they are the only ones here.” Of course, that is just a story. But sometimes you can be part of a denomination or a group of people where you act and think as though you are the only ones who are going to make it. No. When you see the vision of people from so many different people groups and from so many different backgrounds who love the Lord Jesus Christ united, then eternity gives you inspiration and energy for unity right now.

8. Urgency

Eternity also gives a sense of urgency. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50, ESV). Jesus says, “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, ESV), and “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5, ESV). Unless you have the life of God in you now, you will not have the life of God in you for eternity. You cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That means we have a small time frame to be born again ourselves and to bring the new life and the message of new life and rebirth to other people.

In a church I served, there was a young man who gave his mom a packet. He told his mom that this was a packet of wonder seeds, and if you planted them and put them in a window, within a couple of days you would have a plant and it would already be flowering. The mom took that packet from her son and put it in some nice black dirt in a pot and put it in the window there in March and let the sun pour in on that plant, and nothing happened. She waited a few more days, nothing happened. A week or two went by, nothing happened. Nothing was going on with those wonder seeds. Her son showed up, and it was April 1 that day, and he said, “April fools, Mom.” They were not really seeds. They were the little tips of turkey beaks that he had gotten from a nearby turkey farm, and he had pretended they were seeds. A turkey beak is not going to grow into a flower because it does not have a flower’s life in it. A person who is not reborn by faith in Jesus Christ is not going to inherit the kingdom of God because you do not have that kingdom life in you.

If you have that kingdom life, you have to get the good news of Jesus Christ to others. Jesus spoke of eternity in terms of an eternal banquet. He said that there are people who are going to have all kinds of excuses for putting it off and not accepting the invitation, and those people are going to miss out completely (Luke 14:16–24, ESV). There were others who might listen to the invitation and think, “Yes, I want to do that,” but then when they got inside the wedding hall, they were not clothed rightly, even though they had been offered the right clothes for the wedding feast. The master comes and throws the person without the right clothing into the outer darkness (Matthew 22:11–13, ESV). Those who declined the invitation and those who thought they could skate by on an invitation without accepting the robes of Christ’s righteousness miss out on the eternal banquet and get eternal hell instead.

Knowing this gives us a sense of urgency that we must work while it is day. We must make the best use of the time because the days are evil (John 9:4; Ephesians 5:16, ESV). It is urgent to trust Jesus yourself. Even though I may be speaking to Christian leaders, people who are leaders in the church, do not take that for granted. There have been many phony leaders or people who wanted to do good things but who had never experienced rebirth, the new life of Jesus Christ. It is also urgent to help others meet the Savior and to receive his Holy Spirit and to be born again through new life in him.

9. Priority

This focus on eternity also helps us get our priorities straight. If you have some college students and they think the most important thing about college is the college experience, that partying and having a good time is what college is for, they are going to miss out on the main point of college. It may be fine to have fun with friends and do some things that are part of a college experience. It might not be all work all the time and being grim. But if you never study, if you do not learn a single thing in college, if you exit college having learned nothing to prepare you for the rest of your life and have learned no marketable job skills, then you blew college. You missed the main point. College is not ultimate in and of itself. You understand what college is for when you understand it as preparation for what comes after. You understand what life is for when you know that it is preparation for what comes after. Our life now matters not just for its own sake, but because it is leading up to another life, and so you put your priorities on training for that life.

Athletes train in order to pursue the prize. They know that they have to train in order to compete successfully and to run well. The apostle Paul says, “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1 Corinthians 9:25). We need to train and discipline ourselves in godliness and in walking with the Lord, because our highest priority is on pleasing the Lord and on seeing him and living with him forever. And we want to train ourselves in godliness. “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:8).

You can commune with God and have more of the delight of eternity in your life right now. When you make a priority of focusing on God and on the life he has promised in the future, it will shed more light and more joy right now into your life. And of course, it will prepare you for

that life to come, either when you die or when Jesus Christ comes back again. You get your priorities straight when you have eternity on your mind.

10. Energy

And finally, I want to talk about the energy that comes from the awareness of eternity. Paul says, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14, NIV). Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20, NIV). It is easy to get tired. It is easy to feel like packing it in when you are a Christian, and especially when you are a leader in Christianity. When you are leading other people and you get discouraged or tired and worn down, or when you are trying to witness to other people and win them to Christ and you are not having the success you would like, you feel like your energy is running down. And when you think again of the goal, of the heavenward calling that you have, you get a new burst of energy.

Scripture speaks of people who were longing for a better country, a heavenly one, and they lived by faith (Hebrews 11:16). This faith in things that lay ahead, in things that were not yet seen, inspired them in this life to be the great heroes of history, the great heroes of faith. It energized them. “We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:1, NIV). We have a home waiting for us. And when you know what home is waiting for you, it makes all the difference. Jesus said that he has gone to prepare a home for us (John 14:2–3, NIV). What a blessing it is to know that our life, as we live for Christ, is headed toward home.

So those are ten reasons why eternity matters. Keeping your eye on eternity inspires bravery, gives you a sense of reality and puts you in touch with the real world, helps you to know what real prosperity is as you store up treasure in heaven, makes you generous with those who cannot pay you back because God pays you back at the resurrection of the righteous, inspires you to purity because you want to see Jesus and you know he is pure, gives you dignity in knowing that you will reign with Christ and helps you to recognize dignity in others who are going to be reigning with Christ, gives us a vision of unity and strength to fight against racism and needless division among the people of God, gives a sense of urgency that we must be born again and that we must help other people to know the way to be born again in Jesus Christ, helps us to have the right priority and to realize that this life is preparation for the life to come, and it gives us energy. It energizes us knowing what awaits us.

When I was a boy, we had a pony, and his name was Frosty. Frosty was a cagey old pony. In fact, he was a lot older than I was at the time. He did not really like to be ridden. When I would go out to saddle him up, he would be ornery. I would climb on, and the first thing he would do was try to rear and dump me off the back. When that did not work, he would just stand there and not move, standing stock still because he did not want to do any work. Finally, I would whack him a couple of times and dig in my heels, and he would start to move. The first thing he would do then was go to the nearest building or the nearest post to try to rub me off.

When all of his efforts to get out of going for a ride had failed, we would head off down the trail. We would go a while, and suddenly, the poor animal would suffer a crippling injury. Frosty would limp, and the limp would become more severe and then more severe. Finally, my heart

could take no more, and I would turn Frosty around because I did not want to cause further injury to his damaged limb. As soon as I turned around, that horse was instantly healed. He was filled with energy. It was a miracle. He would run like the wind all the way home.

When we go through life and think that all that is ahead of us is getting older, declining health, and then death, we do not look forward to it. Our energy declines, and our verve for life diminishes because it seems like it is all downhill. But when we look forward to the future that God has in store for us, we are like that old pony knowing where he is headed. He is headed home. All of a sudden, what you thought hurt does not hurt so much. All of a sudden, that energy you did not have is doubled because you are headed for home. Maybe that is the best thing of all that can be said about eternity, and maybe the biggest reason why eternity matters even now. It is home.

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1. Bravery

- What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” (1 Cor 15:32)
- Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. (Heb 11:35)
- Braving birth pangs for joy of child. (John 16:21)
- “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” (Jim Elliot)

2. Reality

- “Welcome to the real world.”
- For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Cor 4:17-18)

3. Prosperity

- Treasure in heaven
- Rich farmer plans early retirement
- Rich man and Lazarus
- “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?”

4. Generosity

- When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14:12-14)
- Use worldly wealth to make friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you may be welcomed into eternal dwellings. (Luke 16:9)

5. Purity

- When he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)
- You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming... in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

6. Dignity

- Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ... Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! (1 Cor 6:1-3)
- To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne (Rev 3:21).
- You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10).
- They will reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

7. Unity

- “To dwell above with saints in love—oh, that will sure be glory. To dwell below with saints we know—well, that’s another story.”
- All races: “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes” (Rev 7:9).
- All Christ-exalting, Bible-believing churches

8. Urgency

- Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50).
- Eternal banquet (Matt 22:1-14)
 - accept invitation without delay or excuses
 - be sure to accept and put on the wedding clothes Christ provides.
- Urgent to trust the Savior yourself.
- Urgent to help others meet the Savior.

9. Priority

- **College students:** studying or partying? Is college the ultimate, or is it mainly preparation for what comes after?
- **Athletes** train in order to pursue the prize: Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. (1 Cor 9:25)
- Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Tim 4:8)

10. Energy

- I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus... Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:14,20).
- They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one (Heb 11:16).
- We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven (2 Cor 5:1).

Why eternity matters now: Ten words ending in Y

1. bravery
2. reality
3. prosperity
4. generosity
5. purity
6. dignity
7. unity
8. urgency
9. priority
10. energy