

Longing For Home

Have you ever heard the phrase “That person is so heavenly minded that they're of no earthly use”? The warning is clear: if you focus too much on heavenly things then you'll become useless so it's best to keep at least one foot firmly planted on Earth. However, I have to ask: is that really a Biblical sentiment? Does the Bible warn us against becoming too heavenly minded?

I believe the answer is a firm *no*. Instead it says the opposite! The Bible urges Christians to be even *more* heavenly minded. This is taught throughout the Bible.

For example, take a look at Matthew 6. In this passage Jesus commands people to not lay up their treasures on Earth. Instead He wants people to lay up their treasures in Heaven. Why? Jesus explains:

Matthew 6:19-21: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**

Do you see verse 21? Jesus wants us to lay up treasures in Heaven *so that our heart will be focused on Heaven*. Jesus never said “Whatever you do, don't think too much about Heaven!” He *wants* our heart to be set on it.

This idea is expanded upon in Hebrews 11, which is sometimes called the Hall of Fame for people of faith. This chapter lists person after person who exhibited extraordinary faith, and holds them up as shining examples for us to follow. At the end of this list we are told why these people had the courage

to act as they did:

Hebrews 11:13-16: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now **they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly**: wherefore **God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.**”

Do you see what these verses are saying? The reason Abraham, Noah, and the rest were able to act with such great faith was because they desired a “better country” – a *heavenly* one. Their mind was so firmly fixed on Heaven that they were willing to make tremendous sacrifices. They saw themselves as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” – and *because* of that they were able to serve God with incredible effectiveness. Since they weren't tied to this world, they were willing to give up the things of this world. Their heart was somewhere else.

I've heard people say it's selfish to long for Heaven, but the Bible tells us that being “heavenly minded” pleases God tremendously. Verse 16 tells us that *because* these people had their hearts set on Heaven, God was “not ashamed to be called their God.” In fact, it goes further to say that God *prepared for them a city*. Since these people longed for a better country, the Lord was going to give it to them. Since these people sacrificed earthly things, the Lord was going to give them heavenly things in return. God was *honored*, not appalled, at their passionate longing for Heaven!

The apostle Paul was definitely heavenly minded. He

longed to go to his Heavenly home:

Philippians 1:21-24: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”

Paul didn't say “Longing for Heaven is bad! Keep your mind here on earth because it's selfish to want to be with Jesus.” Instead Paul made it clear that dying was *gain*. He said it's “far better” to depart and be with Christ than to stay here. Although Paul recognized the fact that the churches needed him, he clearly had a passionate desire to “depart, and to be with Christ.” That was what he really wanted – and that desire is never condemned anywhere in the Bible.

The reason Paul longed for Heaven wasn't because he was mired in defeat and had no hope for the future. Instead he realized what many people fail to understand: our life doesn't end when the Lord calls us to Heaven! Instead it actually gets *much better*. For Christians dying doesn't end life; instead it starts a whole new chapter that's so glorious and amazing the Bible says it “cannot be compared” to even the greatest trials and struggles of our life here. Paul knew that he would *improve* his life by moving to Heaven – and the same can be said for the “Hall of Faith” people who are listed in Hebrews 11.

After the Last Supper, when Judas had departed to betray Christ, the Lord took His disciples for a walk. In those precious last moments before His crucifixion the Lord told them this:

John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Jesus said that although the time of His departure was at hand, His disciples weren't to “be troubled” about it. The reason He was going away was so He could prepare a place for them. One day He would come back and get them so they could be with Him forever. In other words, the Bridegroom was leaving to prepare a home for His Bride, and one day He would come back and get her so they could be together for eternity.

Do you honestly think the Lord wants His Bride to be *indifferent* at the prospect of finally going home and being with Him? Do you think it pleases Him when she puts all thoughts of her future with Him out of her mind and instead focuses on the things of this world (which are rapidly passing away)? The first and greatest commandment is to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. How can we passionately love God and yet *not* want to go Home so that we might be with Him? Isn't wanting to be with God part of loving Him?

It's true that we have work to do in this world, but the thing that enabled the great people of faith to do what they did was their *longing for Heaven*. *Because* their heart wasn't set on this world they were able to make great sacrifices and accomplish great things. Longing for Heaven doesn't make people ineffective; instead it frees them from the “cares of this world” which distract them from God and enables them to pursue the Lord's will with less hesitation.

I'm concerned that some Christians are so earthly minded they're of no Heavenly good. That's something Christ *did* warn us about:

Mark 4:18-19: “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in,

choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

Have we become so distracted by the “cares of this world” that we can no longer see straight? What's *really* distracting us from the Lord: is it Heaven, or is it the world in which we live?

I don't think we're in any danger of being so Heavenly minded that we're of no Earthly use. That's simply not possible. However, it's quite possible that we may be so Earthly minded that we're of no Heavenly use – and far too many people fall into that category.