

# ***Basic Discipleship***

## ***A Course On New Testament Discipleship***

### ***Topic #8***

## ***DEVELOPING AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE***

**Objectives:** As a result of the study of this topic we want to be able:

1. To distinguish between the judgment the unsaved will face for sin, and the judgment that Christians will face for their \_\_\_\_\_.
2. To understand & to apply the command of Christ to store up treasure in Heaven, while being motivated to obey based on the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
3. To discern the basis by which God will grant heavenly rewards & crowns, and to know the relationship of our rewards to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.
4. To be able to clearly define the term 'steward' & to be able to identify at least eight general areas, in which God will \_\_\_\_\_ our stewardship.
5. To ascertain the difference between those things that are eternal vs. those things that are of temporal & the role of the \_\_\_\_\_ is determining each.
6. To memorize \_\_\_\_\_ verses of Scripture on developing an eternal perspective.

### ***Introduction***

*God calls us to be wise master builders because God wants us to invest our lives \_\_\_\_\_ just for the here and now, but for eternity future. There is coming a day, maybe today, when either by death or by rapture, that our lives on earth will end. If we are \_\_\_\_\_, we will face not the judgment of the lost, but the judgment of the just. Concerning this judgment, the Apostle Paul instructs the believers in Rome, "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). The judgment of believers will obviously not be a judgment to determine where we will spend eternity. The Bible is very \_\_\_\_\_ that God's declaration concerning our guilt has already been settled. Jesus plainly said, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:17-18). God's judgment for Heaven or \_\_\_\_\_ is determined & forever settled at the moment of death based on what you have done with God's Son. This lesson concerns the judgment that born again believers will face. The 'judgment of the just' will determine how you will be rewarded throughout eternity \_\_\_\_\_ on how you invested your life \_\_\_\_\_ you have received God's salvation. True Christians will face a judgment, not for their sin, but for their service. It is very important that as God's people consider their coming future judgment so that we might \_\_\_\_\_ in light of it.*

## I. We Need to Recognize the Shortness of Life on Earth

A repeated theme through the Bible concerns the brevity of \_\_\_\_\_. To us, life sometimes seems very very long because we tend to measure it in \_\_\_\_\_. But God wants us to consider our lives in light of eternity and then we can see clearly how \_\_\_\_\_ it is. In describing our lives Job said, “*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle*” (Job 7:6). And when Job refers to the royal couriers who hastened in their mission he said, “*Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away*” (Job 9:25). Furthermore, in describing the shortness of life Job instructs us, “*Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain*” (Job 14:1–2). Our \_\_\_\_\_ turn into years, and our years turn into decades, and before long, our life has expired. For this reason, it is very important that as Christians we renew our minds as to how short life is so that we do not waste our lives but rather \_\_\_\_\_ our lives. God’s Word plainly teaches that the manner in which we invest this small slice of \_\_\_\_\_, will determine how we will be rewarded when we go to Heaven.

### A. Recognizing life is short—we should set our \_\_\_\_\_ on God.

1. Psalm 39, was written by David written during the last years of his \_\_\_\_.
2. While this psalm cannot be connected to any specific event in his \_\_\_\_\_, it teaches us some lifelong lessons of our need to set our hope on God.
3. The psalm opens with David recounting a previous prayer he made, when asking God for help by not speaking foolishly before the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. King David feared that if he began to speak at all—that he might speak wrongly before the lost about God by complaining, & so he wisely kept within some strong thoughts that he chose \_\_\_\_\_ to express publicly.
5. Like a “**fire**” within him, *his words burned to come out* but he \_\_\_\_\_ them in fearing that he might regret his words—notice that his **hope** is in God:

**1** I said, “I will keep watch over my ways So that I do not sin with my tongue; I will keep watch over my mouth as with a muzzle While the wicked are in my presence.”

**2** I was mute and silent, I refused to say even something good, And my pain was stirred up. **3** My heart was hot within me, While I was musing the fire burned;

**Then I spoke with my tongue: 4** “LORD, let me know my end, And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am.

6. David’s silence is broken in verse four with a humble prayer to \_\_\_\_\_.
7. While he was wise in not speaking his fears & doubts before **the wicked**, he does pour out—his fears and his frustrations—before the \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Notice how King David in verse four asks God for wisdom—specifically, wisdom to know—the shortness and—the transitory nature—of \_\_\_\_\_.

4 “LORD, let me know my end, And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am.

9. Notice David’s “hope” in God—as his \_\_\_\_\_ continues—in verses 5-7:

5 “Behold, You have made my days like handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Certainly all mankind standing is a mere breath. Selah 6 “Certainly every person walks around as a fleeting shadow; They certainly make an uproar for nothing; He amasses riches and does not know who will gather them. 7 “And now, LORD, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.

10. David was not praying to know—the date of his death—or when his \_\_\_\_\_ would end, but rather he was praying for an accurate assessment of life.

11. He prays here in verse 4, “let me know my end, And what is the extent of my days” and then he acknowledges to God that he wants to live with the reality—of the \_\_\_\_\_ of life as he states in verse five:

5 “Behold, You have made my days like handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Certainly all mankind standing is a mere breath.

12. David wants God to help \_\_\_\_\_ to appreciate ‘the brevity’ of human life, especially now as David is no longer a shepherd boy, but an older man.

13. He realizes how short life is and he wants to invest the remainder \_\_\_\_\_.

14. In Bible days—the Hebrew people—measured ‘short distances’ with “handbreadths” which was one of the smallest units of measurement in ancient Israel—it is equivalent to ‘a couple of inches’ (Ex. 25:\_\_\_\_\_).

15. The newer translations render the Hebrew adjective as “hand width” because it was the width of four fingers (1 Kings 7:26; 2 Chron. 4:5; Ezekiel 40:5,13; 43:13) — meaning a very \_\_\_\_\_ distance.

16. And so, since life is short like “a mere breath” knowing that the many pursuits of this life—are relatively “insignificant” in view of the short time that we live, David prays that God will grip his with this \_\_\_\_\_.

17. At the end of verse 5 — he adds a “Selah” — a musical pause so one can pause and reflect—and this “Selah” is an appropriate \_\_\_\_\_ for each one reading to pause and to think of the shortness & the fragility of his life.

18. I think one of the reasons God could refer to David as “**a man after His own heart**” (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22) was because this champion, this warrior king, this celebrity & song writer, had a \_\_\_\_\_ perspective.
19. David could easily have thought “**more highly of himself**” (Rom. 12:3) than he should have — but he recognized — that he like all men were nothing more than a vapor — a \_\_\_\_\_ of steam — “**a mere breath.**”
20. David also knows that most have \_\_\_ really contemplated the brevity of life as seen by the philosophy of life most people have, stated in verse 6:

“**Certainly every person walks around as a fleeting shadow; They certainly make an uproar for nothing; He amasses riches and does not know who will gather them.**”

21. God by David tells us that “**every person walks around as a fleeting shadow**” in that most live a life—chasing shadows—they are busy amassing riches—all the while ignoring what God calls \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Most people think this is “**the land of reality**” when this is in many ways “**the land of shadows**” & Heaven which is forever, is the land of \_\_\_\_\_.
23. The Apostle Paul said, “**while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18).**
24. In verse 7, David draws a conclusion by answering his \_\_\_\_\_ question:  

**7 “And now, LORD, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.**
25. Perceiving how short this life really is in comparison to eternity, drove David to put his expectation and “**hope**” in the \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Sadly, lost people have a “**this life only**” mentality, and so they live their lives not centered in God—but in \_\_\_\_\_, circumstances, fame & fortune.
27. What is even sadder is *when a believer* has lost focus such that his desire and expectations are centered on the temporal—instead of the \_\_\_\_\_.
28. Recognizing life is short—may we like David “**wait**” on God as we \_\_\_\_\_ to value what He values so that we can say to God, “**My hope is in you.**”

**B. Recognizing life is short—we should reflect on our \_\_\_\_\_.**

1. Psalm \_\_\_ is no doubt the oldest of all the psalms, because it was written by “**Moses the man of God**” — as “**a prayer**” to God in the wilderness.

2. In the opening twelve verses Psalm 90—Moses underscores our need to consider our mortality because of the transitory nature of human \_\_\_\_.
3. He begins the psalm—by reminding us—that God is *the opposite* of us as he compares God’s “**eternal nature**” with our “**transitory nature**” such that we can find \_\_\_\_\_ from the hardships of life in God.

1 **Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. 3 You turn mortals back into dust And say, “Return, you sons of mankind.” 4 For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or like a watch in the night. 5 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; In the morning they are like grass that sprouts anew. 6 In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; Toward evening it wilts and withers away.**

4. Since God is unchangeable & He never \_\_\_\_\_ to be God, that makes Him our “**dwelling place**” or refuge where we can find rest & safety.
5. And this “**protection**” (**NET**) can be found for “**all generation**” because God has always been here even—before the mighty **mountains** because it was \_\_\_\_\_ who formed the earth—and the world and all—that is in it.
6. By contrast—we are mere mortals created by God—whose bodies will “**turn back into dust**” from where we came—this alluding to the \_\_\_\_\_ in Genesis 3:19 — “**For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.**”
7. This of course, was part of the curse on man which reminds us that \_\_\_\_\_ are not in charge but God is in charge, such that no matter how wise or strong or great we may think we are—God deserves our full allegiance.
8. By the way, when you bury your dead which biblically & historically is what believers have always done—you are affirming God’s \_\_\_\_\_ that He will resurrect out of the **dust** with our bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44).
9. Then, for a second time, underscoring God’s eternity \_\_\_\_\_ writes:

**For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday  
when it passes by, Or like a watch in the night.**

10. For our eternal God, “**a thousand years**” seems like a single day or like “**a watch in the night**” which was about \_\_\_\_\_ hours long.
11. “**A thousand years**” which to us may seem so long — when compared to God’s eternity — “**a thousand years**” are reduced to \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Of course, the Apostle Peter reminds us that the converse is \_\_\_\_\_:

**8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day (2 Peter 3:8).**

13. Yet, our years are so quick—they are like “a flood” (90:5) that quickly carries things off before we can retrieve them, or the years of our \_\_\_\_\_ our “like grass” that “sprouts” & “flourishes” & then “withers away.”

14. This \_\_\_\_\_ “Moses the man of God” to continue his “prayer” in vs. 7:

**7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And we have been terrified by Your wrath. 8 You have placed our guilty deeds before You, Our hidden sins in the light of Your presence. 9 For all our days have dwindled away in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh.**

15. We as humans live a relatively short time because our sin brings death, because death \_\_\_\_\_ in response to God’s just “wrath” (Romans 6:23).

16. **Moses**, acknowledges that God’s “anger” against mankind is not \_\_\_\_\_ or unreasonable—or unearned—for our outward sins—but also for our “hidden sins” because there are no sins that can be “hidden” from God.

17. None can escape, *for one aspect* of God’s justice for \_\_\_\_\_ is physical death.

18. Even though Jesus paid the penalty for our sins & freed us from Hell if we have trusted Him—the consequences of our sins still lead to \_\_\_\_\_.

19. **Moses** wrote this Psalm 90—during his 40 years in the desert wilderness where he witnessed the “watch” around the camp at night & the rush of a mountain flood with the grass sprouting & then dying in the hot \_\_\_\_\_.

20. **Moses** witnessed an entire generation “twenty years old and upward” (Numbers 14:29) that perished in the wilderness such that we he said after \_\_\_\_\_ years of wandering “our years (are) like a sigh” (90:9).

21. *It is in this context* that he makes the \_\_\_\_\_ of these *often-quoted* verses:

**10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is only trouble and tragedy; For it quickly passes, and we disappear. 11 Who understands the power of Your anger And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? 12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.**

22. It is interesting that he said the normal lifespan in his day was **70 years**, in that as he lived to be 120—Aaron lived to 123 & Joshua died at \_\_\_\_.
23. Their ages were a rare exception because by this time in human history, as the ages of people continued to drop after the Flood, the average \_\_\_\_ was **70**—given neither as a promise or a limit, but as a general estimate.
24. His stress is not on our long we live—but how short we live—years \_\_\_\_ with “**trouble and tragedy**” — in this fallen world that “**quickly**” go by.
25. So, in light of who we are & who God is, notice what he \_\_\_\_ to God:

**12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.**

26. When he says, “**teach us to number our days**” he is asking for “**wisdom**” knowing that this is something that must be learned & is \_\_\_\_ automatic.
27. Most people live *with little awareness* of really how short life is—and the younger one is—he tends to think that his \_\_\_\_\_ are without number.
28. We tend to prioritize what we think is important—and so people can count their money and count their goods and maybe even their years, but those \_\_\_\_\_ are made up of “**days**” that represent a lifetime.
29. We need to live with a sense of our mortality, so as to \_\_\_\_\_ our lives.
30. When we make **Moses’** prayer our prayer and God answers this prayer, showing us how to “**number our days**” — then He will give us “**a heart of wisdom**” — which is not only for the mind — but for the \_\_\_\_ too.

**C. Recognizing life is short—we should live in humble dependence on God.**

1. James reminds us that because life is so temporal—that we must not \_\_\_\_ arrogantly but must live in humility if we are going to invest in eternity.
2. In James 4:13-16 he reminds us that because our life is like **a vapor** we must \_\_\_\_ have an attitude of independence from God but of humility:

**13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.**

3. James pictures for us a self-centered person living his or her life, not in light of eternity — but only for — the here and \_\_\_\_\_.

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.”

4. His illustration is of a 1st century shrewd businessman—who would have been considered ‘**a great success**’ — was nothing in the eyes of God ‘**a successful failure**’ because he made his \_\_\_\_\_ without God.
5. James underscores for us that this man had **the wrong attitude**, and that — this businessman \_\_\_\_\_ **the wrong assumption**.
6. His ‘**attitude**’ was wrong—in that he was self-sufficient and in that he acted independently of God—never praying or never even consulting the Lord in his travel plans to “**go to**” the next “**city**” on his \_\_\_\_\_.
7. He never prayed, “**Lord, where would You have me to go?**” — but to the contrary — he spread out his map — and he looked at the \_\_\_\_\_ of business and he thought — “**That’s the city where I am going!**”
8. But not only did he plan the city that he would go to—he also determined the period of time—for which he would \_\_\_\_\_.

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year

9. He took out his calendar & reasoned, “**This is what I am going to do next year**” without ever stopping—to ask what God thought about it, he just assumed — that he had 365 days to use — as he saw \_\_\_\_\_.
10. His self-confidence is seen in that he not only determines the place he wanted to go—and the period of time that he wanted to stay, he even determined — his \_\_\_\_\_ with its calculated outcome.
11. He reasoned within himself that he would “**engage in business**” seemingly indicating that he was some kind of merchant for the word “**business**” is the Greek word for our word ‘**emporium**’ for a center of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. And he also — very confidently predicted and boasted — that he would “**make a profit**” as sadly it was \_\_\_ prayer that had him—but “**profit**.”

“Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.”

13. The person that James describes in his illustration—is not interested in eternal treasure but only in earthly profits that \_\_\_ had all mapped out.
14. We must not forget that is this context—James is addressing prayerless Christians and so—without judging them—we must take inventory of ourselves because—we can be guilty of doing—the very \_\_\_\_\_ thing.
15. It may not be in the world of business—but it could be—in the world of family or the world of marriage or in the world of education or \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Each of us might ask ourselves about the past week as to how much time, if any we took communing with God and asking Him about our \_\_\_\_\_.
17. The plans of the man in James’ illustration were not wrong in themselves, the man’s problem was his ‘**wrong attitude**’ in that he did not consider his complete dependence on \_\_\_\_\_ (cf. Luke 12:18-20; John 15:5).
18. If we are to live with an eternal perspective — then we must plan our day with the Lord—which has a \_\_\_\_\_ of changing one’s perspective.
19. Sadly, many of us—live like this shrewd businessman—we are believers in Jesus Christ — but \_\_\_\_\_ are living — like ‘**practical atheists.**’
20. Please understand, again this passage is not—a prohibition against planning because the Bible is very clear that we should plan \_\_\_\_\_.
21. For instance, in Proverbs chapter \_\_\_\_\_, King Solomon wrote (6:6-8):

**6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise,  
7 Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, 8 Prepares her food  
in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest.**

22. This involves ‘**planning**’ — such that in a ‘**season of plenty**’ we should set aside for the future — for \_\_\_\_\_ here is a — ‘**season of need.**’
23. Likewise, ‘planning’ is seen in Ephesians 5:16 the Apostle Paul instructs \_\_\_\_\_ to, “**make the most of our time, because the days are evil.**”
24. Even the Lord Jesus in describing what a true disciple looks like, He asks us to count the \_\_\_\_\_ in following Him (Luke 14:28-30):

**28 “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’”**

25. Neither James nor Jesus nor wise Solomon would rebuke these merchants for their plans & for that matter would not condemn their desire to make a profit—which happens to be a good thing—when you are \_\_\_ business.
26. James is not rebuking them—for their “**occupation**” or even for their “**anticipation**” but for the “**secularization**” of their hearts & \_\_\_\_\_.
27. God is not down on planning or profits—but when you leave Him \_\_\_\_\_.
28. James is describing someone — who is not thinking — about God’s glory, and God’s will — and God’s plans — and God’s kingdom — from start to finish — there is not — a word about God — in their \_\_\_\_\_.
29. James underscores for us that this man had \_\_\_ only **the wrong attitude**, but in verse 14—that this businessman also made **the wrong assumption**.

**14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.**

30. Two truths you can count on in this life about the future—one is that only God knows the future & the other—is that we do not \_\_\_\_\_ the future.
31. Tomorrow’s circumstances are totally uncertain—you could go home from church today — and get a phone call — and in a moment’s time everything will change such that your life takes a \_\_\_\_\_ direction.
32. James reminds that we do not know what “**life will be like tomorrow**” and so—he would rebuke us in our pride when we underestimate our own limitations & make plans apart from our constant need for \_\_\_\_.

**15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”**

**16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.**

33. It is nothing but sheer “**arrogance**” (4:16) that makes us think that we can live and move and have our being independent of God—for such “**arrogance**” is the root of most \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 14:12-15; Genesis 3:5-7).
34. There are a lot of the people in the cemetery this day—who are not here, not because they — ran out of plans — but because they ran out of \_\_\_\_\_, which is the very truth that James & God wants us to be gripped by.
35. If we live in light of eternity — then we must recognize life is very short, so that as fragile humans we set our \_\_\_\_\_ on God depending on Him.