

Eternal Life

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No matter how large a number is, it is finite: it is always possible to mention a number that is larger. Scientists speak of the “googol.” It is a one, followed by 100 zeros. The googol is inconceivably large. But then think of the “googolplexes” which is the googol raised to the power of the google(th). It is said, that if this number were written out, there would not be space on earth to contain the pages required. In fact, they would more than fill our galaxy!

Such a number as this is so large, boundless and infinite that it is impossible to comprehend. The same could be said about the Biblical truth concerning eternal life. The concept of eternal life is immeasurable and cannot fully be comprehended with our own finite minds. Our human minds have limits attached to them. The fact that something could never end becomes a truth that we cannot fully grasp with our human minds and yet we can and must accept it by faith. We can believe what the Bible says. God promises eternal life to every believing sinner.

This study is all about eternal life. We are going to investigate the teaching of eternal life as it is unfolded to us in Scripture. We will answer several questions from the Bible about the subject of eternal life. After all, if we are going to really understand the teaching on eternal life, then we must look to the Bible for the answers.

1. How long does eternal life last?

John 3:15-16

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The words “eternal” and “everlasting” come from the same Greek word “aionios” which means “perpetual,” “without beginning or end” or “never to cease.” This means that the life, which Jesus gives to the believing sinner, is a life that has no end. In fact, eternal life is the life

of God implanted within our spirit. Therefore, the life that God gives to us (His own life) has no beginning or end (Psalms 90:2; Genesis 21:33). The eternal life that we have is everlasting because God is everlasting in existence. You cannot lose this life that Jesus gives to you. Why is this true? Simply because it's everlasting life.

A simple definition of eternal life that we will discover to be true throughout these messages is this:

“Eternal life is the entrance of the spiritual life of God’s Son into our own spirit at the time of conversion. It is a new experience of life that involves both a quantity and quality of life, which will be realized both in the present and future life of the believer.”

For now, we are centering our attention upon the quantity of this new life that we have received at salvation. Quantity has to do with an indefinite amount and measure of something, a considerable or great amount. As to quantity, we must understand that this new life is eternal in its nature. It will last forever. Arminian teaching is still around today and in full bloom. The Arminian believes that he or she can lose salvation. The point is this. If we are promised everlasting or perpetual life, how can we lose it?

I always ask the objector this question, “If everlasting does not mean everlasting, then what does it mean?” This question poses a problem to the person who wants to accept the truth about the meaning of words. When God says that He gives to us eternal or everlasting life, He means what He says! If we could lose eternal life, then God did not mean what He said because it would no longer be eternal. I know that legalistic people trying to earn eternal life and salvation attach conditions to eternal life. People will say that you must endure to the end or else you will not have eternal life. Oh my friend, what happens if you do not endure to the end? Do you lose eternal life? How can you lose eternal life? If something is eternal how can you lose it? There are many people that do not understand the meaning of simple words. Eternal means eternal and God promises to every believer eternal life. This is the promise of eternal security. Eternal security rests in the promise of eternal life. You cannot have one without the other. Dear friend, the salvation that God gives to us cannot be lost because salvation consists of eternal life.

Think of this for a moment. If you can do something to lose eternal life, then one terrible conclusion must be faced: God is a liar.

In John 17:2 Jesus prayer a prayer of intercession and said:
“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he (the Son) should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

Jesus said that He as the Son would give eternal life to those people that the Father gave to the Son. Let me ask you a question. Did Jesus lie when He said this? If you say that eternal life can be lost then you make Jesus out to be a liar. That my friend is utter blasphemy!

In John 5:24, Jesus also said:
“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Did Jesus lie when He said this? How can Jesus lie when He is God? You cannot get around it. If eternal life can be lost then you make God the Son to be a liar because He clearly promises eternal life to those who believe on Him. The child of God is secure because of the promise that Jesus made. Jesus cannot lie! There are some things that God cannot do. One thing God cannot do is lie!

Titus 1:2
“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”

Here we see that God the Father promises eternal life to His elect even before the world was ever created. God’s plan of salvation and eternal life for sinful mankind was determined and decreed before man was even created. If this is true, then how can man undo that which God has decreed to be so even before the universe was ever created? Man cannot undo the eternal decrees of God! God designed for people to have eternal life so that they can be His eternally and never be lost. The blueprint design concerning eternal life was actually drawn up by God before the blueprint for the world was ever designed or written. You cannot undo the decree of God the Father

and make Him out to be a liar. It is impossible for Him to say anything untruthful (“God, that cannot lie”).

If you believe that you can lose eternal life, then you are saying that eternal does not mean eternal and that both the Son and Father did not mean what they said. You are actually concluding that both the Son and the Father are liars.

In John 10:27-28 Jesus said:

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

Verse 26 verifies that a person cannot be one of Christ’s own sheep when they fail to believe on Him for salvation. This must mean that the opposite is true. You must believe on Him in order to be His sheep. Verse 27 verifies the truth that those who are His sheep know Christ and follow Him. The following is not the condition for eternal life but the result of having eternal life (John 10:10). Jesus promises a new kind of eternal life that results in a new obedient walk and new way of life. Verse 28 then goes on to say that Christ’s sheep can never be lost because He promises them this eternal life. Verse 28 is simply continuing the general thoughts and conclusions about Christ’s sheep. It is not a verse that promises eternal life on any condition of following as some conclude by looking back at verse 27. John is merely making mention of the many facts related to Christ’s sheep. One fact is that they all have a new way of life (27) and the other fact is that they all have eternal life (28). These facts are unrelated and are not to be construed together.

This eternal life is not conditional on the behavior of the sheep. If our eternal life was conditional upon our behavior and actions, then we all would be hopelessly condemned for we are all law breakers and cannot keep the law perfectly before God (Galatians 3:10; James 3:10). This is the clearest revelation given in all the Word of God concerning the promise of eternal or everlasting life. Jesus says that we have the promise of eternal life (“they shall never perish”). If you cannot believe that, then what can you believe? Because we have been given and unending life, this means that we will never perish in

Hell and experience spiritual ruin. Everlasting life is the basis for eternal security. If any sheep of Christ ever perished, then the Lord Jesus would have been guilty of failing to keep a promise, and this is not possible. Jesus Christ is God, and He cannot fail. He has promised in this verse that no sheep of His will ever spend eternity in hell.

Jesus then promises that we have this eternal life by using the picture of no person being able to snatch us from the Father's hand (28b-29). Arminian teachers try to extrapolate from this text that although no person can remove us from the Father's hand, we can remove ourselves from his hand. Let's be honest with ourselves today. Is this all that Christ intended to mean from this text? Did Christ only intend to convey that we have eternal life in one sense; that sense being that no other person can cause us to be removed from the Father's hand of security? Did Christ really mean that we couldn't have eternal life in another sense; that sense being that we ourselves can jump out of the Father's hand of security? Must we try to reason into the text something that is not there?

Dear friend, if you want to try and twist what Christ is teaching in this verse, then you are adding to the Word of God! This kind of conjecture or reasoning goes beyond the obvious meaning of the text. Christ is saying that we all have eternal life and can never lose this life because it is eternal. He then illustrated this with the hand illustration to prove the eternal nature of this life. To try and play games with what Christ means is reading into the text and the obvious meaning of what Christ is conveying. In short, you are putting words in Christ's mouth when you fail to rest in His obvious point.

By the way, if you vainly reason that you can jump out of the Father's hand, then you must be greater than the Father (see vs. 29). Our security rests upon the greatness of the Father's power and not upon our character and conduct. Furthermore, if you can do something to lose eternal life, then was it ever eternal in the first place? How can you lose eternal life if it's eternal? You must simply understand that the very nature of eternal life is such that it cannot be based upon human condition. A great many folks today believe in conditional security instead of eternal security. But Christ does not teach conditional security. Christ teaches eternal security. And this security

is explained in the concept of eternal life and illustrated by the Father's hand of safety.

“Safe am I, Safe am I, In the hollow of His hand.
Sheltered o'er, sheltered o'er,
With His love forevermore.
No ill can harm me, No foe alarm me;
For He keeps both day and night.
Safe am I, Safe am I, In the hollow of his hand.”

Do you believe in the promise of eternal life? Jesus says that He gives to you a spiritual life that will never end in this life or in the next. It will go on throughout the eternal ages of time because He has promised that it is eternal. And if Jesus promises that this life is eternal, then it is eternal unless you make it mean something other than He meant. Arminian teachers try to make ceaseless, endless and timeless life mean temporary, transitory and fleeting life! In doing so they destroy the obvious meaning of the word “everlasting” or “eternal” and place themselves under the bondage of a works oriented system that poses no assurance of salvation.

Instead of clinging to the promise of eternal life many are clinging to the condition of their own life. This brings fear and bondage to a system of legalism that never can promise the assurance of eternal life (Acts 15:1,24; Galatians 5:1). When you base your salvation or security upon your own performance, then you cannot accept the teaching of eternal life. Why is that? It's because eternal life is not based upon human performance. It is based upon God's grace. Jesus gives this unending life to us out of His own grace and we have it forever because it is solely based upon His grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). The salvation that we have is actually this new eternal life that God implants within our spirit. Thus, if you truly believe that God saves you by his grace and keeps by His grace (Romans 5:2), then you will rest in the promise of eternal life and salvation. This is because they are rooted in the grace of God. God's grace has granted eternal life to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles Spurgeon believed in the wonderful promise of eternal life. He was quoted as saying that he was so sure of his salvation that he could grab on to a cornstalk and swing out over the fires of hell, look

into the face of the devil, and sing, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!”

Oh friend, you must believe in the promise of eternal life as well. Eternal means everlasting or unending life. It is God’s promise to you.

2. How do we receive eternal life?

Eternal life is received by every believing sinner when they turn to God through personal belief in Christ and his finished work upon the cross. Several verses, out of many, will be sufficient to prove this point.

John 3:15-16 are verses worth repeating:

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:36

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 5:24 also says:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Eternal life is given on the basis of belief in the Son of God and what He has accomplished for us in His cross and resurrection. Belief is a personal response of the individual to Christ, whereby he or she accepts the forgiveness that is available in Christ Jesus. It is a personal decision that brings a person to the place where they call upon the Lord in simple faith and ask Christ to save them (Romans 10:13). At the very moment of personal belief in the Son of God, a person is granted eternal life.

It is worthy to note at this time that eternal life is not given on the basis of confession, as Arminian teaching seems to stress. Many

conditional security people point out 1 John 1:9 as the means to regain eternal life once it is lost. Once again, this is a total misunderstanding of words. Belief and confession are two different things. Belief is for the unsaved and is what God requires to receive eternal life. Confession is what is needed in the Christian life in order to regain our fellowship with God within the Christian life. The former (belief) is for the reception of eternal life and the latter (confession) is for restored fellowship with God. Every person who believes in conditional security confuses verses dealing with the Christian life by applying them to the matter of a person's salvation and acceptance before God.

The Bible is crystal clear on the matter of how eternal life is received. It is received as a free gift. It cannot be earned or worked for in any way. The Bible always present eternal life as a gift to be freely received.

Romans 6:23 says:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:18 also talks about the free gift of eternal life when it says: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

The gift that is given to us by God's grace and kindness is salvation or eternal life. What a gift it is! And this gift is absolutely free! That is what a gift is. When I give my wife a gift I do not expect her to pay me off in installment payments! The gift is free. So it is with the gift of eternal life. You receive eternal life as a gift from the Lord. You do not have to work for it or try to earn it in any way. How can you earn a gift? Can you answer that question for me? How can you earn a gift?

Mark 10:17

“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Many are asking this same question today. What could they possibly do to inherit the gift of eternal life? They believe in conditional salvation and security. Jesus proved that this man could not inherit the future blessings attached to eternal life because he loved his riches more than Christ and salvation. This man could not inherit eternal life in the coming blessing of the kingdom because he loved his riches more than the salvation, which the Messiah was offering him. It's not that this man needed to liquidate all his riches in order to be saved. Jesus was simply showing to this man his own inability to inherit the kingdom's rewards and blessings by following Christ or attempting to be saved through his measure of discipleship. This man did not have a perfect track record when it came to following the law and God. So Jesus used the law to convince this man of his sin and inability to do what's right. When Christ summoned this man to give up riches, he actually discovered that he was a covetous man who had broken God's holy law.

The law said, "Thou shalt not covet." Alas, he recognized that he was a sinner, but was sad because he had so many riches (vs. 23). The end result was that this man loved his riches more than salvation because Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (23). This man was unwilling to repent of his covetous living.

Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

My friend, the greatest news in the entire world is that eternal life, which is the internal salvation within the spirit of man, is absolutely free! You cannot earn this new saving life from God. By the way, it's the life of God that saves you and not your own life of works. Your little scheme of living will not save you. You need to have the saving life of God applied to your life. Only God's life can save you and not your own life.

It is also important to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in eternal life. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the person within the Godhead that actually implants this everlasting or eternal life within our spirit.

John 3:5-7

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

“A ruler once came to Jesus by night,
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;
The Master made answer in words true and plain,
“Ye must be born again.”

People have been debating for years concerning the meaning of “water” in this passage. I have stopped debating and have come to the conclusion that if something looks like water and tastes like water – it is water. Nicodemus had just been talking about physical birth in verse 4. Now Jesus wants this religious man to understand that the new birth is more than just a physical birth. It is a spiritual birth. Jesus is saying in verse 5 that a man is first born out of the water of the mother’s womb but secondarily, and more importantly, he is born again by the Holy spirit and given a new and second birth which is spiritual and not physical. In essence, Jesus is saying, “Nicodemus, you must understand that you are born the first time physically, but you are born spiritually the second time by receiving this new life from the Holy Spirit.”

Then in verse 6 Jesus reminds Nicodemus that it is the inner spirit of a man that receives this second birth or new spiritual life (“that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”). In other words, it’s the job and ministry of the Holy Spirit to give you a second birth, which is spiritual in nature. This means that the Holy Spirit implants this new divine life into the realm of our spirit. This is why it is called spiritual life. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this goal by implanting within your human spirit a new spiritual life that will last forever and forever and forever! The Holy Spirit is the bestower of eternal life and this life is given within the human spirit of man. When it is all said and done, we have been given a second birth from God, which is spiritual in nature and applied to our lives through the saving work of the Holy Spirit. This is what the new birth relates to (verse 7). It relates to a new spiritual birth within our human spirit that gives to us eternal life. And this life deals with both quantity and quality, as we will see.

Regeneration is what we call this new eternal life. Regeneration actually means new life. And for you and me, who know Christ, we have received new spiritual life within our immaterial spirit. Our spirit has been renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5, my favorite verse says:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

One of the simplest and clearest truths about salvation is the most difficult for man to receive. It is that salvation is not based on good works; one doesn't become a Christian by living a Christian life. Does that strike you today? It is not good people who go to Heaven, but bad people who realize that they are sinners and in need of the Savior.

None of us would be saved today if it were not for the “mercy” of God! Mercy is actually God withholding judgment upon our lives through the blood sacrifice of His own Son. Because we have been cleansed of all of our sins through the application of Christ's blood to our life, we have experienced the mercy of God. The Bible says that God saved us from the guilt and penalty of all our sins – the sins of our past, present, and future. All of our sins were in the future tense when the Savior died upon the cross. God the Father placed all of our sins that we would ever commit upon His Son, so that Christ could become our substitute and grant forgiveness for those sins. Through Christ's death we can have all of our sins forgiven and be saved from the judgment that those sins bring upon our life.

But how does God save us? How does God do it? God actually saves us through the miracle of the new birth, the work of the Holy Spirit of God implanting new life within our spirit. The new birth is the channel that brings the application of God's salvation into our life. This new birth is called the “washing of regeneration (rebirth)” and the “renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5b).”

The first step in the regenerating (life-giving) work of the Holy Spirit is when the Holy Spirit washes away the filth of our old sins within our

human spirit by applying the substitutionary death of Christ to our spiritually dead spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:11 says:

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

We accept this washing as a divine inner act that occurs within our spirit. "Washing" speaks of our cleansing from the defilement of sin and is the first act of producing regeneration or new life within the spirit. Titus explains this as “the washing of regeneration” whereby the Holy Spirit in His regenerating work washes away the filthy sins of all our life so that He can prepare us to receive this new spiritual life that is from God. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit washes all of our sins away (“washing of regeneration”).

Second, Titus 3:5 says that the Holy Spirit renovates or completely changes and renews our spirit that was once spiritually dead in sin and going to Hell. The Holy Spirit does this renovating work by providing it with eternal life and new life (“the renewing of the Holy Spirit”). This renewing process also provides a new nature in our human spirit, which now has the capacity to live for God. Because of this dramatic change within our human spirit by the interaction of the Spirit of God, we no longer have to be controlled or dominated by the sins mentioned in Titus 5:3. Oh what a new spiritual birth this is! It is new life forever. It is eternal life with new godly desires and right attitudes to live for God. We can now change our life of sin into a life of holiness.

This new birth or regenerating work of implanting eternal spiritual life within our spirit, provides us with the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the condemnation of Hell and a new desire and motivation to live holy and free from sin’s contamination. Oh what a salvation this! When you tell someone that they need to be born again you are really telling them that they need to be born again spiritually. They need to have their sins forgiven and receive eternal spiritual life within their human spirit so that they can be delivered or saved from spiritual ruin in Hell forever. A person needs to receive eternal spiritual life through the new birth or else they will receive eternal spiritual ruin in Hell.

Indeed, we receive eternal life through believing in the meritorious work of Christ on our behalf. At the moment we personally believe on Christ, the Holy Spirit then implants within our human spirit this new spiritual life which we never possessed before. Hence, it becomes our second birth, which deals with a new spiritual and saving life within us, which lasts forever. In short, the new birth brings this eternal life into our human spirit.

Jesus said in John 3:7:
“Ye must be born again”

This new and second spiritual birth can only be received once. The illustration of physical birth to which Christ relates the spiritual birth will prove this point. You can only be born once physically (John 3:4) and you can only be born once spiritually (John 3:7). Jesus did not say that you must be born again and again and again and again! Just as a man cannot enter into his mother’s womb again to be reborn physically (vs. 4), so a man who has already experienced the second spiritual birth from God cannot be reborn spiritually (vs. 7). We had nothing to do with our first birth. God formed us within the womb (Psalms 139:14-16) and granted us physical life.

In a similar manner, we have absolutely nothing to do with our second birth. God has given us this spiritual second birth by virtue of the new life that the Holy Spirit has given to us. This life is actually the life of the Son implanted within us, as we will see in our next main point. The argument from physical birth to spiritual birth proves the point that we have absolutely nothing to do with gaining and keeping eternal life or salvation. The picture is very clear, yet the person looking for conditional security and bondage ignores the simple and beautiful words of Christ, “Ye must be born again” (not again and again and again).

The necessity of the new birth is vividly portrayed in the life of George Whitefield. At age 16 he became deeply convicted of his sin. He tried everything to become acceptable to God. He wrote, "I fasted for 36 hours twice a week. I prayed formal prayers several time a day and almost starved myself to death during Lent, but only felt more miserable. Then by God's grace I met Charles Wesley, who put a book in my hand that showed me from the Scriptures that I must be

'born again' or be eternally lost." Finally, Whitefield understood that he had to trust in Jesus Christ. He believed and was both forgiven and changed. After he became a preacher, he spoke at least a thousand times on the subject, "You must be born again."

Have you ever had a spiritual birthday? Have you ever been born again? It's only through this new and second spiritual birth that you can receive eternal life.

So how do we really receive eternal life? We receive eternal life through the new birth. The Holy Spirit gives us this new and wonderful life within our spirit. And this life is really the life of God's very own Son. The life of Jesus Christ is what brings eternal life into our own life. Eternal life can be summed up in one person – Jesus Christ! The very life that the Holy Spirit bestows within our spirit is God's life in the person of God the Son. This brings me to the next major question about eternal life.

3. How can we know that we have eternal life?

A great many people today would like to really know for sure that they possess this everlasting life. And yet, because of false teaching concerning the license to sin (Antinomianism – against all law) and lack of understanding about the teaching aspect of the grace of God (liberty to follow Christ), many fail to have the assurance that God wants them to have about salvation and eternal life. The argument has always been, "If God's grace gives to us eternal life, then we will have a license to sin and do as we please." This of course is simply not true nor a valid argument. This is because the Bible declares that the believer has been given the transforming life of the Son of God and His new nature to both impel and empower us to live for God like we never could before.

2 Peter 1:3-4 says:

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Those who don't believe in eternal security say that the doctrine of eternal life or security leads to license and sin. It's like an insurance policy that will end up in a ruined and wrecked life of sin. This is as absurd as saying that because we have Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance, we will chew on razor blades or guzzle down a glass of premium gasoline.

Eternal life is the infusion of God's life and nature within our own spirit, so that we can now have His characteristics and holy manners within our own life. Because of the new nature, a Christian will not want to pattern their life after the devil. Furthermore, the grace of God is a motivating factor and not sin factor for Christian living. God's amazing grace when rightly viewed leads the believer into a life of surrender and sacrifice before the Lord. It promotes holiness in our life. The fear of God's judgment does not produce holiness. Only the grace of God's eternal forgiveness can motivate us on in our holy living.

Titus 2:11-12 says:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"

The truth of the matter is this. Because God has given eternal life to us, we can now live holier than we ever could before. This is because we have God's life and nature within our spirit empowering us and equipping us to live victoriously and righteously in this present evil world. How wonderful eternal life really is.

John tells us how we can know that we have eternal life.

In 1 John 5:10-12 we read:

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

So there you have the record, God's record about eternal life through his Son! And if you cannot believe God's record, then you cannot believe any record! So what is the record? Here it is. Are you ready for it? We must believe the record that God has given to us – "And this is the record." The record is clearly stated. Eternal life is given to us through the Son. The Son possesses life in Himself ("this life is in his son" - see John 1:4, 5:26). We have eternal life because we as believers have been brought into an eternal union with the Son of God (vs. 12, 20). Eternal life is an imparted and communicated life. We have a saving union with the Son of God.

This record means that the Son of God Himself becomes our spiritual life in that He shares His life with us. Eternal life is endless existence with the Son! Eternal life is the life of God the Son coming into our spirit and giving to us His very own life. This does not mean that we share God's own self-existent being. What it means is that Jesus shares a dimension of His life with us and we can receive the kind of life that He has, which is eternal life. Everlasting life is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the spiritual life received when a man is born again, in contrast to the natural life, which he received at his physical birth.

Jesus not only is the way to eternal life, His own indwelling life is our eternal life!

John 14:6 says:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The difference between spiritual life and spiritual death is the Son of God! God the Father is pleased with His Son. And God gives eternal life to each one of us through the life of his own Son. God has given to man the thing that he lacks - eternal life. It doesn't matter how earnest you are or how devoted you have been or how religiously intent you have been. It does not matter how hard you have been trying to please God. These matters are not the issues. The issue over salvation is resolved. It's a record that you cannot break. If you don't have the Son, then you don't have eternal life!

Dr. H. A. Ironside used to tell of a man who had great doubts about whether or not he was a Christian. One day he went home after hearing a sermon on the verse of John 3:15. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He got down on his knees and said, "Now, Father, I want to settle this question. Show me whether I have eternal life or not." And opening his Bible, his eyes fell on this verses, 1 John 5:10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

Then the man said in his prayer, "Father, I don't want to make You a liar and it says here that if I don't believe the record that you give about the Son, I'm making you a liar. Now I don't want to do that. What is the record?" And he read the next part in the beginning of verse 11. "This is the record," and he stopped right there.

He was so excited that he put his thumb over the rest of the verse and said, "Lord, it says here that if I don't believe the record that you gave concerning your Son, I'm making you a liar, and I don't want to make you a liar. I believe that I have what that testimony and record is right under my thumb here, and I'm going to take my thumb off and read it, and Lord, help me to believe it, because I don't want to make you a liar."

With great trembling fear he raised his thumb and read, ". . . that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. " (v. 11). Suddenly it came home to him. John makes it so clear, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (vs. 12). No matter what else he may have, no matter how religious he may be, if he has not received the Son he does not have life.

Your efforts for holy living and moral living will not give you eternal life. Your efforts to please God by your conduct and dedication to the church will not give you eternal life or keep you saved in any way. Whether or not you live a certain way will not promise you eternal life. Listen to me today my friend. Only the Son of God can save you. Only the Son of God can give you eternal life. Eternal life is only found in the Son. You can't find eternal life any other place. Not until you trust in Him can you have eternal life.

Some of you today are calling God a liar! That's right, you heard what I said. When you doubt that eternal life is found in His only Son, then you make God into a liar. Those of you who think that you can never have the absolute assurance of eternal life through His Son have been telling God that His record is not true!

1 John 5:9-10 says:

"If we receive the witness (record, report, testimony) of men, the witness (record, report, testimony) of God is greater: for this is the witness (record, report, testimony) of God which he hath testified (or given) of his Son."

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness (record, report, testimony) in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record (report, testimony) that God gave of his Son."

Let me tell you right to your face today what the word of God is saying. You may not like me after I tell you this but I am going to tell you any way. I am not trying to win a trophy today for the best liked preacher. The Bible says that God has a record, report or testimony that He has given to each one of us who are truly saved. And this report is greater then any report or record that man could give. God's reports are greater then man's reports!

The fact is that we trust in the reports that the dentist and doctor gives to us. We may say, "Now doc, I'm ailing deep down in my lower back, would you check me out and give me your report?" When the report comes back it says, "Old age, take two aspirins and call me in the morning." Now that is a report. It may not be the report that you want, but it is a report. But God's report is far greater! It has more of a far-reaching and eternal significance attached to it ("the witness of God is greater").

The fact of the matter is this. God has already spoken! God has already given the record or report and it is all about his Son (see 9b). He has spoken about His own Son that was sent into the world in order to give eternal life to every believing sinner. God has already

spoken. He has already testified about His Son. By the way, when God speaks, He loves to speak about His Son.

Matthew 3:17

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The record or report, this witness of God is already given to every born again believer. In fact, the Bible says that this report about God’s Son is like an internal witness within our own spirit.

1 John 5:10 says:

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness (record or report) in himself...”

This means that God internalizes the message that He gives to us about His Son. We have an inward report in our hearts that is wonderful and marvelous and magnificent. What is the report? What is the record and witness? Verse 11 gives us the actual record or God’s witness that He has placed within the heart of believers. Here it is again. Are you ready for it?

1 John 5:11

“And this is the record (the internal witness of God), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

God says that He has placed within the heart of every child of God the inward record, inward report or inward witness that God has given to us eternal life through His Son! What an internal witness that is!

God gives believers the internal witness that we have eternal or everlasting life because we have His own Son abiding within our hearts. This is why the report of God is greater than the reports that man could ever give to us. God’s report deals about eternal life through His Son. You can’t get a better report than that!

So what happens when I try to suppress this inward witness and fail to believe and trust fully in the Son to give me eternal life? The Bible says that we make God out to be a liar (1 John 5:10b).

“...he that believeth not God (about His record or report) hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record (inward report or testimony) that God gave of his Son.”

If you don't believe that you can have eternal life through God's Son alone, then you have rejected the internal witness that God has been trying to establish within your heart. Let me tell you in a simpler fashion. You are ignoring and rejecting the internal record or testimony that God gave to you concerning eternal life, if you lack the assurance of your salvation (10b). You are refusing to believe God and calling Him a liar.

God has spoken! And God is not a liar! He says that I give eternal life through my son and my son alone. That is the record. That is the absolute final report. And God says if you don't believe it then you are following the reports of man and your own report instead of God's final record. You are playing with your own records and reports that some man gave to you through a book that you read or some other source of material. Many people believe the records of man and then disbelieve the record of God almighty. They read a piece of literature and conclude that what this man says about salvation must be right. I have had people actually tell me that if they could just have their little written pamphlet of material on salvation, which they were studying, then they would really give it to me with both barrels! Who really cares what a pamphlet says? What about the internal witness of God? What is God saying about eternal life? This is what really matters.

You may say to me today, “Well I just can't believe this once saved always save stuff.” Listen, I don't care what you believe. The witness of God is greater! God's record or report is greater than what you say or believe. The witness of God is greater! I don't care what you say, I only know what God has said in His Word and reported to me within my own heart. What God has said is that He has given me eternal life through his Son. And I for one am not going to call God a liar if He says that He gives to me eternal life through His dear and beloved Son.

If you lack the assurance of your salvation today you must trust in the Son. All you must do is fully trust in His Son to save you completely and forever by giving to you His own eternal and spiritual life.

1 John 5:10 once again says:

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself...”

If you will trust only in the Son of God to be your savior, then you can have this internal witness and assurance that you are saved forever. How can this be? It's because God has given you eternal life through his Son. Eternal life means eternal salvation and nothing can be greater than knowing that you have eternal life through His Son.

1 John 5:13

“These things (about the record of eternal life – vs. 11-12) have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Did you catch those wonderful words? You can know that you have eternal life. You can know that you will never perish in Hell. You don't have to guess about your eternal destiny any longer. You can know today that God has given you eternal life through His Son. The word “know” denotes a positive, confident and absolute assurance. It signifies an abiding conviction that is thoroughly imbedded upon your heart, which rests in concrete and known facts. This factual promise of the Bible among many others is to move you from doubt to certainty.

Many people ask, “How can we really know for sure that we have eternal life?” It's by having faith in the promises of God's Word. It is by resting in the concrete, unchanging and eternal facts of God's Word. Eternal life is not based upon feelings. It is based upon facts. The facts of God's promises concerning eternal life are clearly revealed in the Bible (John 3:15-16, 3:36, 5:25, 6:47, 10:28, 17:2; Romans 6:23).

You can know that you have eternal life because God has just told you about it in His Word (“These things have I written unto you”). He has written it down in His word and communicated this truth to you in

1 John 5:11-12. The truth is this. The written record is this. If you believe on the Son for salvation, then you have everlasting spiritual life. How can this be? It's because you now have the life of the Son living within you to give you this eternal life. Remember, because the Son has eternal life dwelling within Him and because He is eternal life, you possess everlasting life as well (vs. 20).

When you believe in the Son to save you, He then comes into your life and applies His saving work to your spirit. The Son then gives to you His own eternal spiritual life. But you cannot have this life unless you believe on the Son to be your savior. John reminds us of this in the latter part of 1John 5:13 ("and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"). Some people claim to have eternal life without believing on the Son, but John says it is impossible to possess eternal life without believing on the Son. Furthermore, you cannot claim to have the assurance of eternal life unless you believe in the Son. There is no eternal life apart from the Son.

Oh what a glorious and grand truth this is! Eternal life, unending spiritual life, without the fear of God's eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire. Eternal life frees you from eternal judgment, judgment which is the wages or just payment for your sins (Romans 6:23). Think of it. You can know that you have been forever set free Hell and damnation. You can know that the Son has given to you spiritual life that will last forever! You can know that you have eternal life if you will just believe the record! You must believe by faith what God has said about His Son and eternal life. God has given to man something that he lacks, eternal life!

Suppose someone would say to you, "Well, I'm trying to believe you." Wouldn't you take that statement as an insult? Wouldn't you feel that this person, who did not believe that you would keep your word, was questioning your integrity and your character? Surely you would. The same is true in connection with God. How do you think God feels and reacts to your unbelief in the written record or testimony that He has given to you concerning eternal life?

1 John 5:11-12

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

What does God think and how does He feel when you question His promise of eternal life? God asks all of you a question today who do not believe in His promise of eternal life. He asks. “Cannot you believe in my Word? Why can’t you believe what I say?” We must understand that we insult God and His character when we disbelieve in His promise of eternal life. The fact is this. Because John had to teach the people about eternal life, evidently some were lacking the assurance of their salvation. There are Christians like this today. There are those who have honestly believed in Christ for their salvation, but have since fallen into the legalistic trap and teaching about works (performance) before God as a way to finally gain salvation and eternal life (Galatians 5:1-7).

Galatians 5:4,7

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth (about the grace of God)?”

If this is your position today, then you have fallen from grace! You used to run well by following the true teaching about salvation by grace. But now you have fallen from the teaching about how the grace of God alone saves you and gives you eternal life without your own works, performance and manner of living. To fall from grace is not to fall into some mortal sin, but to fall from Biblical teaching about the grace of God!

Dear friend, I want to say to you today that you may truly be saved and have eternal life, and yet not know that you have it. What you need to do is believe the record that God has given to you! Go ahead and believe it! And when you believe it by faith you will be released from a tremendous bondage and fear that God never intended you to have. You will know that you have eternal life simply because God says that you have it and because He will give you this assurance in your heart by the witness of the Holy Spirit. Faith is the only way to

have assurance. God is appealing to your faith. And you must have faith in His record. It's faith in what God has said in His Word (1 John 5:11-12).

High up in the North, in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is 100 miles high and 100 miles wide. Once every 1000 years a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak. When the rock has thus been worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone by. My friend, our finite minds cannot grasp eternity! But I know one thing. God has given to me eternal life. Do you know how I know? It's because God has given me the record! God has given me a record written down in the Bible (11-12) and a record written down within my heart (10). When you believe the record, then you can also know that you have eternal life.

I told my wife that if Jesus does not return and I go before she does, I want this song to be sung at my funeral.

“I can ride the morning winds and You are there.
I can sail the widest sea and You are there.
I can find the darkest night and You are there.
Oh, Lord, I can never be lost from You.”

4. How is the concept of eternal life to be understood?

A. Eternal life is to be understood as a present possession.

John 5:24 once again says:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

You will notice that it does not say that he will have eternal life, but that he has it right now! The promise is that we have eternal life the moment we believe on Christ. Eternal life is a present possession that we have as a believer in Christ. It is to be a living and life changing reality. We don't have to wait to have eternal life, we have it right now! It's the birthright and possession of every believer.

Many people wrongly believe that eternal life is something, which they can only enter into within the future. In the meantime, they must seek to earn or merit eternal life by their works or manner of holy living. Then in the next life, if they have done enough good or were living in a holy manner when they die, then they will enter into eternal life from the point of their death and onward. In other words, many people only view eternal life as something to receive in the future instead of the present. But the Bible clearly says that the believing sinner has eternal life right now. It's a present possession.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

The text also says, “And shall not come into judgment.” This truth beautifully describes the result of eternal life. Since we have eternal life the believer is not condemned now and will never be condemned in the future. “But has passed from death into life.” The one who has trusted Christ has passed out of a state of spiritual death into one of spiritual life. Before conversion, we were dead in trespasses and in sins. We were dead in the sense that we had no spiritual and eternal life indwelling our human spirit. We were dead because we had no love for God or fellowship with the Lord. However, when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we became a possessor of divine and eternal life. We became the recipients of this new life and have been brought into a new fellowship with God.

Other verses describe the present possession aspect of eternal life.

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

John 3:36 says:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

In John 6:54, Jesus also said:

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

1 John 5:12 says:

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Unless you turn a blind and legalistic eye to these wonderful promises, you can be sure of the present provision and possession of eternal life in your spirit. The believing sinner who has trusted in Christ has eternal life indwelling his or her spirit. It is a present possession and promise that God gives to each of us who know His Son as Savior. We have eternal life and we can rest assured in God’s promise that we have it right now within us.

The hymnwriter has written:

Oh, what a Saviour that He died for me!
From condemnation He hath made me free;
“He that believeth on the Son,” saith He, “Hath everlasting life.”
“Verily, verily I say unto you; Verily, verily,” message ever new!
“He that believeth on the Son” tis true “Hath everlasting life!”

It is true! Don’t doubt about it; shout about it! We have everlasting life!
Jesus said it is true!

“Verily, verily I say unto you...” is what Jesus said in John 5:24 and 6:47. These are words that indicate Jesus is about to say something that is of utmost importance. They actually mean “Truly truly” or “Surely, surely.” Literally Jesus is saying, “Amen, amen.”

Dr. William Pettingill has written a book called the “Verily Verily’s In John’s Gospel.” I have been looking for a copy of this book for years and have never stumbled across one. If you want to relieve yourself of this book please send it to me! I would be grateful to you for it. So much for my library search! Why did Dr. Pettingill take time to write an entire book on these “Verily, verily” statements of Christ in the Gospel of John? It’s because when Jesus says, “Verily, verily” He means business and is trying to impress something upon our hearts.

Dr. Thayer has said something outstanding about this word amen. "The word amen is a most remarkable word. It was transliterated directly from the Hebrew into the Greek of the New Testament, then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. It has been called the best-known word in human speech. The word is directly related -- in fact, almost identical -- to the Hebrew word for "believe" ('aman), or faithful. Thus, it came to mean "sure" or "truly", an expression of absolute trust and confidence."

These words are then of Hebrew origin and denote an absolutely faithful and trustworthy saying. This is what we mean when we say, "Amen" to something. We are saying that it is absolutely true and trustworthy. This means that Jesus is saying, "Amen" to what He is about to say. And what has Jesus said, "Amen" about?

In John 6:47 Jesus said:

"Verily, verily, (Amen, amen) I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Whenever Jesus uses these words, you can be sure that He is trying to impress upon our hearts the absolute faithfulness and truth of what is about to follow. Jesus says, "AMEN" to eternal life! The fact that the believing sinner has eternal life and will never perish in hell is the absolute truth that came from the lips of the absolutely true God. Listen dear friend, when Jesus says, "Amen" to something, we had better believe it and say, "Amen" to it as well. Have you said, "Amen" to the wonderful truth that you have eternal life? Have you come to the place where you can believe the promise that Jesus has said concerning eternal life? We already have it and it will be ours forever, because eternal life means forever! "Verily, verily I say unto you!" Verily, verily it is true!

It is easy to misunderstand the truthful counsel that we receive from others. A man by the name of Charlie Stink was constantly being advised by his friends and co-workers that he should have his name changed. They said that the name Charlie Stink just did not sound good to the average ear. Finally, he agreed, and went to court to have the process completed so he could change his name. The next day back at work, his associates inquired, "What did you have your

name changed to Charlie?" The old Charlie answered, "I changed it to George Stink," he answered, "but for the life of me I can't see what difference it's going to make!"

Dear friend, don't be like Charlie Stink. Don't miss the truth that Jesus is trying to impress upon your heart! You have eternal life. Jesus says "Amen, amen" to this wonderful promise.

I have often wondered why certain Christians could never come to the place where they can believe in God's record of eternal life and promise of eternal salvation, which He has clearly revealed to us in the Bible. Then one day I was reading a little pamphlet by the late Theodore Epp. Dr. Epp remarked about the shield of faith that we must use to ward off the attacks of Satan upon our mind.

Ephesians 6:16

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Satan is very busy today shooting his flaming arrows into our mind or thinking process. Satan and his demonic helpers are very active in their pursuit to bring mental doubt and deception upon the goodness of God and the promises revealed in His Word. The flaming arrows of Satan can start a brush fire of doubt in our mind concerning the promise of eternal life that God gave to us in His Word. Satan's plan is to try and get us to disbelieve what God has said ("Yea hath God said"). I for one am convinced that the devil is behind all of this uncertainty today about the promise of eternal life and salvation. The reason for this is because he tries to keep Christians in the fear of death. This is what the devil did to us before coming to Christ for salvation.

Hebrews 2:14-15 will stir up our memory:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Jesus came to deliver us from the fear of dying by having us place our faith in His eternal plan of salvation and redemption. Before we were saved, Satan kept us in the fear of death. What would happen when we die? Where would we go when we die? How terrible would hell be when we die? It was a fear of the unknown and fear of the judgment of God that haunted us throughout our unsaved life. Satan had the power and authority to keep us in a constant fear of dying before we were saved. However, when Jesus died upon the cross it gave the devil a deathblow.

The word “destroy” means to render powerless, idle or to go out of business. Christ destroyed the devil or released him of his authority and power over our lives. One of the plaguing powers, which Satan had over our lives in our unsaved state, was to keep us in fear! The death of Christ upon the cross meant that believing sinner can now be released from the fear of dying because Christ has died for them and provided eternal life and salvation for them. What a victory it was! Today we can claim the victory that Christ has accomplished for us over the devil by simply believing in the eternal salvation of the Son of God. When we do, we can be delivered from the fear of death, which the devil had kept us in for so long. When we trust in Christ to save us, we can be forever released from the fear of dying and that bondage of fear over death which the devil kept us in our unsaved state.

But after we are saved the devil comes along and shoots his flaming arrows into our mind and tries to bring doubt upon the truth of eternal life and salvation provided through the death of Christ. He does this so he can once again keep us in fear and bondage. Our heart is filled with fear when we do not believe that we have eternal life. My friend, Jesus died upon the cross in order to defeat Satan’s overcoming power over your life and deliver you from the fears that you had before you were saved. When you disbelieve in God’s plan of eternal life you then allow the devil to place you back under the fear that he once kept you in before you were saved.

The way I see it is this. You can either believe in the promise of God’s Word that He gives to you about eternal life or you can believe in the lie of the devil. You cannot believe in both of them at the same time. But how can we really believe in God’s promise? The answer can be

found in one word, "Faith." Faith is the victory that overcomes the world and the devil's fiery arrows of doubt, which he sends into our minds. We must take up the shield of faith and overcome the seeds of doubt, which are sown in our mind by the devil.

Faith is the answer to believing in eternal life. Faith in God's record will release you from the fear of death and dying. It will release you from the fear of not being sure of salvation. Faith will quench the fiery darts of the devil and bring freedom and assurance into your life.

The story is told about the little fellow who got saved at a certain rescue mission. A New Testament on the Gospel of John was given to him. A verse was pointed out to him concerning eternal life, so the little boy could have the assurance of everlasting life in Christ. The verse was John 5:24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

The little fellow firmly believed in the promise. When he went to bed that night in the rescue mission, the boy sensed the presence of the devil. The devil seemed to be challenging this little fellow by saying, "Are you really sure you have eternal life? So you really think that you are saved forever?" The little guy hardly knew what to say, but he argued back with these words. "The preacher says that I have it, the Bible says that I have it, even though you, Satan, say that I don't have it." Then the little fellow got out his New Testament and read John 5:24 again.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Putting his arm back under the pillow all the while pressing his thumb on that text of promise, he said to the devil, "Devil, see for yourself!" With that, the tempter left him. Dear friend, this boy won the victory over the temptation of doubt by taking up the shield of faith in God's Word. The shield of faith is what will bring victory over your doubts about Christ's record and promise of eternal life.

B. Eternal life is to be understood as a future inheritance of blessing.

The Bible teaches there are two sides to the concept of eternal life. The first side deals with the reality of the present possession of eternal life (John 6:47) and the second side deals with the future aspect connected with eternal life (rewards, blessings, and privileges to serve Christ in the future).

Jesus taught in Matthew 19:29:

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

Here Jesus is not talking about earning eternal life, but inheriting the future reward and privileges connected with eternal life because of our faithful living on earth. This eschatological aspect of eternal life deals with the blessings that will come upon our lives in the future when we will be rewarded for our love and commitment to Christ down here upon the earth. I want to tell you something today. You have eternal life today and will always have it. However, if you really want to inherit the full blessings and reward connected with this life, you will have to get busy down here on earth and become a disciple or follower of Christ. I think some Christians are so caught up in their own little world that they forget about the world to come!

The future aspect of eternal life deals with our enriched experience of this life when we receive reward and future blessing connected with this life. It means that believers will in the future enter into a deeper and richer experience of the eternal life, which they received at the time of regeneration. Think of this. The more we serve the Lord today, the more we can look forward to in the future when inheriting the reward and joy of eternal life!

Mark 10:28-31

“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time,

houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”

We must understand that Jesus was speaking about inheriting eternal life from the standpoint of entering into the future reward and blessings connected with eternal life. When Jesus speaks about the “world to come eternal life” he was talking about the future rewards and privilege to rule with Christ in the future, earthly kingdom. Eternal life deals with the privilege to rule and reign with Christ in view of the amount of the believer’s work done for Christ right now in this life. Eternal or everlasting life has a very clear future concept attached to it which deals with the believer’s privilege to rule and reign with Christ. These disciples could not earn eternal life, but they surely would inherit the future blessings of eternal life when they are given greater privileges to rule with Christ upon this earth.

This is why Jesus spoke those oft-misunderstood words: “But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.” Jesus was simply saying that not everybody would have the same inheritance of eternal life. Not everybody will receive the same privilege to rule with Christ in the future. Those believers who were first in this, that is to say, they were honored for their position, practice and performance during their life span upon earth, will actually take the back seat in the next life. Instead of driving the bus in the future kingdom, they will be in the back seat of the bus eating cheese crackers! They may have the glory in this life but not in the next life. This is because they were really out to make a name for themselves and did not get serious about serving the Lord and really serving the Master.

When they did serve Christ it was not out of the heart. Furthermore, their lack of service and commitment to Christ would not bring reward and the privilege to serve Christ in the coming Kingdom. They would not have an inheritance like those believers who are last. Those who are last in this life are believers who humble themselves and are faithfully serving the Lord out of a heart of gratitude and with great love. They may not receive much recognition in this life, but in the “world to come” (the Kingdom) Jesus says that they will inherit eternal life. They will experience the future blessing associated with this life

by receiving reward and the greatest privilege of all, greater opportunity to rule with Christ!

“But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.” What kind of inheritance will you have in future? The future concept attached to eternal life deals with the greater privilege we will have to rule with Christ in the coming kingdom. How we live for Christ today will determine our privilege and opportunity to reign with Christ in the future. How we serve today will have a direct bearing upon our future inheritance of eternal life.

Revelation 2:26-27

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

This promise to the overcoming Christian who practices victorious living in this life is that they will possess a greater privilege to rule and reign with Christ in His coming Kingdom. All of God’s New Testament saints will rule with Christ (Rev. 5:0) but those who excel in victorious living and who serve the Lord faithfully will receive greater positions of ruling authority.

Payday is coming! I will say this once again for clarity. Eternal life is not something to be earned or merited in any way. Eternal life is viewed in its future tense as something to be enjoyed through the blessing of eternal reward and privilege to rule with Christ.

Every Christian has eternal life (Rom. 6:23), but not every Christian will inherit eternal life on an equal basis. Our future enjoyment, reward and blessing will depend upon our present service, faithfulness and dedication to Christ.

Galatians 6:8 reminds is of this sobering reality:

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

We cannot earn eternal life but we can reap the benefits, blessings, and reward that eternal life offers to those believers who faithfully

serve the Lord in this present life. When we understand that eternal life has a future concept of reward and blessing attached to its meaning, then we can easily understand a passage such as this. We can sow to our own flesh by spending our money and time on things that rust and fade away and do not matter for eternity. Only as we give or sow to the ministry of God in this life can we expect to reap “life everlasting” which is a future quality of life that will go on for eternity. We will receive eternal reward and future enjoyment for what we give and do for Christ in this present life.

The old hillbilly saying is still true:

“Do your givin, while your livin,
Then you’re knowin where it’s goin.”

What we do today for the Lord will mean “life everlasting.” It means that we will enter into the future with a glorious prospect of blessing, reward and experience the highest quality of life that can be expected. All of us will all enter the future aspect of eternal life as believers; however, we will not all reap the same blessings and rewards related to life eternal. Every man will reap what he sows! Does that stir your heart today? Does that put a lump in your throat today? It should. You will get exactly what you deserve in the future or eternity! You will reap reward and future blessing in direct proportion to your own life of faithfulness right now. Many believers will know first hand about the law of diminishing returns. The more that they have sown to their flesh in this life the less that they will have returned by way of reward and privilege in the next life. This is the law of diminishing return.

Revelation 14:13 says:

“...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

Dear friend, what you do for the Lord today will be with you the rest of your life in eternal reward and blessing. Every prayer, every effort, every word said, every kindness, every act of service. This is why we must practice today the very things that God expects us to do and wants us to do. We must keep praying, keep attending church

faithfully, keep disciplining our lives, and keep serving the Lord in any way we can knowing that the future blessing of “life everlasting” awaits us!

I wonder if you will say throughout eternity, “I wish I would have been more faithful to church over the years. I wish I had given more of my time and energy to serving the Lord. I wish I had given more of my money to the Lord instead of being so greedy. I wish...” Dear Christian brother and sister, we are to live with eternity’s values in view!

“Only one life,
Twilt soon be past,
Only what’s done,
For Christ will last.
Only one chance to do His will,
So live for Jesus every day,
For it’s the only life that pays,
When you recall,
You have but one life.”

Galatians 6:9

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Yes, indeed! We shall reap life everlasting. We cannot earn eternal life but we can reap a future inheritance that will last forever and forever. This my friend is a specific aspect related to eternal life. Eternal life is not only a present provision and possession, it’s also a future inheritance that we are making today and will one day enter into. Eternal life can then be viewed as future blessing in the age to come. The half has never been told!

b. The blessing of resurrection

A Mr. Bausum, traveling through China before the day of Communism, saw in Kwelin a very odd sign that attracted his attention. It read, “Eternal Life For Sale.” Looking into the building he saw row upon row of massive black caskets. It was a coffin factory.

This person must have conceived of eternal life ending when the body dies. Oh how wrong they were! When we die eternal life continues on because we will only enter into the next phase of our eternal existence with God in Heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8). In fact, another future aspect of eternal life deals with the resurrection of our bodies as believers. Eternal life is not for sale because Jesus is coming again to give us a new body that will last forever!

Eternal life is also viewed in the future tense of the resurrection of the human body. When we receive our resurrected bodies we will enter into a future realization and blessing of how we will live and be throughout the eternal ages. There is truly a glorious future aspect attached to eternal life that we will enter into within the future. This future may not be far away for Jesus is coming!

John 5:28-29

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Here we see that the resurrection of the believer at the coming of Christ is connected to life. It is called the “resurrection of life” because each believer in Christ will be bodily raised to enjoy the existence of everlasting life in an eternal body, which will live in the presence and blessing of God forever. The resurrection of the unsaved will be a “resurrection of judgment” because they will be bodily raised after the Millenium to suffer the eternal agonies of Gehenna or Hell forever (Rev. 20:10-15).

Certainly as John’s views eternal life, he had this future hope connected with the resurrection of the believer in his thinking. What a hope it is! The resurrection will simply be another phase of our eternal life that we will experience some day.

John 6:40, 54 say:

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Daniel 12:2

“And many of them (bodies of Old Testament saints) that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake (resurrection), some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

These verses portray the future concept of eternal life as it is connected with the resurrection of believers. God’s plan is for resurrection to take place. We can look forward to entering into this future aspect of eternal life in the day of the resurrection when Jesus returns and we are given a new body.

When the great Christian scientist Sir Michael Faraday was dying, some journalists questioned him about his speculations for a life after death. He purportedly replied: “Speculations! I know nothing about speculations. I’m resting on certainties. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and because He lives, I shall live also” (Job 19:25).

Titus 1:2 says:

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”

The “hope” mentioned in this verse deals with the future hope connected with the concept of eternal life. This hope is a confident and settled conviction about the future glories of eternal life. In fact, Titus suggests that we possess a future hope of eternal life that it is related to Christ’s coming.

Titus 2:13 speaks of this hope:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Jude 21 talks about this coming hope:

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Even those believers who are living at Christ’s return will experience the hope of eternal life at this time. When Jesus returns and gives us

a new body, it will be another act of His mercy (“looking for the mercy of the Lord”). At this time, we will experience another aspect of our future hope of eternal life. Those who are alive at His coming will receive a new body and enter into a new glorious future connected with eternal life, where they will dwell with Christ forever in a new body. When Jesus returns He will provide eternal life for the believer in its future and ultimate sense by giving us a new glorified body. We will receive this new body and enter into another glorious phase of eternity where we will enjoy a never ending existence in God’s presence. What a day that will be. We have the future hope and wonderful prospect of eternal life in an eternal body.

Philippians 3:20-21 says:

“For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

This will be eternal life at its best! The concept of eternal life is connected to our redemptive body that we will receive at Christ’s return. Believers will possess an eternal, physical body that they can enjoy throughout eternity.

Romans 8:18

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

We have the hope of a new body untainted by sin and a body that will never die. In this future day when we receive a new body, Christlikeness will be perfectly revealed in us! The glory and splendor of Christ will be seen in our lives in this day when we receive a new body.

Titus 3:7 declares:

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The believer becomes an “heir” (future recipient) of all that God has prepared for those who are His as a result of the reckoning of His

righteousness to their life by His amazing grace. Everything that God has in store for us in the future concerning eternal life is ours. We can bank on it because we are justified by God's grace and are His child. Because we are heirs of eternal life, we will see Jesus someday at His coming as Titus focuses on. We shall see His lovely face! We will receive a new body someday. We will also receive eternal reward someday. We will enter into Heaven someday. We will also reign with Christ someday in the Golden Age of the Kingdom. Yes, I am an heir of eternal life. Dear friend, I have hope coming out of my ears!

Romans 8:24-25

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

I recall going to a band concert at school. My children were in the band. One was in the beginner's band and the other in the more advanced band. The curtain opened and the beginner's band played. Later on another curtain was opened and the advanced band played. The school decided to separate the two bands in different stages so everyone could clearly see the separation of the two bands. The same could be said for eternal life. God has divided eternal life into two different stages of time, so every believer can clearly see the two stages of eternal life.

The first stage of eternal life is granted to us at the moment we believe and becomes a present reality in our lives. Eternal life is a present possession that provides us with regenerating life that will last forever (John 3:15-16; 36; 5:24). The second stage of eternal life deals with the resurrection of the human body of believers and their subsequent reward, eternal blessing, and privilege to reign with Christ in direct proportion to our reward. This reward will last forever in the believer's life and provide them with their own personal blessing of everlasting life, which they alone have accumulated by their present faithfulness to Christ and manner of living while on earth.

Both the present and future concept of eternal life must be kept in mind as one interprets the Bible passages dealing with eternal life. Only then can a person realize the free nature of the gift of eternal life as well as the inheritance associated with the gift of eternal life.

Every believer possesses eternal life as a result of regeneration; however, this life is experienced in different stages of time (present & future) and at various stages of one's existence, right now as they experience the blessing of eternal life (John 10:10), but also in the future when they enter Heaven and receive a glorified body. Here is one way to understand it. A child does not begin to exist when he is born. The child has already existed for nine months prior to this in the mother's womb. At the point of birth, only the conditions in which the child exists change. Before, he lived internally, but now he lives externally. Before he was fed internally but now he feeds externally. He does not begin to live at birth, he has lived all the time since conception, but conditions change at birth.

The believer can view eternal life in a similar fashion when contemplating death and the future resurrection of their body. At the point of death, the conditions of our eternal life change. We will be Heaven! At the time of our resurrection, we will receive a new body that will exist forever and we will also be rewarded for our faithfulness. In the coming Kingdom we will also reign with Christ according to our reward. All of these changes and future wonders related to eternal life will occur for the believer. However, none of these changes in time or conditions of existence affect the glorious truth and fact that we have always had eternal life.

A bank in Binghamton, New York, had some flowers sent to a competitor who had recently moved into a new building. There was a mix-up at the flower shop, and the card sent with the arrangement read, "With our deepest sympathy." The florist, who was greatly embarrassed, apologized. But he was even more embarrassed when he realized that the card intended for the bank was attached to a floral arrangement sent to a funeral home in honor of a deceased person. That card read, "Congratulations on your new location!"

A sentiment like that is appropriate for Christians because we move to a wonderful new location when we die. we go to Heaven and dwell with Christ and the sorrows and heartaches of this earthly existence are past forever. In short, we move into another dimension of our eternal life. we enter into Heaven itself and will enter into all the future blessings associated with eternal life.

5. How does eternal life change our lives today?

In answering this question, we will deal with the practical aspect connected to the concept of eternal life. Eternal life is not only given to us for a soteriological (salvation) purpose and eschatological (future) hope, it is also given to us to enhance our present day living on earth in a wonderful way.

The assurance of eternal life abiding within you can change your life in two ways.

- A. The assurance of eternal life can remove fear and bondage from your life.

When you know and believe in the truth about eternal life, it will set you free! It will set you free from the fear of doubt and uncertainty. Assurance of eternal life or salvation is the privilege and birthright of every born-again person! As mentioned earlier, Satan's goal is to try and keep you in the fear and bondage of death's uncertainty.

Hebrews 2:15

“And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

The devil is trying to keep your heart uncertain, unsure and uneducated about Christ's promise of eternal life. He wants you to think that you might not make it to Heaven as a Christian. He wants to keep the seed of doubt in the back of your mind. However, the assurance of eternal life through Christ's work on the cross can bring a tremendous deliverance in your life as a believer from the fear of death's uncertainty, which the devil attempts to keep you under. The bondage of fear is very real in the lives of people. However, the Christian who trusts in Christ's complete saving provision for them upon the cross and in His promise of eternal life can find peace, rest and freedom from the fear of dying. The promise of eternal life through the cross can calm our fears and help us to find that inner quietness and rest of soul that we all long to have concerning salvation and acceptance before God both today and in the afterlife.

2 Corinthians 3:17 says:

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

The Holy Spirit provides us with a newfound freedom. This is a major emphasis of the New Covenant relationship that the believer has with God. The believer is no longer in bondage to the Law's condemnation or Satan's power and fear that he once kept them under in their unsaved past. We can in a practical way be free from the fear of doubts and free from the fear of losing our soul forever in hell. I want to tell you that the ministry of the Spirit of God upon our life promotes freedom from the fear of death and condemnation. The Holy Spirit frees us from the fear of condemnation and dying under the Law's penalty. The Spirit gives us the inward assurance that we are God's children and will never be condemned by God in the future.

Our freedom from the fear of judgment is only possible because of the New Covenant, whereby Christ's blood has redeemed the believing sinner from the penalty of the Law, which is eternal judgment. The New Covenant settles the question about sin forever. The blood of Christ, not of bulls and goats, has forever taken our sins away and given us the assurance that the ransom price for our salvation was paid in full (Hebrews 10:3-4; 12-14). This freedom from eternal judgment and the fear of judgment through the blood of Christ is confirmed in our own heart by the Spirit, who gives us the assurance that we have eternal life because we are the Father's children.

Romans 8:16 says:

“The Spirit itself (Himself) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

The Holy Spirit not only bestows eternal life within our spirit (John 3:6), but He also gives us the inward assurance that we have eternal life and are God's child through the shedding of Christ's blood. Because of this, the Holy Spirit sets the believer at liberty concerning the uncertainty of salvation and the fear of judgment in hell. The Holy Spirit gives believers freedom from the fears that the devil tries to place within our hearts about death and salvation. He gives the child of God the inward assurance that they have eternal life through the

shedding of Christ's blood and that we are God's children and can never be lost again. The shedding of Christ's blood and the Spirit's witness to Christ's blood (the New Covenant) gives the believer the assurance of eternal acceptance before God.

"I'm free from the fear of tomorrow,
I'm free from the fear of my past,
I've traded all my shackles, for a glorious song,
I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last."

Do you have this joy of freedom? The fear can be gone if you will only trust in the cross of Christ to give you eternal life and acceptance before God. The Holy Spirit wants to give you this assurance if you will by faith believe what Christ has done for you through His New Covenant work. The shedding of His blood is sufficient to save you forever. Dear friend, put up the bloodstained shield of faith before the devil when he tries to sow the seeds of doubt in your mind about salvation or eternal life. That bloodstained shield will allow the Holy Spirit to produce this assurance in your heart and provide peace and rest instead of fear and uncertainty.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus says, "I will rest you!" Jesus promises an inner peace that we can possess in our hearts knowing that we have been forgiven forever and delivered from God's wrath and judgment forever.

B. The assurance of eternal life can introduce you to a new quality of life.

In John 10:10, Jesus taught:

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Eternal life is not only a *quantity* of life; it is also a new *quality* of life that we receive at the moment of salvation. It is a kind of life that can

be developed within our Christian life and lead to a new meaningful and wonderful life. Eternal life truly is a wonderful, wonderful life!

When we were college students attending the Grand Rapids School of the Bible & Music, we used to do things that would irritate others. Don't misunderstand me, they were good things, but irritating things! One thing I remember doing was going over into a brother's room at 6:00 in the morning and turn on the cassette tape player. Then we would start marching around the room and jumping up and down on his bed and wake him up to a good Christian song. The song on the cassette that we were playing was called "It's a Wonderful, Wonderful Life." What a way to wake somebody up! It can't be all bad when you wake someone up to remind them of the wonderful life that they have in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Dear friend, the eternal life that Christ has implanted within our spirit not only is a life that will last forever, it also is a quality of life that can change our own dull and drab existence. Eternal life can certainly transform your life. Someone has said, "Stop existing and start living!" That is good advice. Right now, eternal life can have a life changing impact upon your own life. Let us investigate the quality of this new eternal life that God has given to us.

As we have mentioned earlier, eternal life is actually the life of God the Son coming into your own human spirit. When this occurs, we not only receive the benefits of Christ's saving life, but also the benefits of Christ's changing life. We are given the characteristics and nature of God's Son so that we are said to have a new nature within us. This new nature produces dramatic changes within our own life and produces a new kind of life which is abundant. The word "abundantly" means to be excessive and overflowing.

What the Greek scholar Thayer has said concerning this word will make you want to jump out of your seat wherever you are reading this paper and shout, "Hallelujah!"

Thayer said concerning this word abundantly ("perissos"): "exceeding some number or measure or rank or need over and above, more than is necessary, superadded exceeding abundantly, supremely

something further, more, much more than all, more plainly superior, extraordinary, surpassing, uncommon pre-eminence, superiority, advantage, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent.”

My friend, you cannot add anything to this! It doesn't get any better than this! The eternal life that Jesus gives to us at the time of regeneration is a life that is superabounding, extraordinary, superior, remarkable and surpassing in every way. And it is a quality of life that will last our entire lifetime on earth and on into the next life when we meet God. It's a quality of life that will last forever because it is eternal life.

When you are given eternal life, the life of God's Son begins to be manifested Himself through your own life (Gal. 2:20) with the result that your own day-to-day living becomes dramatically enhanced and enriched. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:5, “That in every thing ye are enriched by him...” What an abundant life we have received at regeneration. It is the life of God being introduced to us so that we are filled to overflowing!

“New life in Christ!
Abundant and free!
What glorious shine,
What joys are mine,
What wondrous blessings I see!
My past with its sin,
The searching and strife,
Forever gone – There's a bright new dawn!
For in Christ I have found new life!”

Dr. Stedman has called it:

“Life abundant, life exciting, life that is adventurous, full, meaningful and relevant. It is a life that is lived to the fullest.”

John spoke about this new life as a new nature. He likened it to a seed implanted within the child of God.

1 John 3:9 says:

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

The seed that is planted within us and remains within us is the new nature. This buried seed within our spirit, which has been brought into our own life through the infusion of eternal life, promises to give us a new way of life. It produces new desires, ideals, outlooks, perspectives, priorities, beliefs, loves, habits, ideals, plans and new drives to live for God. The result is that this new life and nature produces a whole new way of living for our own personal lives. We are never the same! Yes, Never the same!

2 Peter 1:3-4 says:

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Peter reminds his readers that they have become partakers of the divine nature. This means that by the work of God’s own power, we have received a godlike character within our human spirit. It is also called “divine” or “godlike” because it comes from God and reflects God’s own nature and likeness (2 Peter 1:4). This wonderful transaction has occurred through the infusion of the new life that God has given to us at regeneration. With this life comes a new nature that provides new drives and desires to live for God and allows us to experience a rich and meaningful life that counts for God.

This new nature is the character of God’s own life being lived through our life, providing us with peace, joy, patience, love, gentleness and many other character traits that will change our life forever. What a new quality of life this is! It’s a new way of life that promises to enhance our living all the days of our life upon earth as well as throughout eternity. Eternal life promises a new quality of life that will last forever. Eternal life can bring change into your life that will remain with you throughout your entire life upon earth but also throughout the eternal ages of time. It certainly is a wonderful, wonderful life. It is the abundant life.

Have you found the abundant life? Have you experienced the happy side of life? Why does your wife always tell you that you are a grouchy old man? Why are you a person who sits, soaks and sours about everything? Why are you always full of worry? Why are you always angry with other people? I'll tell you why, it's because you are not feasting off of the abundant life that is within you. Some Christians live a miserable life instead of enjoying the wonderful abundant life that they can experience through God's indwelling life.

John 17:3 says:

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

Jesus uses the word “life” before the word “eternal” in order to convey the quality aspect of eternal life. Eternal life is more than just an eternal saving relationship before God. Eternal life is an abiding relationship with God. This means that the “life eternal” that we receive at the time of salvation is intended to produce a new loving relationship with God. The eternal life that we have implanted within our spirit is a life that opens up our capacity to fellowship with God. It is a life that introduces us into the fellowship of God's dear Son, through which we share a union with (John 14:20). The result of this new union is that we can get to know God experientially and walk in a new relationship with Him.

Eternal life opens up a whole new world to our lives! We begin to see, understand, and experience the presence of God like we never have before. The eternal life within us unveils the wonderful abiding life of God to our own personal lives, so that we can experience the wonder, greatness and sweetness of His abiding presence. Eternal life is God revealing His life to our own life. This is why John emphasizes that we will get to “know” God experientially in our life as we enjoy eternal life (John 17:3). Eternal life brings the life of God into our own life and helps us to know God in an intimate and personal way. Knowing God! This is what eternal life is all about. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Through our union with the Son, we are to get to know God in a deeper fashion and learn to depend upon Him and experience His abiding friendship and assistance within our life.

Paul said in Philippians 3:10:

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

Dr. Andrew Telford was teaching homiletics at the Philadelphia College of the Bible (then School of the Bible) many years ago. In those days, a young girl who was going on the mission field, was required to take homiletics in order to be able to teach the children on the field. She was the last speaker of the day and began by announcing her text. The text was Philippians 3:10. She read the text and began to cry realizing that she needed to know the Lord in a much deeper way than she did. Dr. Telford said that they never did finish the class because every one in the room began weeping. Everyone knew that there was a wonderful life to be had in their relationship and fellowship with Christ.

Dear friend, Christ Himself is our eternal life and He provides us with a new quality of life that calls us into a deeper and more intimate relationship or experience with Him (“That I may know him”). We can know and fellowship with Christ in a new intimate way and experience the wonder of His presence within our life because of His eternal life within us.

“My God and I go in the field together,
We walk and talk as good friends should and do;
We clasp our hands, our voices ring with laughter,
My God and I walk through the meadows hue.”

So there you have it. Life! This is what eternal life is in its practical outworking within your own life. You now have the life of God and can be introduced to the very fellowship and likeness of His abiding life within you. This in return brings us into a new relationship with God that helps us to experience His own personal presence, love, joy, peace, patience, victory, strength and power. It is a life that manifests itself in an overflowing, superabounding, extraordinary, surpassing and fulfilling way. Oh what a life it is!

1 Timothy 1:16 gives us this wonderful promise:

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”

What are you looking for in life? I hope you are looking and seeking to experience the abundance that eternal life offers you. Eternal life is a new quality of life that will make your old life look like a squashed tomato! I want to say today that you don't know what life is all about unless you have eternal life abiding within you and are drawing from its newness and abundance, which is designed to enhance the quality of your life.

The age-old question has always been "What is life?" Many years ago I asked a man this question while sitting in an airport terminal. He was some college professor going to some university. However, when I asked him the question, I received a very strange answer. He said to me, "Life is the span of time in the sphere of nothingness." To this day, I have never really figured out what he meant by that statement! The answer to this question by the Christian should be this: "Life is abundant, life is full, life is meaningful, life is relevant, life is rich, life is overflowing, life is wonderful!"

"It's a wonderful, wonderful life,
When you know the Lord above.
It's a wonderful, wonderful life,
When He's saved you by His love;
There's a joy that you never once knew,
And a peace in the darkest night.
As you travel along, in your heart there's a song,
It's a wonderful, wonderful life, It's a wonderful, wonderful life!"