

EXPANDED EDITION

SEEING the UNSEEN

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A 90-Day Devotional
to Set Your Mind on Eternity

RANDY ALCORN

Author of If God Is Good

What Readers Are Saying About *Seeing the Unseen*

“For over fifty years, my wheelchair has helped me focus on eternal things, rather than the passing things of this earth. But how do you set your mind on heavenly realities? How can we live, knowing that everything we do on earth has a direct bearing on our eternal estate? My friend Randy Alcorn answers these questions on every page of his wonderful new book, *Seeing the Unseen*. I highly recommend this ninety-day devotional to all Christians who want to enrich their joy in Heaven!”

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“Alcorn’s insights from the Scriptures are clear, cogent, profound, and practical. We all need to be reminded of the hope we have in Christ. I highly recommend this excellent compilation of Alcorn’s finest thoughts on Heaven and living for eternity.”

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“This devotional written by Randy Alcorn is one of the best I have read or own. Topics are all spot on, and scripture accompanies each devotional. Many have brought great encouragement to me, and many more have brought great conviction. Be good to yourself and read this daily devotional.”

—Jean

“This is like sitting down in the study of a trusted pastor for a daily talk.”

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“Like all of Randy Alcorn’s writing, it’s a refreshing drink of eternity for my day!”

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Fixing Our Eyes on the Unseen

Do you have a life verse? Mine is 2 Corinthians 4:18, which is posted on our ministry website and at the end of every e-mail I send:

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.
For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (NIV)

What does Scripture mean when it tells us to fix our eyes on what we can't even see? How do we begin to do that?

Even though as Christians we affirm the reality of the spiritual realm, sometimes we succumb to the naturalistic assumption that what we see is real and what we don't see isn't. Many people conclude that God can't be real because we can't see Him. And Heaven can't be real because we can't see it. But we must recognize our blindness. The blind must take by faith that there are stars in the sky. If they depend on their ability to see, they will conclude there are no stars.

For many people, including many believers, Heaven is a mysterious word describing a place they don't understand and therefore don't look forward to. We will one day be delivered from the blindness that obscures the light of God's world. In the meantime, here in what C. S. Lewis called the Shadowlands, we must remind

ourselves what Scripture tells us about the life to come. What we otherwise could not have known about Heaven, “God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:10). God tells us about our eternal home in His Word, not so we can shrug our shoulders and remain ignorant, but because He wants us to anticipate what awaits us and those we love, and because it has the power to transform the way we live today.

Life on Earth matters, not because it’s the only life we have but precisely because it isn’t—it’s the beginning of a life that will continue without end. It’s the precursor of life on the New Earth. Eternal life doesn’t begin when we die; it has already begun. With eternity in view, nearly any honest activity—whether building a shed, driving a bus, pruning trees, changing diapers, or caring for a patient—can be an investment in God’s kingdom.

God is eternal. His Place is eternal. His Word is eternal. His people are eternal. Center your life around God, His Place, His Word, and His people, and reach out to those eternal souls who desperately long for His person and His place. Then no matter what you do for a living, your days here will make a profound difference for eternity and you will be fulfilling the biblical admonition to fix your eyes on what is unseen.

This book includes ninety daily devotionals on a variety of topics related to living each day purposefully with an eternal perspective. I hope these readings will encourage you to live with eternity in mind as you follow Jesus with all your heart.

Randy Alcorn

Living for the Line

When we live with eternity in view, even the tasks of washing dishes and mowing lawns become an investment in God's plan.

The people who change lives are the ones who point us away from the world's short-term perspective to God's long-term perspective. Life on Earth is a dot, a brief window of opportunity; life in Heaven (and ultimately on the New Earth) is a line going out from that dot for eternity. If we're smart, we'll live not for the dot but for the line.

When we view our short today in light of eternity's long tomorrow (to use A. W. Tozer's expression), even the little choices we make become tremendously important. After death we will never have another chance to share Christ with one who can be saved, to give a cup of water to the thirsty, to serve our church. No wonder Scripture commands us, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2, NIV).

From childhood most of us learn to stifle our thirst for the eternal, replacing it with the pursuit of the temporal. But when we live with eternity in view, we'll do everything with a transformed perspective, not only preaching and witnessing but also washing dishes and mowing lawns. Almost any honest activity can be an eternal contribution, an investment in God's eternal plan.

Perspectives from God's Word



“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

“And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward” (Matthew 10:42).

Perspectives from God's People



“Let no one apologize for the powerful emphasis Christianity lays upon the doctrine of the world to come. Right there lies its immense superiority to everything else within the whole sphere of human thought or experience. . . . We do well to think of the long tomorrow.” —A. W. Tozer

“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next.” —C. S. Lewis

For more: Read the blog post “Six Eternal Truths to Remember Each Day”: epm.org/6truths

Seeing God as the Source

We should see God as the Source of all good and our Sustainer through everything bad. God alone is the Fountain of Life.

As Romans 1:20 suggests, God's fingerprints can be seen everywhere in His creation: on the friendships we enjoy, the food we eat, and the pleasures of family, work, and hobbies. But we should never let these secondary pleasures eclipse our love for God. In fact, sometimes we must forgo them to focus more fully on Him. We should thank Him for all of life's joys and allow them to draw us closer to Him.

God welcomes prayers of thanksgiving for a simple meal, a lively conversation, a captivating book, and every other good thing. When we fail to acknowledge God as the Source of all good things, we fail to give Him the recognition and glory He deserves. We separate God from joy, which is like trying to separate heat from fire or wetness from rain.

God is the Source of all good and our Sustainer through everything bad. Consider the perspective of one accustomed to suffering who can still say, "They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:8–9). God alone is the Fountain

of Life. Without Him there could be neither life nor joy, neither abundance nor delights.

Perspectives from God's Word



“My heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him”
(Psalm 28:7).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above”
(James 1:17).

Perspectives from God's People



“There are but two lessons for Christians to learn: the one is, to enjoy God in every thing; the other is, to enjoy every thing in God.” —Charles Simeon

“He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake.” —Augustine

For more: Read the blog post “Longing for God and Joy, from Augustine”:
epm.org/longingjoy

The Preserving Power of Humility

*When we become proud, we operate outside
the grace God gives only to the humble.
Humility preserves us; pride destroys us.*

When we start thinking we're special, that we deserve everyone's respect, that we have a lot to offer, then we become proud. That means God is opposed to us, and we are operating outside of the grace that He gives only to the humble. We become a fall waiting to happen: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Humility preserves us; pride destroys us. Acting in arrogance is like wearing a sign that says "Kick me." Being proud is a prayer to God: "Strike me down." It's a prayer He's certain to answer. Every day, every hour, we choose either to humble ourselves or to be proud.

If you want to be humble, take a good look at God and then a good look at yourself, and notice the difference. When you see Him as He is and yourself as you are, the very thought of being proud or arrogant should be absolutely laughable.

Perspectives from God's Word



"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

“You who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” (1 Peter 5:5–6).

Perspectives from God’s People



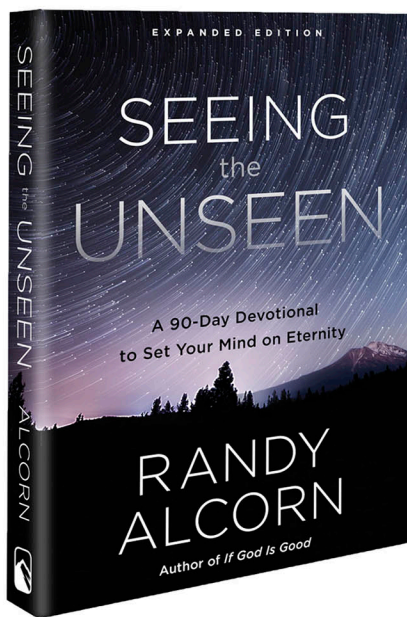
“Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.” —C. S. Lewis

“They that know God will be humble; they that know themselves cannot be proud.” —John Flavel

For more: Read the blog post “Humility: Recognizing Who We Really Are”:
epm.org/humility

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