"New City People"

Rev 21-22:6

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you to watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

Getting Started:

In this segment, Joe Stowell illustrates a point with a John Wayne World War II movie, The Longest Day, in which the Germans had a practice of moving road signs.

- Have you ever been confused by a sign at an airport or on a street, highway, or trail? Did you end up getting lost?
- Can you recall any other occasion in which you got lost?
- Can you think of a time when you were lost but felt confident you were going in the right direction?

Strength through Scripture:

Read Revelation 22:1-7.

1. Why do you think there is not a whole lot in Scripture about the details of what heaven is like?

2. Joe states that the thirteenth and final description of heaven, found in Revelation 21:1–22:6, is that we will be identified with the wonderful, liberating person of Jesus Christ for all eternity (see 22:4). How do you feel about having Jesus' name "tattooed" on your forehead?

Notes:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea."

Rev 21:1

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3. Joe points out that in Revelation 22:7 the apostle John's account of heaven moves from the place to the promise. Do you really believe and expect that Jesus could return and take you to heaven at any time—even today?

4. Read John 14:1-3. How do you react to Joe's claim that Jesus' promise is so personal that if you were the only one on this planet to be His, He would be preparing a place for you right now and would come back to get you and take you there?

5. Joe states that when you understand not only the wonder of heaven but also the precious promise that God is preparing a place there for you, it should build a passion in your heart that ought to make a dramatic difference in your life. How would you rate the level of that passion in your life?

Digging Deeper:

If you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

1. How much can you relate to Joe's statement that when people think of heaven they think about "pearly gates and streets of gold"—concepts that have become trite and of little significance?

2. If you had to come up with one word to describe heaven, what would it be?

3. How do your attitudes and actions square with Paul's words in Philippians 1:21 and 23, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. . . . I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far"?

Strength through Reflection:

1. Joe states that Satan comes along and moves the sign to heaven and tries to make us think that heaven is in a different direction—like a new house or car, the person you're in love with, a promotion, your bank account, a vacation, or something else on this planet. What bogus "direction" are you tempted to associate with heaven?

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2. On the other hand, when the sign is pointed to heaven we keep thinking about doing something for eternity, like writing a check for a missionary who is leading people to Christ. Can you see your life taking on a whole different meaning when the signpost is headed to heaven in terms of your possessions, time, talents, and desires?

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer. Thank God that Jesus Christ on the cross is our D-day, and that He won the victory and has marshaled us toward heaven. He knows the way; He's got the compass. He's been there before, and He's calling us.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Heavenly Father, thank You that I can say with the apostle Paul: for me to live is Christ but to die is gain. Going home to be with You would be far better than anything this world has to offer. May the signpost of my heart be pointed toward heaven. May the wonder of the place of heaven and the awe that I am included in the promise of heaven stir a life-changing passion in my heart."

Closing Call to Action:

Think about all the important things in your life: money, house, relationships, time, energy. If the signpost of your heart is headed toward heaven, how could you use those things differently? How could you use them to make a difference for heaven?

Think about it, and then write it down. Make sure that not only you are on your way to heaven but that the stuff of your life is on the way to heaven too.

Notes:

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