

Daily Devotional, October 19, 2020 The Greatest Race of Our Lives

⁹ *One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."* ¹⁰ *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.* ¹¹ *It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. Revelations 21:9-11 (NIV)*

I seem to know a fair number of people who are good book starters, but terrible book finishers. They read until they feel they have a good handle on where the story's outcome, or the theory is taking them, but can never force themselves to finish out the decisive aspects of the last few chapters.

There is one book that we ought not leave unfinished, and it is the Bible. One might think that they know the essentials already and that the suspense has already been eliminated—I mean we already know that Jesus died and rose again so that, by faith, we can have eternal life—but there is so much more to hear about the final outcome. Paul gives us some amazing instruction on how to live the good Christian life and how to support one another in striving for a loving and supportive Christian community. But the last book, in the final chapters of the Bible contain something we especially need.

At the very end, in the book of Revelation, is a picture-perfect image of what our eternal future as believers in Christ will be like. It is a future that is so magnificent, so stimulating, a place reserved for us that we ought to set our sights on and desire with every ounce of our being. If we would only read the Bible to the end, we would truly grasp what God has waiting for us, and nothing, NOTHING, could hold us back from living our lives all out for God.

In the world of sports, there is an important exercise I'm aware of called visualization. The concept is that whatever the sport might be, you can train yourself to see in your mind's eye the perfect execution that is needed. Whether it be the perfect skill, match, game, shot, or race. And when you can see it clearly in your mind, it's as if an invisible force takes you far beyond your physical ability. Suddenly, merely by mentally picturing your specialty performed the ideal way, you are able to execute it more perfectly.

In much the same manner, it is imperative for *us* to be capable of picturing exactly where we are going. A runner does not race by focusing merely on the next step; they race with their sights set on the finish line. When we target our faith, we fix our minds on *our* ultimate goal.

God would not have given us this glimpse of the eternal future in His Word if it were not something God wanted for us. I strongly encourage you to read Revelation 21-22 in its entirety. As you read it, try to imagine yourself in that amazingly glistening city. Picture yourself walking on its marvelous streets. Imagine the sights, the sounds, and the tastes and smells of the magnificent banquet feasts.

Focus your mind each day on these things. This is what God wants for God's people. When you believe that, it will give you the strength you need to overcome every hardship, doubt, and anxiety that you face today. In fact, I believe that it should be enough for us to shout out in great joy and exhilaration: Come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for the gift of Heaven! You have created such an incredible place for me to spend eternity with You, and I am amazed, yet humbled that you would have prepared such a place for me. Please help me to live today with Heaven in mind, so that I will not give up or turn aside, but will sprint towards the finish line, running the race of life with eternity always in mind. For Your glory. Amen.