

Do You Want to Go to Heaven?

The story goes something like this: An very elderly “Christian” couple dies suddenly in an accident on the way to play golf- which they, as avid golfers, did 2-3 times a week. Upon death, they’re immediately whisked up to heaven where Peter meets them at the gate. He suggests a tour of the city foursquare to help acquaint them with their new home. The first stop is, of course, the golf course. It is immaculate, and more gorgeous than any they’ve ever seen. But then he further describes its amenities: the ball always flies straight and true- no hooks, slices, duffs, or worm-burners, never leaves the “fair” way, there are no longer any penalty strokes, and though it may not go in the hole on every shot, it always winds up right where you intended. After all, “This is heaven,” Peter explains. The couple is amazed.... and quite excited to say the least. Then Peter shows them their place. It’s everything they always wanted in a home, but could never afford. It’s lavish, but in a tasteful way of course- except for all the gold gilding and marble floors, of course. It’s spacious, but not too large. It has every modern convenience (and even several that are *other worldly!*). Everything is *just so*, “And,” Peter explains, “Nothing ever breaks, wears out, or needs cleaning- after all, this is heaven.” “But how much does it cost?” the husband skeptically asks. “It’s absolutely free,” Peter replies. “This is amazing!” the wife exclaims. Finally, Peter leads them to the clubhouse- which is fabulous, of course. Before them is a spread of every delicacy imaginable.... in abundance. All their favorite foods were there, and looked simply scrumptious. As their open mouths began to drool, Peter quickly added, “Nothing is fattening, bad for you (regardless of what it would have done to your cholesterol numbers otherwise), and never runs out or gets too cold or hot.” “This is great,” the husband begins timidly, “But how much does it cost?” “It’s free!” Peter gleefully exclaims. All of sudden the husband starts cursing his wife with every expletive he knew, and a few others he must have made up on the spot. “Hey, hey, hey!” Peter interrupts, “What are you doing? You can’t talk like that here! What’s the matter?” The man glares at his wife, “If it had been for you and all those bran muffins, we could have been here years ago!”

We all have our concepts of what heaven will be like. Many of them are not precisely what the Scriptures describe. In 1980, Country and Western singer T.G. Sheppard released a song entitled, “Do You Want to Go to Heaven?” It was a catchy tune, but I was old enough to realize that the “heaven” he referenced was not the one of the Bible. The song’s title question was posed by the *women of the house* to a young, innocent, summer farm hand regarding sexual immorality / adultery. It furthered the notion that the world has no idea of what makes heaven *heavenly*. Do we? Do we want to go there for the *right* reasons?

Heaven is **not** *heavenly* because:

- **We’ll get to spend eternity “doing” our favorite earthly pastime.** We can stop putting golf balls in the caskets of our departed friends. The truth of 1Tim.6:7 remains, and will remain, true. Notions of spending eternity enjoying sports, gardening, or our favorite earthly hobby fall spectacularly flat.
- **We’ll get to enjoy some sort of “heaven on earth in heaven” sights.** Some of you have been to all 50 states, and even several foreign countries. You’ve seen breath-taking sights of amazing beauty, wonder, and amazement. You may have even exclaimed, “Surely this is heaven on earth!” May I kindly say, “No, no it isn’t.” No scenery on earth holds enough wonder and amazement to be even compared to heaven. Everything we see and know here is temporal, finite, and destined for corruption and destruction, 2Pet.1:4b; 3:10,12.

- **We'll be "forever young."** Some folks think being forever young would be heavenly. Not me. Awkwardness, Acne, ignorant arrogance, obsessive self-consciousness, naivety, and the paralyzing fear and pressure of not being accepted or liked by peers? No thanks! Even if your "youth" was different... and better, such is not the stuff of heaven, Eccl.12:1-8.
- **We'll be reunited with loved pets, friends, and relatives.** We *do* love our pets, our friends, and our relatives- and for some of us, they rank in that order! How could heaven be *heavenly* if some (or all?) of them are not there? How could there possibly be "No Tears in Heaven"? I certainly don't have all the answers to this (or any other!) question. But, while I believe the joys of proper marriage are a *foretaste* of heaven, they are not on the menu there, let alone are they the *entrée*, cp. Eph.5:22-33; Prov.5:18-19; Song of Songs 1-8 with Matt.22:30. If this is true of the best and closest of all *earthly* unions, how much more so for our lesser loves and bonds?

Heaven is *heavenly* because:

- **We'll be doing "heavenly things" such as singing and praising God.** "What will we *do* in heaven?" I'm sometimes asked. "Sing and worship!" is the answer, Rev.5:9; 14:3; 15:3. Sing like we've never sung before! As uplifted, encouraged, and inspired as we've felt here while singing praises (another true *foretaste* of heaven!), how much more so when joined by Moses and the Lamb, and all the host of heaven!
- **We'll enjoy the beauties that are beyond comprehension- let alone comparison.** Whatever *earthly* wonders we have beheld, none of them will prepare us for the glorious beauty of the *city four square*, Rev.21:2,9-21,23-27. If God could create an *earthly Paradise* where every need of man was abundantly fulfilled- and He did, Gen.2:8-9:15, that was destined to be abandoned and lost, how much more so do we suppose that the *glories of heaven*- which shall never fade, are beyond compare?
- **We'll be "eternal"- having put off mortality and put on immortality.** I've said many times before that I'm sure *exactly* what Phil.3:20-21 means, but I sure want to find out. Our mortal, finite minds have trouble comprehending that which is *immortal* and *infinite*- but that is exactly what we will become, 1Cor.15:35-44,47-57. The *hardship, pain, suffering, and death* of earth will be no more, Rev.21:4!
- **But most importantly, we'll be with God- and that's what makes heaven "heavenly."** If we make our lives *here* about Him rather than us, our eternity can be about Him forever. The pure love, absolute goodness, and glory of heaven is that we will be with God forever, Rev.21:22; 22:1-5. But if we don't enjoy being *with* and *in* God here, we won't have to worry about it there later (Rev.20:14-15; 21:8).

Conclusions:

1. Don't taint heaven with *earthly* concepts of pleasure.
2. Desire to be with God- removed from all *earthly* pain, suffering, and death; and enjoying the glorious pleasure and beauty of heaven with Him and those that love and worship Him.
3. Heaven can be yours, if you *believe*, if you *obey*. Will you?
4. As my friend Dee Bowman is fond of saying, "If we miss heaven, we've missed all there is."