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The Day You Finally Become Perfect

In Living Color, Part 9

Selected Scripture

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

One day, our bodies will be perfect. We will see Jesus face to face and walk with Him for all eternity. It's hard to imagine what that day will be, but we know it will be glorious. Right now, our world is full of darkness, but we are looking forward to the day when the Light of the world completely eradicates that darkness. We press on because we know our future is when God brings Paradise back; and in that Paradise, we will be singing with the angels, worshiping and praising God in our glorified bodies.

Discussion Points:

Because of sin, our bodies are full of imperfections. For those who follow Jesus, we are promised a glorified body – a body without ailments, sickness, imperfections, etc.

- Do you have physical imperfections that you wish were not there?
- How does God use those imperfections to show you how good He is and that He has a plan for you?
- What are some details of Jesus' resurrected body that we can look to for explaining what our glorified bodies will be?

We identify ourselves by our family, job, social status, etc. In heaven, our identity will be a continuation of our identity now.

- We allow so many things to define us or contribute to our identity. What does Scripture tell us about our identity as believers?
- Scripture says we will be given a new name which refers to our personal relationship with God. What is your relationship with God now?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Heaven will be a place of creativity, light, music, and all things good.

- The devil wants to try to distract and deter people from following Jesus. What can you share with others about the joy of looking forward to being with Jesus for all eternity?
- We will no longer argue but be able to live in total peace with others. How does this contradict our culture today?
- What are you looking forward to most about Heaven?

Gospel Connection:

The Gospel is the beginning. From Adam taking of the fruit and sin entering the world, we are on this constant journey of chasing after self or chasing after Jesus. Thankfully, God provided a way for us to live with Him for all of eternity. By sending Jesus to die in our place and rise from the dead, we are following the One who knows where we are going. We need the Gospel to get to that point – Heaven. We enter into a relationship with Jesus that will one day, lead to an even more personal relationship with Him. We will see Him face-to-face. We will walk with Him, all because of the Gospel.

Practical Implications:

Think: What will it be like to live with God? How does that encourage you?

Pray: Ask God to remind you of your hope in Christ. Ask Him to help you live to the fullest for Him now as we wait for eternity.

Do: Chase after Jesus, and share Him with others.

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I am convinced that if we could travel back in time to the six days of creation, we would have been awestruck at the creative genius of our Creator Lord.

The book of Job informs us that the angels were created before the universe and planet earth and Job informs us that the angels were singing glory and praise to God the Son as He spoke into existence the world and universe beyond (Job 38:7). What more would you want to do, observing the creative acts of God, but sing praise?!

If we could have somehow swooped down into the Garden of Eden and seen Adam and Eve, newly created on the 6th day of creation, they alone would have taken our breath away. Perfectly formed . . . sinless in character . . . stunningly beautiful and handsome beyond words . . . unblemished . . . healthy and strong.

I agree with one author that could Adam and Eve see us as we are now, we would take their breath away – filling them with grief and pity for what has happened as a result of their sin and ours . . . our health . . . our form . . . our countenance . . . they would be deeply saddened that our health and beauty have been so marred by the effects of sin over these thousands of years.¹ We would be a mere shadow of their original beauty and perfection in innocence.

Because of sin, paradise was lost and sin has run its course now for centuries – to this very day – through our own willing submission to the Tempter as sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.

But a Redeemer was promised to bring Paradise back; and because of Christ – the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) – and because of His sacrifice for sin and sinners, Satan's ultimate plans were crushed and Paradise is going to be regained – and so much more.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the eternal state – the new heavens and earth – where we will live forever – will be the radical changes to our bodies.

As promised, I want to include in this series on God's creation, a session or two on God's new creation – and I want to spend at least one session on our future bodies – as God puts us together to last forever – that future time in Heaven where we will resemble not just Adam and Eve, but our glorified Lord.

Paul the Apostle writes to the Corinthian believers who were wondering about their future existence in Heaven, just as we do to this day. And he'll answer the question:

Will I have a physical body in Heaven?

And the short answer is yes, but it's going to be different. Yes, but different. In other words, there is a continuity between your earthly body and your eternal body. You're not going to die as Fred Smith and go live in Heaven as Sam Jones.

Paul writes to the Philippians in chapter 3 and verse 20; For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory.

Philippians 3:20-21

Your resurrected, eternal body is the same body that you had on earth – only glorified and made eternal like the body of Jesus who becomes our prototype – having risen from the dead. Jesus was still Jesus after He arose . . . He had the same body, only different . . . and much better. In fact, according to ***John chapter 20***, the significant difference between our glorified bodies and the body of Jesus is that we're going to be healed of everything - all our scars will be

forever gone; but Jesus chose to retain some of the scars of His crucifixion.

He said to Thomas in that upper room – reach here and touch the nail prints in my hands . . . touch my side where they pierced me with a spear (*John 20:27*).

In the glorified body of Jesus, He chose to retain the nail scars which will serve throughout eternity as an everlasting testimony and tribute to His atoning sacrifice and redemption through His blood for our salvation. He'll have scars – we won't. Which means the only thing man-made in Heaven will be the scars on the body of Jesus.

Now when Paul says here that our bodies will be transformed like Jesus' body, what did Jesus look like after He rose from the dead? He looked like a human being . . . He wasn't an alien creature or a ghost. He was recognizable to His disciples, unless He masked His appearance somehow to remain unrecognizable for a time – as He did with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (*Luke 24*).

He talked with His friends – in fact, we're told that on four different occasions, He ate food with them . . . He wasn't some disembodied spirit. He had a real, physical, functional, genuinely human body – only different and better.

We're also told that after His resurrection Jesus passed through closed walls and doors (*John 20:19*). He appeared and disappeared suddenly (*Luke 24*).ⁱⁱ

So for Paul to inform us that our bodies will be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory, that's pretty exciting stuff.

What else do we know about our future, eternal bodies?

Will my immortal body function like it does now?

In many ways, the answer is yes. We're going to inherit a new earth – where the Father's House of gold and glory will rest (more on that in another session).

John's revelation of Heaven, as we've already discovered together, will involve a river flowing in between orchards of trees.

We're going to see with our eyes, smell the flowers and budding trees with our noses; taste fruit and enjoy feasting with mouths and taste buds, hear the rushing and cascading of the river and all the sounds of a new creation with our ears; and we'll fill our lungs with air and then with our voices join the hosts of heaven in singing praises to our glorious, majestic, Creator God.

When scripture describes Heaven with animals and fruit trees and rivers and feasting and rejoicing and worshipping, why would anyone conclude that all of that is symbolic and not literal?

You're not going to be some ethereal spirit being floating around heavenly clouds where you'll do nothing more than play a harp all day.

There is no reason theologically or grammatically or contextually to spiritualize away or doubt or deny any of these biblical descriptions.

Why not just let Heaven be what God's word says it will be?! And your new body, by the way, too.

According to Biblical descriptions in the preaching of our Lord as well as the tour of Heaven given to the Apostle John, believers in Heaven will be capable of watching, talking, walking, kneeling, singing, leaping, listening, eating, touching, laughing and on and on.

I mean the whole thing kicks off with a banquet, Isaiah records for us in chapter 25 where the Lord himself will make sure the food served at the banquet feast is nothing but the finest of foods.

Isaiah writes that *the Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all the redeemed (Isaiah 25:6)*.

Here's another question – What will my identity be in heaven?

In other words, will I still be me? I mean, I'd really kind of like to trade myself in. Well, in a

way you will. But your eternal identity will be a continuation – and perfection – of your identity now.

People in Heaven are called by the same name they had on earth. Abraham is still Abraham; Isaac is still Isaac and Jacob is still Jacob (*Matthew 8:11*).

We'll be given a new name, according to *Revelation 2:17*, but that's a reference to unique intimacy we'll share between God and us. Which means that your relationship with the Lord will be personal as well as corporate. But Heaven does not involve the loss of personal and individual identity.ⁱⁱⁱ

You're not reincarnating into some other life form as Hinduism believes. You're not melting into some universal consciousness without any personal identity as Buddhism believes.

The Apostle John sees in his tour of Heaven the city of gold and he specifically mentions that he sees a literal city surrounded by literal walls – He writes; It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates . . . and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

Revelation 21:12

Imagine, this city is a city of history . . . the history of Jacob's 12 sons – history we will not forget, by the way.

John sees further; And the wall of the city had twelve foundations stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation 21:14

We're evidently not going to forget the history of the Apostolic era either. And that means Peter will still be known as Peter . . . Judah and Joseph will still be Judah and Joseph . . . Andrew is still Andrew. And Fred and Susie and John and Jim is still Fred and Susie and John and Jim. And Stephen – your pastor – will still be Stephen – without all the bad parts and broken down parts.

Which leads me to ask another question;
Will your body be perfect in Heaven?

The answer is yes . . . at last . . . finally . . . physical perfection. Paul describes it to the Corinthians by telling them that our resurrected bodies will replace that which is corruptible with incorruptibility (1 Corinthians 15).

In other words, nothing diseased, dying, deformed, disabling, digressing, discouraging will ever again be a part of your body.

But again – there will be continuity between your immortal body and the body you now occupy. You're going to still look like you.

Jesus didn't resurrect from the grave as a fair skinned, tall, blonde haired man. He resurrected as who He was – a Jewish man, which means His skin was bronze, his eyes were brown or black as was his hair.

If you have blue eyes now you're going to have blue eyes in heaven; if you have blonde hair or red hair, before it all turned grey, you're going to go back to the vitality of your youth and you're going to have blonde hair or red hair. And for those of us who used to have hair, we're going to get it back. How perfect is that?

Beloved, according to the Bible, you are going to become transformed into an immortal specimen of eternal youth and health.

You will never again catch of glimpse of yourself in the mirror and notice wrinkles or blemishes; you will never experience another moment of sickness, injury or allergy.^{iv}

Paul writes to the Corinthians in chapter 15 as he describes your new, immortal, eternal body – For this perishable will put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

I Corinthians 15:53

Everything that is mortal will be replaced with immortality; everything that is *perishable* – you could understand that to mean – everything that ages – everything that wears out – everything that doesn't work anymore or never did work right – all of that will be removed and your new body will be imperishable.

You will be forever – absolute, imperishable perfection.

And for those in the Body of Christ who suffer the greatest imperfections, Heaven will only be that much sweeter.

Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic, writes, I can still hardly believe it. I, with shriveled, bent fingers, atrophied muscles, gnarled knees and no feeling from my shoulders down, will one day have a new body. Can you imagine the promise this is to someone with cerebral palsy, someone brain-injured or with multiple sclerosis? Imagine the hope this gives someone who is manic-depressive; or someone who is spinal-cord injured like me? No other religion promises new bodies, hearts and minds – only in the Gospel of Christ do hurting people find such incredible hope.

Joni tells of speaking to a group of mentally handicapped Christians – they knew they were mentally disabled and couldn't do things considered normal – and when Joni told them they would one day receive new bodies they smiled and thought that was great; but when she went on and told them they would have new minds – they literally broke out in cheers and applause.^v

And let me add this about your new appearance. It will be much more magnificent than a healthy body and a head of hair.

Jesus preached a sermon which Matthew quotes where the Lord repeats an Old Testament promise from Daniel where the righteous – the right with God – Jesus says – The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

(Matthew 13:43/Daniel 12:3)

Is that figurative or should we take it literally? John described Jesus in His glorified body shining like the sun in its strength (*Revelation 1:16*).

In *Luke 9*, where Jesus meets with Moses and Elijah on the mount and His glory peaks through the veil of flesh for a few moments in time; Peter and the other disciples awaken just in time to see it and Luke later describes that event, no doubt told over and over again by his friends, Peter, James and John – that Jesus's clothing was as brilliant as lightning – Luke

writes – like brilliant, shining, flashing lightning.

Luke further reported that Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus and they also were in – quote – *glorious splendor (Luke 9:29)*. Even Moses and Elijah are described with words like *glorious* and *splendor*.

Do you remember the narrative in Exodus 34 where Moses was in the presence of the glory of God as he received the tablets of the law – and as he came down from the mountain, Exodus records; And Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with God. So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel say Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone . . . and he put a veil over his face.

Exodus 34:29-30

There isn't any reason to take this idea of our bodies shining with brilliant light figuratively and not literally.

God Himself is gloriously bright and brilliant and we, as His image bearers will one day be perfected and reflect in our own bodies – our own faces, in our own unique manner – the shining glorious splendor of our Lord.

You beloved, won't just have a new body – you will shine with brilliant light throughout the Kingdom and into the glories of Heaven.

Every believer I am speaking to today, will one day become shining immortals – still uniquely you, but breathtakingly stunning in splendor and brilliant light.

That leads me to a practical question:

How will I get around and travel in Heaven?

I personally believe that one of Satan's greatest discouragements for the believer is taking all the color and excitement and breathtaking aspects of Heaven.

If Jesus could materialize and then disappear, and we're told by the Apostle Paul that our bodies will be transformed into conformity with His body, why not us too?

Keep in mind, we're not becoming deity; just because our bodies will mirror the glory of

Christ's glorified body, we're not going to become omnipotent, omnipresent or omniscient.

We will have limitations and we will have the need to learn and the desire to, like never before.

So when it comes to getting around the Father's house, or the New Jerusalem, or around the new earth – for one thing, we're given a description of our new home.

One author provoked my thinking as he pointed out the Celestial city is clearly marked by streets of gold and gates and foundations . . . streets and gates suggest conventional means of transportation. He wrote, there's nothing sinful about wheels and motors and automobiles – along with technology and invention and artistry.^{vi}

The description of the Millennial Kingdom and even into the eternal state implies culture and development and artistry and music and composition and invention and technology.

Heaven is going to be a place of incredible creativity. Imagine the music you musicians will compose. Imagine the paintings you artists will paint.

Imagine, how long it would take redeemed, immortalized, perfected engineers, working with unclouded and unhindered inventive minds, in full and joyful cooperation with each other, to make new technological inventions and advancements.

The eternal state will be a place where the Lord will allow and encourage you to use the skills and talents He coded into your DNA – so that you will one day find freedom and joy and true worship in continuing to invent and build and paint and compose and discover and explore the new heavens and earth.

There isn't any reason to doubt, from the record of scripture, that all of this will take place forever on the New Earth and throughout the New Universe.

I'm convinced one of the strategies of the Devil is to take all the fun out of your eternal future . . . to promote the idea that Heaven is this place where you're all dressed up with nowhere to go.

No, God created you – and one day He will perfect you and release you to do everything He creatively built into you, for your enjoyment and for His glory.

John MacArthur writes in his book about heaven that it will include enjoying incredible gourmet delights – in fact, much of heaven is designed for sheer pleasure.

David wrote of Heaven in *Psalm 16* that it is a place where we will be filled with joy and with eternal pleasures. The joy of our Lord's presence – the joy of seeing Him – the joy of personally – face-to-face thanking Him for His redemption and His grace; Then to discover a world re-created by Him for us to explore and enjoy – a return to a far better Garden of Eden – only this time without sin you can explore the Amazon River and climb the highest mountains and venture into space as new technologies are created to explore the Universe.

Ray Stedman, an evangelical pastor for many years, wrote, There will be new planets to develop, new principles to discover and new joys to experience. Every moment of eternity will be an adventure of discovery.

Ray Stedman—1917-1992

We forget one of our Lord's promises to us that one day our new world will ring with, not just music and joy and conversation and food and nature, but laughter.

What happens when friends gather around a table with some good food and conversation? There is laughter.

The Bible often portrays our future as a time of gathering and eating at a dinner table with the Lord. And what sounds will you hear? Laughter.

Jesus promised that in the kingdom to come mourning and grieving will be turned into laughter!

He said, ***Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh Luke 6:21.***

He said further in that sermon; You will leap for joy, because great is your reward in Heaven.

Luke 6:23

Nobody leaps for joy in silence! You will be shouting and smiling and singing and laughing for joy.

Heaven will be ringing with laughter. And imagine why? Paul wrote to the Philippians, ***I am confident of this very thing –that He – Christ – who began a good work in you will perfect it . . . (Philippians 1:6)***

When you see Him, that's the day you will finally be perfect! That's the day your life will be filled with light and laughter and music and joy.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 11/4//2018 by Stephen Davey.

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i Adapted from Randy Alcorn, Heaven (Tyndale, 2004), p. 281

ii Adapted from John MacArthur, The Glory of Heaven (Crossway Books, 1996), p. 130

iii Alcorn, p. 45

iv Adapted from online resources at Grace to You/library/B130703

v Alcorn, p. 286

vi Alcorn, p. 430