

Partners In Courage, April 2016

# Think About Heaven

Sermon by Wes Daughenbaugh

**INTRODUCTION:** Recently I bought and read a book called *IMAGINE HEAVEN* by John Burke. The author is a pastor of an evangelical church. He has studied over 1,000 near death experiences. The book gives the eyewitness accounts of people who died, saw heaven, and were brought back to life. He includes many scriptures to show that their accounts match up to what the Bible says.

I found the book very refreshing. This world is approaching the very end of the age. Our news is filled with sad and scary stories of wars and rumors of wars, not to mention economic woes, new diseases, terrorism and the like. Yet heaven awaits us in all its glory. This message will give you many testimonies from the book, *IMAGINE HEAVEN* plus many scriptures. So enjoy. Think about heaven!

## 1. IT IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT HEAVEN.

Peter wrote, **"Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming,"** 1 Peter 1:13).

Paul wrote, **"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things,"** (Colossians 3:1-2).

To the Philippian Christians Paul wrote, **"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things,"** (Philippians 4:8). Thinking about the things of heaven certainly meets and even exceeds these criteria.

One more verse along this line. Hebrews 3:1 **Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.** It is good and healthy to think about the accounts of those who have looked into the eyes of Jesus Christ.

I just listed four admonitions to think of Jesus, heaven, and the things above. Yet most of us spend the majority of our time thinking about this world with all its many problems. We wear ourselves out and weaken ourselves when we forget to think about heaven.

## 2. THINK ABOUT THE GLORIOUS ENTRANCE TO HEAVEN.

Isaiah wrote, **"And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk in that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away,"** (Isaiah 35:9-10). When you come to the entrance of heaven you are going to be overtaken with gladness and joy. Everything that made you sad and made you sigh is going to FLEE AWAY! And it's going to be everlasting joy! Your head is going to be crowned with everlasting joy!

\*\*\*\* Don Piper was coming back from a pastors' conference and was driving across a narrow bridge. An oncoming 18-wheeler lost control on the rain soaked road and hit Don's car head on, running directly over it. Don was pronounced dead at the scene. However, a full 90 minutes later he came back to life. Here's some of what he saw while his spirit approached the glorious entrance of heaven.

“Joy pulsed through me as I looked around, and at that moment I became aware of a large crowd of people. They stood in front of a brilliant, ornate gate. They rushed toward me. I didn’t see Jesus, but I did see people I had known. As they surged toward me, I knew instantly that all of them had died during my lifetime.

Each person was smiling, shouting and praising God. I knew they were my celestial welcoming committee. The first person I recognized was Joe Kulbeth, my grandfather. He looked exactly as I remembered him, with his shock of white hair and what I called a big banana nose. He said, “Donnie!” He embraced me, holding me tightly. He was once again the robust, strong grandfather I had remembered as a child.

The crowd surrounded me. Some hugged me and a few kissed my cheek, while others pumped my hand. Never had I felt more loved.” Don met his childhood friend, Mike Wood, who had been killed in a car wreck at 19 years of age. Mike’s early death had broken Don’s heart. Now, receiving a hug from that same friend, the pain and grief vanished. He still didn’t know why his friend died so young, but he said, “My pain and grief vanished. The joyousness of the place wiped away any questions. Everything felt blissful. Perfect.” (Pages 84-85)

Jesus taught that there would be a heavenly welcoming committee. **“Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home,”** (Luke 16:9 NLT).

Four-year-old Colton Burpo had a brush with death and claimed to have visited heaven. He met his great grandfather “Pop” whom he had never seen on earth. He told his Dad, “He’s really nice.” Colton also said, “Mommy, I have two sisters.” His mother replied that Cassie was his only sister. “No!” Colton said. “I have two sisters. You had a baby die in your tummy, didn’t you?” His mother asked, “Who told you that?” He said, “She did, Mommy. She said she died in your tummy.” As his mother started to cry Colton said, “It’s okay, Mommy. God adopted her.”

My wife and I lost a child in a miscarriage that came in the years between the births of our two daughters. Once my wife was caught up to heaven and saw two twin boys who were so excited to see her. She believes we lost twin boys. That puts a smile on my face. What a great thing to think about, meeting friends, people we’ve won to Christ, relatives—what a joy it will be when we are welcomed into those eternal dwellings.

The Kelly Study, conducted in 2001 at the University of Virginia, found that 95% of the people encountered on the other side during near death experiences were deceased relatives, while only five percent were friends. Our earthly families seem to be really important in heaven. In the Old Testament, whenever a person would die, the Scriptures would say, **“Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age and he was gathered to his people,”** (Genesis 25:8). **“Then Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people,”** (Genesis 35:29). God created love, relationship, and family, and they remain important to him in Heaven.

### 3. THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE FOR HELL IS QUITE DIFFERENT.

There is only one near death experience in this book that shows the other side, where people are welcomed into hell. It is so stunning I’m going to briefly relate it. It will give you compassion for all the lost. It also reveals the amazing love of Jesus to rescue sinners.

Howard Storm was a professor of art at Northern Kentucky University. While taking students on a tour of Paris’s museums a stomach ulcer perforated his duodenum. Death usually comes in five hours from when something like this happens. But ten hours later they found that the doctor had gone home and they would have to wait until morning. He fought to stay alive, but knew he was dying. However, he didn’t believe in God, heaven, or hell and regarded them all as fairy tales.

Instead of the oblivion he expected he found himself standing up beside the bed. All his senses were extremely vivid. He looked at the face of the body in the bed and realized it was his own! He yelled and screamed trying to communicate to his wife, but she sat in her chair, oblivious to him since he was a spirit outside of his body.

Then he heard voices calling, "Howard, Howard." They were pleasant, male, female, old and young. Remember, he was in France and no one spoke English in the hospital. But these voices spoke in English. "Come out here," they said. "Let's go. Hurry up. We've been waiting for you for a long time."

"I can't," I said. I'm sick. I need an operation. I am very sick!"

"We can get you fixed up," they said. "If you hurry up. Don't you want to bet better? Don't you want help?" These people were irritated by his questions and hesitation. "We can't help you if you don't come out here."

He stepped out into the hall, full of anxiety. The area seemed light but very hazy and he couldn't see the people calling to him. As he tried to get close to them they withdrew deeper into the fog. He followed farther and farther. The more suspicious he became the more antagonistic and authoritarian they became. Howard writes, "They were whispering about my bare rear end, which wasn't covered by my hospital gown, and about how pathetic I was. It was increasingly clear that they were deceiving me. They began shouting and hurling insults at me, demanding that I hurry along. The more miserable I became the more enjoyment they derived from my distress."

"A terrible sense of dread was growing within me. When I looked around I was horrified to discover that we were in complete darkness. They began to push and shove me about. I began to fight back. A wild frenzy of taunting, screaming, and hitting ensued. I fought like a wild man. As I swung and kicked at them, they bit and tore back at me. All the while it was obvious that they were having great fun. I was aware that there were dozens or hundreds of them all around and over me. My attempts to fight back only provoked greater merriment. Every new assault brought howls of cacophonous laughter. They began to tear off pieces of my flesh. To my horror, I realized that I was being taken apart and eaten alive, methodically, slowly, so that their entertainment would last as long as possible."

"These creatures were once human beings. The best way I can describe them is to think of the worst imaginable person stripped of every impulse of compassion. They were a mob of beings totally driven by unbridled cruelty."

"As I lay on the ground my tormentors swarming around me, a voice emerged from my chest. It sounded like my voice, but it wasn't a thought of mine. 'Pray to God.' I remember thinking, 'Why? What a stupid idea.'" A second time the voice spoke to me, 'Pray to God.' A third time the voice said the same thing, 'Pray to God.'"

Howard tried to remember any prayers learned in childhood and began to piece together a rag-tag prayer of desperation. "Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. For purple mountain majesty, mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. Deliver us from evil. One nation under God. God bless America."

To his amazement, the cruel, merciless beings tearing at him were incited to rage by his ragged prayer. It was as if he was throwing boiling oil on them. They screamed, "There is no God! Now we are really going to hurt you." But at the same time, they were backing away. Howard realized that saying things about God was actually driving them away.

He writes, "All of my life, I'd fought a constant undertone of anxiety, fear, dread, and angst. If I could become famous, I could defeat powerlessness and beat death. I didn't like myself, and I didn't like other people, either. How ironic it was to end up in the sewer of the universe with people who fed off the pain of others! I had had little genuine compassion for others. It dawned on me that I was not unlike these miserable creatures that had tormented me. Little strength was left to resist becoming a creature gnashing his teeth in the outer darkness. I wasn't far from becoming like one of my own tormentors for all eternity."

Howard began to sing a Christian song. He remembered only three words, "Jesus loves me, da, da, da." He yelled out into the darkness, "Jesus, save me." He writes, "I have never meant anything more strongly in my life. Far off in the darkness I saw a pinpoint of light like the faintest star in the sky. The star was rapidly getting brighter and brighter. The light was more intense and more beautiful than anything I had ever seen. It was brighter than the sun, brighter than a flash of lightning. Soon the light was upon me. I know that while it was indescribably brilliant, it wasn't just light. This was a living

being, a luminous being surrounded by an oval of radiance. The brilliant intensity of the light penetrated my body. Ecstasy swept away the agony. Tangible hands and arms gently embraced me and lifted me up. I slowly rose up into the presence of the light and the torn pieces of my body miraculously healed before my eyes.

“This loving, luminous being who embraced me knew me intimately. He knew me better than I knew myself. He was knowledge and wisdom. I knew that he knew everything about me. I was unconditionally loved and accepted. He was King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Christ Jesus the Savior. Jesus does love me, I thought. I cried and cried from joy and the tears kept coming. Joy upon joy billowed through me. He held me and caressed me like a mother with a baby, like a father with his long-lost prodigal son.”

“We rose upward, gradually at first, and then like rocket we shot out of that dark and detestable hell. We traversed an enormous distance, light-years, although very little time elapsed.” Howard then had a life review in the presence of Jesus and several angels. He revived, miraculously, and several years later left his career as a university professor and chairman of the art department to become a pastor. (Excerpts from Page 217-223)

#### 4. THINK ABOUT THE AMAZING BEAUTY OF HEAVEN.

Paul wrote, **“Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,”** (1 Corinthians 2:9 KJV .) **Paul continued by saying, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, (V.10 KJV).**

When people have near death experiences they are out of the body and in the spirit world. We would have to have a vision given by the Spirit to see what they see. Here are some reports of what they see. Captain Dale Black is a commercial pilot. One day, flying in a twin engine Piper Navajo, he was involved in a fatal crash. His friend, Gene was piloting. They took off but were air born at an abnormally slow speed. Unable to clear the tree tops Gene veered off directly into a 75-foot-high aviation monument. The plane disintegrated as the three pilots smashed into the stone edifice at 135 miles per hour, then plunged 70 feet to the ground.

He suddenly found himself suspended in midair, hovering over the wreckage of his body. He sped through what appeared to be a narrow pathway. It was a path in the darkness that was delineated by the light. Outside of this pathway was total darkness. He traveled through what looked like deep space with two angelic escorts. His peripheral vision was enhanced. He could see to both sides and even behind him all at once.

They approached a magnificent city, golden and gleaming among a myriad of resplendent colors. He writes, “The light I saw was the purest I had ever seen. And the music was the most majestic, enchanting, and glorious I had ever heard. I knew instantly that this place was entirely and utterly holy.”

“I was overwhelmed by its beauty. It was breathtaking. A strong sense of belonging filled my heart; I never wanted to leave. Somehow I knew I was made for this place and this place was made for me. The colors seemed to be alive, dancing in the air. I had never seen so many different colors. The light was palpable. It had substance to it, weight and thickness, like nothing I had ever seen before or since. Somehow I knew that light and life and love were connected and interrelated. The light didn’t shine on things but through them. Through the grass. Through the trees. Through the wall. And through the people who were gathered there. There was a huge gathering of angels and people, millions, countless millions. They were gathered in a central area that seemed over ten miles in diameter. The expanse of people was closer to an ocean than a concert hall. Waves of people, moving in the light, swaying to the music, worshipping God. Somehow the music in heaven calibrated everything, and I felt that nothing was rushed.”

“Below me lay the purest, most perfect grass, precisely the right length and not a blade that was bent or even out of place. It was the most vibrant green I had ever seen. If a color can be said to be alive, the green I saw was alive, slightly transparent and emitting light and life from within each blade.

The fragrance that permeated heaven was so gentle and sweet. I wanted to smell the flowers but instantly, I was aware of a gentle aroma. As I focused, I could tell the difference between the grass, the flowers, the trees and even the air. It was all so pure and intoxicating and blended together in a sweet and satisfying scent.”

“Between the central part of the city and the city walls were groupings of brightly colored picture-perfect homes in small quaint towns. Each home was customized and unique from the others yet blended harmoniously. Some were three to four stories, some were even higher. There were no two the same. If music could become homes, it would look like these, beautifully built and perfectly balanced.”

The book doesn’t say how this man was resuscitated. It moved on to other accounts of heaven’s beauty. Brad Barrows had been blind since birth. When he nearly died his spirit man could see with greatly enhanced vision. He also described light that actually penetrated through everything. He wrote, “There was no shade, there was no need for shade.” (page 112).

The Bible says that the heavenly city **“shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal,”** (Revelations 21:10).

Richard, a messianic Jew, died in a horrible car accident, leaving him with a broken back, neck, and both arms, and two ribs puncturing his heart. The medics said he had been dead for about eight hours when they found him. But Richard revived to describe the beauty of Heaven and the new life found within.

“There were flowers of every imaginable size and color along the path. The air was filled with their aroma, and *they were all humming*. I asked if I could pick one to smell, and I was told that I could. It was wonderful. When I put the flower down, it was immediately replanted and growing again. Again, there’s no death in heaven. The beautifully manicured park was filled with huge, striking trees. They had to be at least two thousand feet tall. And there were many different varieties. Some I knew, others, I had no idea what species they were. There was a continual sound of chimes coming from the leaves of one tree as they brushed against one another. The fruit was pear shaped and copper colored. When I picked it, another fruit instantly grew in its place. When I touched the fruit to my lips, it evaporated and melted into the most delicious thing I had ever tasted.”

## 5. THINK ABOUT MEETING JESUS.

Khalida wondered the streets of Bethlehem as a child, orphaned by a missile that took the lives of her whole family. She was sold into slavery as a child and traveled the Arab world with a Bedouin tribe. She was married off to a very abusive Muslim man. He beat her and left her for dead. She then was married to another man who beat her often. She managed to flee and met a woman who offered her a home, a job, and told her about the love of God found in Jesus.

Khalida didn’t have a near death experience. She had a vision of heaven, much like Isaiah or Daniel. “A person was standing in front of me, but different from any person I’d ever known. I heard His voice—it was the same voice I heard years before. Though I didn’t know who it was then while still in Palestine, He said over and over to me when my Muslim husband was beating me and threatening my life, “Leave the darkness for the light.”

Now He said to me in Arabic, “I am the truth, the life, and the way, and no one comes to the Father except by Me.” His voice was like rushing waters, powerful and soothing at the same time. The minute He said, “I am the truth,” I knew immediately it was Jesus. He didn’t say, “I am Jesus,” but every fiber of my being knew who He was. I had never read the Bible before, but somehow I knew what Jesus was saying to me was in the Bible. I was so consumed by His presence that I dropped to my knees and looked up at Him. He is so glorious, so beautiful. All light inside of Light.”

I said, “Lord! You are Lord!” He said, “Yes, I am Jesus, the One you denied. The One you said is not the Son of God. I came to save you, to make you a happy person. You don’t have to do anything, just know that I love you.”

I said, “That’s it?” He said, “Yes, believe in Me.”

He didn't preach to me; He was just talking to me like another person, but with a beautiful and strong voice. It was loving, and sweet like honey." (Page 145-147)

Dean had a near death experience and wrote, "When I looked into Jesus' eyes, His eyes were like flames of fire with changing colors of red, orange, blue, green, yellow and many other colors. I experienced in His eyes that they are deep and full of life. I could get lost in His eyes and never want to come out. In His eyes I saw the love for every human and creation of God. At first it seemed as if His eyes had love only for me. But when I thought about someone else, I saw His love for that person. It was like He loved only that person. So I thought about someone else, and that same thing happened. I saw his love for that other person." (page 182)

In these near death experiences people are often given a choice. They can stay in heaven or go back and finish their life mission. A lady named Samaa decided to return and Jesus said colloquially in her native tongue, "Okay, see ya soon."

A lady named Vicki was given a life review in the presence of Jesus. He showed her a scene where in a fit of jealousy she had ripped off the buttons and all the lace from a fancy dress of another blind classmate:

She said, "It was like, you know, I could feel from Jesus his understanding and compassion about how I felt that way, and why I did it. But, you know, it was sort of like he talked to me during that time. He says, "Yeah, that wasn't too cool."

The interviewer asked, "Really?"

Vickie: "The thought that came into my mind was that he was giving me was---" "Yeah, that wasn't too cool."

Interviewer: "You're not kidding me?"

Vickie: "No. That's exactly what he said." (page 189)

When Khalida, the Muslim lady had her vision of Jesus she told him, "I need You." He said to her, "I'm going to come back and get you." (Page 189)

## 6. THINK ABOUT YOUR LIFE REVIEW

Most people who have a near death experience see a being of light that reviews every event in their life in an instant. They are always asked, "What have you done with the life I gave you?" For these blessed people, they get to come back and live their life with a new value system, doing what pleases God and what will be eternally rewarded.

We don't have to have a near death experience to get the same results. The Holy Spirit can show us our hearts, our motives, where we are pursuing trivial things, and how our actions affect others. We should ask God to show us what our lives look like to him.

Dr. Mary Neal drowned in a kayak accident. While her spirit was out of her body she says, "I was shown events in my life, not in isolation but in the context of their unseen ripple effects. It is easy for us all to see the impact of our words or actions may have on our immediate surroundings, but to see the impact of events or words dozens of times removed was profoundly powerful. Through this experience, I was able to clearly see that every action, every decision, and every human interaction impacts the bigger world in far more significant ways than we could ever be capable of appreciating. As one might imagine, this was a profound part of my experience." (Page 243)

Pim van Lomel is quoted as saying, "The life review is usually experienced in the presence of the light or a being of light. During a panoramic life review, people experience not just their every action or word but also every thought from their past life, and they experience the effects of their thoughts, words and actions on other people. People can talk for hours or even days about their life review, even though the cardiac arrest lasted only a couple of minutes."

Mark, had a near death experience when his body was crushed between a pole and a jeep. He said, "Not only did I experience the feelings again, but I had some sort of empathetic sense of the feelings of those around me who were affected by my actions. I was adopted as an infant. I had been somewhat of a troublemaker. I sometimes hurt other children when smaller and had taken to drug and alcohol abuse,

stealing, crazy driving, bad grades, vandalism, cruelty to my sister, cruelty to animals—the list goes on and on. All of these actions were relived in a nutshell, with the associated feelings of both myself and the parties involved. But the most profound was a strange sense coming from my mother. I could feel how she felt to hear of my death. She was heartbroken and in great pain. I got a sense that it was such a tragedy to have had this life end so soon, having never really done much good. This feeling left me with a sense of having unfinished business in life.” (Page 244-245)

Rene hydroplaned on the streets of Sydney, Australia, hit a piling, and “died.”

“I became fascinated by the fabric of His robe, trying to figure out how light could be woven! He stood beside me and directed me to look to my left, where I was replaying my life’s less complimentary moments. I relived those moments and felt not only what I had done but also the hurt I had caused. Some of the things I would have never imagined could have caused pain. I was surprised that some things I may have worried about, like shoplifting a chocolate as a child, were not there whilst casual remarks which caused hurt unknown to me at the time were counted.”

One line written by the author of the book, John Burke, is especially memorable. He writes, “Everybody wants to change the world; nobody wants to love their neighbor! Yet all God needs us to do to change the world is to love God so we can love our neighbor as much as ourselves. We may accomplish big things in the world’s eyes, build huge corporations, lead sweeping political change, or even lead large nonprofits or churches in God’s name—and that can all be good. But if we fail to love our families, our neighbors, our co-workers, and those in need whom God puts in our path, we’ve failed in the primary task God’s given us. “ Well said.

Jeffrey Long notes that those who had near death experiences found “many things that seemed insignificant at the time—a small kindness for instance—turn out to be significant in their own or another person’s life. People realize they became angry over things that were not important or that they placed too much significance on unimportant things.”

Pastor Steve Sjogren was and is a famous pastor and author. In his near death experience God showed him that he didn’t know the names of any of his children’s friends.

Lindi not only experienced a life review, she heard Jesus giving another person a life review. He said, “Let’s look at all the things you’ve done to serve Me, to love other people well; let’s look at the relationships in your life and how you’ve loved them well and therefore served Me through them.” *Lindi recalls, “What was interesting is it was all about relationships. There was nothing about accomplishments, nothing about our successes. It was all about how you’ve loved other people.”*

Jesus then said to her, “Let’s look at the missed opportunities to love Me better. Let’s look at how you could have loved other people better, and the missed relationships and how you could have loved them better and therefore served Me better.” Since this experience she started working to free women from sex trafficking.

## 7. THINK ABOUT YOUR LIFE MISSION

Jeffrey Long’s website contains a story of a thirteen year old girl who died in a pool accident and found herself at the City gates where she saw books and an “old” friend:

“I was waiting in line at first, behind all these people. And then it was my turn. And I was standing in front of this BIG guy, who I think was an angel. He was holding this BIG book. The angel guy asked me for my name, and I told him. When he looked for it he said, ‘I’m sorry but it is not your time.’ So I said to him, ‘Why is it not my time?!?! I’m ready to die! My life sucks!! My best friend died five years ago!! Why is it not my time?!?!’ And he turned around as if someone was talking to him and turned back around to me again and said, ‘Someone wants to talk to you.’ Then he pointed to the gate with the city behind it. It was Jake. You see, Jake, my best friend, died in a car accident five years ago. We were both seven years old, and when I saw him there I ran to the gate as fast as I could! We both reached out and grabbed each other’s hands and cried. He looked my age, but I knew it was him. And I feel stupid in saying this, but he got cute since the last time I saw him! Ha ha ha! Then we talked for a

while, about things that happened, about each other, and then the angel said, ‘It’s time for you to go back.’”

Another teenager who drowned said, “My angels did not like my response of ‘I don’t want to go back down there; it is painful.’ ‘You must! Your mission is not yet complete!’ We communicated telepathically; no lips or mouth movements; all thoughts.”

The Bible says, **“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do,”** (Ephesians 2:10).

Why focus on who will be elected, whether the economy will tank, whether America will turn communistic, or what great disasters are ahead for this world? If we are in Christ, we cannot really die. Jesus said, **“And whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,”** (John 11:26). If our bodies die, we get to enter the glorious presence of the Lord in the paradise of God. Our prayer should be, “Lord, help me fulfill my mission.”

The Bible says, **“Each person will be rewarded for their own hard work. No one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames,”** (1 Corinthians 3:8, 11-15 NLT).

Howard Storm realized this during his life review: “The angels and Jesus had no interest in the track meet competitions I won or lost. They were interested in the relationship and how we encouraged or hurt one another.” (Page 264).

## 8. THINK ABOUT PERFECT RELATIONSHIPS

One of the best things about heaven is that relationships there have no strife, no miscommunication, no family feuds. John Burke writes, “God will have new family values that will make all the relational challenges of earth fade away. First, communication will be perfect. Crystal describes it this way: ‘There was instant and complete communication between us. There was no room whatsoever for secrets or shame or misunderstanding or anything negative. There was just this wonderful beautiful, nourishing sense of knowing.’” (Page 96)

With perfect communication and perfect love comes perfect unity. Dale Black recalls this epiphany: “Part of the joy I was experiencing was not only the presence of everything wonderful but the absence of everything terrible. There was no strife, no competition, no sarcasm, no betrayal, no deception, no lies, no murders, no unfaithfulness, no disloyalty, nothing contrary to the light and life and love. The absence of sin was something you could feel. There was no shame, because there was nothing to be ashamed of. There was no sadness, because there was nothing to be sad about. There was no need to hide, because there was nothing to hide from. It was all out in the open.” (Page 99)

## CONCLUSION

There is so much more in the book, IMAGINE HEAVEN. I hope you’ll buy and read it. I found this book so refreshing and needed. I want to ask you, what do you think about most of the time? Are you thinking about how every word and action affects others for good or bad and how God is keeping track of it all? Think about ripple effects fourteen times removed. Your small act of love can be amplified and multiplied. Are you thinking about finishing the work God gave you to do? Are you thinking about seeing Jesus and the paradise of God and being in a place of perfect love—forever? Are you thinking about pure and excellent things, with your mind fixed on Jesus and your hope set firmly on the grace you’ll receive when Jesus appears? Most of us would have to say, “No. I’ve been thinking about the events of this world, my own needs, and scary things that might happen.” Well, let’s make an adjustment. LET’S THINK ABOUT HEAVEN. I LOVE YOU. GOD BLESS YOU.