

### **YOU WILL NOT LIKE HEAVEN IF...**

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You jump out of bed late, rush to the shower, throw on your clothes, get in the car, and walk into the building five or ten minutes late. You think “whew!” I’m not the only one, as you hold the door for the other late comers. At that point, you may even lose your sense of urgency and casually walk to your area, find your place, and begin to involve yourself in the activities of the day.

Can you guess where you are? No, you aren’t at work, because the boss would have fired you weeks ago for being unreliable. Instead, you are at the church building walking into class or the worship service late, as your mind is filled with the thoughts of next week’s responsibilities. That doesn’t apply to all people, but it does apply to a great many. What does that scenario tell us about those to whom it does apply? One thing it illustrates is a lack of respect and interest in offering worship to God. If one does not find earthly praise a priority, then eternity in heaven is not going to be something to which a person looks forward! There are certain activities that God has commanded to be observed in this life, but if one does not like doing them in the present, he will not like doing them in the eternal abode. Notice some of those things:

You will not like heaven if you do not like being present. If assembling with the saints is not a priority (Heb. 10:23-25), then God is not a priority! Very few people would be chronically late to their secular jobs, however, there is a growing segment who feel no urgency to be present on Sunday for Bible study and worship. There are also many who do not feel the need to attend all the scheduled services of the local congregation. It has been said, “There is no commandment to meet during a Sunday morning Bible study or a Wednesday night class.” First, that mindset is sinful, and secondly it has been commanded! Paul told the elders at Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). In addition to the command to worship on the first day of the week, members of local congregations are obligated, by God’s commandment, to obey the eldership as they oversee and feed the flock (Heb. 13:17), which includes any additionally scheduled services of the local congregation.

You will not like heaven if you do not like praising God in song. How many people have you sat next to during song service that have refused to sing during the worship assembly? Many of us do not have the beautiful voices we would like, but that is no reason not to sing praises to God. Even if one doesn’t have a good singing voice, that doesn’t mean God doesn’t appreciate and accept one’s worship of praise. Have you ever smelled burning hair? There is little doubt that it is one of the worst smells to which one may be subjected. The Israelites endured countless animal sacrifices that produced the smell of burning hair and flesh, which they surely did not enjoy. However, according to God it was a “sweet savor” (Gen. 8:20-21; Ex. 29:18...), so it doesn’t matter what others think, as long as God is pleased. Just like the sacrifices of the Old Testament, New Testament Christians are commanded to offer “the fruit of *our* lips” (Heb. 13:15).

You will not like heaven if you do not like praying. Similar to those that do not engage in the sacrifice of singing praises, many do not participate in the avenue of prayer, even during the public assembly. Some will be talking while others will be engaged in check writing, money counting, or any number of things. Have you ever considered what life will consist of in eternity? In heaven, there will be one thing happening: service rendered to God by the holy throng. That service will take various forms

which include the offering of thanks (Rev. 4:10), lifting up voices in His honor (Rev. 5:11), and all manner of worship (Rev. 7:9-15), which includes words both spoken and sung.

You will not like heaven if you do not like preaching. If one does not like to hear about God now, then the spirit world will be nothing but continuous agony; after all, everything is centered upon Him. Granted, there are times when it is difficult to sit through a sermon, but Christian maturity ought to allow one to glean, even from those sermons, the intended message and to pay attention to what is being said. One would be surprised to know just what can be seen from a pulpit! People can be seen reading novels, talking to their neighbors, balancing checkbooks, trimming fingernails and toenails, playing with babies, playing video games, watching videos, sleeping, older teens mocking and laughing at song leaders and preachers, and the list goes on and on. That shows an immaturity toward God and a lack of respect for His message.

Just because a person becomes distracted from time to time does not mean that person does not love God. However, it is very important to focus on God in the correct way during worship, as well as outside of it. Any person who is blessed with the heavenly home will realize that there is no greater joy that exists. The sad thing is that people who do not like to participate in spiritual activities while living in the physical world will never know the joys of heaven's abode or the beauty of the spiritual "city" that "lieth foursquare" (Rev. 21:16-27). If you do not like being present at the worship assembly, praising God in song, praying, and listening to His Word being preached, then you will not like heaven.