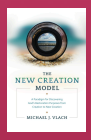
November 1, 2026

Evangelize … Establish … Equip



Heaven or earth? — p. 2



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"We train disciplemakers…"

Update from Kansas Communities Ministry

***Making Disciples Naturally* Podcast & Richard Spann's blogs are found at KansasNavs.org**

What will eternity look like? — *page 2*

Breathing room — *page 2*

The importance of finishing well — *pages 3 - 4*

For videos of our recent Fall Conference Click here and enter "White" in the search box.

What is the difference between friendship and discipleship?



You and a friend meet a couple of times a month for a fun activity, or maybe just to chat over coffee. During that time you talk about your careers, family, what you are learning from the Word and what's happening at church. You both walk away feeling encouraged. Is that discipleship?

What is the difference between friendship and discipleship? There's clearly nothing wrong with friendship. We can encourage and be encouraged by our friends. Friendship can lead to discipleship, but it's not exactly the same thing.

Justin Gravitt, Navigator thought leader, in a great article explores these ideas. He notes that friendship and discipleship differ in several key areas, chief among them being the difference in primary aim. The purpose of friendship is *enjoyment, connection* and *encouragement*. The goal of discipling others is *maturity* and *reproduction*.

Friendship, fellowship and connection are all wonderful gifts. They also may lead to a discipling relationship. But as we disciple others, let's keep the focus on our goal of helping each other *mature* into Christlikeness (Eph. 4:13) and helping them *reproduce* (2 Tim. 2:2).

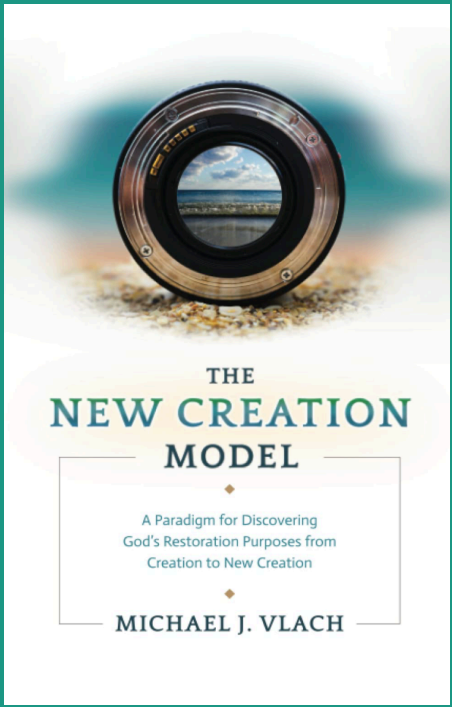
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"For what benefit is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his life?"

—Mark 8:36 (NET Bible)

The New Creation Model: A Paradigm for Discovering God's Restoration Purposes from Creation to New Creation

by Michael J. Vlach



What is your view of the afterlife for believers? Will we be floating among the clouds, singing endless praise songs and hymns? Will our future home be in heaven?

Michael J. Vlach is professor of theology at Shepherds Theological Seminary in Cary, NC. In this volume he has offered a thoughtful, academic and detailed history of how the church has viewed the Christian's eternal existence. In addition he relates how the various theological positions tend to describe eternity. He looks at the Covenantal approach, the Dispensational approach as well as the various eschatological positions.

Professor Vlach notes that throughout much of church history, believers have considered our eternal existence to be totally spiritual (non-physical), and basically involving a state of being more than actual activity. He says that we have gotten this idea primarily from Plato and the idea that the physical is "bad" and the spiritual "good." Thus, how could eternity be at all physical if that is basically "bad"?

Instead, the New Creation Model emphasizes that we will live on a recreated earth, with physical although glorified bodies, having meaningful work, relationships, service, culture, etc. This is similar to Randy Alcorn's book *Heaven* several years ago.

In Vlach's volume, he approaches this from a well-documented Biblical perspective as well as from a scholarly approach of ecclesiastical history. I was very encouraged by this book and would recommend it highly!

Goads and Nails

(excerpt)

By Richard Spann

How to Keep the Elephants Off Your Air Hose
— Howard Hendricks

(Excerpt from Vol. 4, pages 27-30)

The alarm clock has awakened you early in the morning. After getting dressed and starting the coffeemaker, and getting ready for your quiet time with the Lord, you remember a meeting that was scheduled early that morning. Without having time to really talk much with the family you are out of the door and your day is well underway. Your schedule is a little tighter than you realized and the calls you were going to make to others in the morning never get done. Lunch is hurried, and as you start your afternoon tasks you seem more behind than usual. You would like to find time to read your Bible, or pray during the day, but other demands crowd in until you find yourself more pressured as the day goes on… You fall asleep frustrated by yet another day that was out of your control with little hope that tomorrow will be any different. This is the type of day which Howard Hendricks described as "having elephants on your air hose." These elephants are often caused by incorrect priorities, insufficient prayer, and inadequate planning…

Unless our priorities are correct, we have no hope of having a day that is pleasing to the Lord and satisfying to ourselves. Matthew 6:33 declares His priority for us daily. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Unless we firmly establish and set apart our best time each day to meet with the Lord, and to seek His direction as to what activities will promote His Kingdom each day, our days are not under His control and are subsequently out of control…

Have the elephants been on your air hose lately? If so, the truths of Matthew 6:33 and Luke 18:1 will be of help as you consider their application to your life. As you follow the Lord's direction from these scriptures, He will also give wisdom into obtaining the margin you need each day; so that by His Grace, your life will be satisfying to you and bring glory to Him.
In Christ, Richard Spann

Many Start Well, Few Finish Well by Richard Spann

We continually hear about those who have followed Christ for many years whose lives have been marred by moral failure, corrupt financial practices or the destructive behavior resulting from the arrogance of authority. It is as prevalent in our leaders as in those who follow, as common in the pulpit as in the pew. The fallout from these failures affects not only their own lives and ministries; but there is a slow recovery from the devastation it leaves in its wake, affecting the lives of many others. Such was the case in the Old Testament where we see the start of King Asa's reign described in II Chronicles 14:2, "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God." His finish was described in II Chronicles 16:9-10. "..'You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.' Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people." Verse 12 also relates, "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his illness was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians." We also read about Uzziah King of Judah in II Chronicles 26:4. "He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done." He started well. His finish is described in II Chronicles 26:16. "But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense." We read further in II Chronicles 26:21, "King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house—leprous, and excluded from the temple of the LORD."



In contrast to the above, we see the Apostle Paul describe his finish in II Timothy 4:7-8. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." What was it that so characterized the life of the Apostle that he was able to finish well? We find three things that enabled him, and will also enable us, to finish well in his statement found in Philippians 3:14. "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." First and foremost, he established the goal of his life. Secondly, the word "press" implies that Paul needed to exert effort to meet this goal. Thirdly, he anticipated resistance. Paul not only experienced resistance to his goal, but he expected it to occur.

Paul established the goal for his own life based upon God's goal for Paul's life. This is seen in Romans 8:29. "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

(Continued on next page)

"Sometimes the 'bad' circumstances of life are not always bad if God is accomplishing something good."

~ Gary Hamrick, Lead Pastor, Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia. Quote from his sermon *Good Things Out of a Bad Place*, based on Jeremiah 24

Finishing Well (Continued)

His goal is also seen in Ephesians 4:13. "Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Paul states further in II Corinthians 3:18, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." This goal was ever before Paul throughout his life. Is this our goal as well? Or have we substituted for this goal others which are noticed and acclaimed by others and may bring us a sense of self-satisfaction? If it is our goal to attain to the fullness of Christ, then we must exert effort as Paul did when he fought the good fight, and pressed toward the goal.



We need not shrink back from the thought of effort in the Christian life. Dallas Willard comments that Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. LeRoy Eims once commented on the common phrase as two friends leave one another, "Well, take it easy." LeRoy said that we should say, "Tackle it with all the gusto you can muster, not 'take it easy!' " Jerry Bridges has remarked in his book *Disciplines of Grace* that it will require effort to avail ourselves of the means of His Grace, His Word, prayer, and fellowship with other followers of Christ. This effort which avails us of the means of His Grace enables us to live in the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:16. "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." As His Spirit leads us in our time in the Word, prayer, and in fellowship with others, we are kept on target as we run the race. LeRoy Eims once characterized it this way, "When is the last time you were tempted to some sinful behavior while you were sharing the Gospel with a non-believer or praying at the bedside of a sick friend?" Our enemy would have us think that the way to live by the Spirit is to stop gratifying the desires of the sinful nature. The truth is just the opposite. The way to stop gratifying the sinful nature is to live by the Spirit! This will require effort to which we can expect resistance.

Paul was well acquainted with the resistance to running the race. He related in II Timothy 4:10 the following statement, "For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." Our enemy uses the world to attack the flesh in attempts to delay, divert, discourage and destroy our lives and ministry. James 4:7 relates, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." It is with our goal firmly established, in a continued effort to live by the Spirit, that we are enabled to overcome the resistance to finishing well.

It is my prayer that each of us involved in ministry to others will finish well. To this end, therefore, I would urge you to fix your eyes upon our Redeemer (Hebrews 12:2), prepare your minds for expected resistance (I Peter 5:8-9), and commit your hearts to a race that is finished well (I Corinthians 9:24).

"Besides assurance and acceptance, a growing Christian has four basic needs: protection, fellowship, food, and training." — LeRoy Eims, Navigator, Author, Speaker