

## **Pursuing Our Heavenly Prize**

It's safe to say that most Christians are so focused on earth that they forget our true citizenship is in heaven. **Philippians 3:20:** *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."* Think of it this way: we live in a city and state in America and are citizens of the country. Our clothes, language, laws, protection, government, and even religious practices all point to that place, giving us its identity. In our natural human state, we are citizens of our country. But when we become believers, God forgives our sins through the cross and transforms us by His Spirit; we become new creations. **2 Corinthians 5:17-18:** *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."* This same dynamic applies to our Christian identity. Yes, we are God's children living in America, but our true citizenship is in heaven, as subjects of its King and followers of a heavenly culture. The church functions as our heavenly colony in America, drawing strength from that heavenly identity to bolster our Christian lives here on earth. As citizens of heaven, we can live in this world without depending on it. The wealth of the world need not tempt us, since we have the promise of heaven's riches. Likewise, the dangers of the world need not scare us, because we trust that our life is in Christ and that we will appear with Him in glory. **Colossians 3:3-4:** *"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."* In other words, Christians exist in a realm of hope that reaches beyond our current location. We live in this unfamiliar land with confident expectation that our Sovereign will come to us. This hope shapes and guides our actions as we wait. We are not focused on the promises of this world. **Hebrews 11:16:** *"Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."* Our confidence in heaven today is not based on our ability to visualize it but on the complete trustworthiness of the one who promised it. Jesus said **John 14:2-3:** *"In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be."* All a Christian's effort to persevere comes from Christ. We live by His grace and aim to meet Him in glory. Therefore, let us fill our minds with His glory and our new heavenly home.