

Letter from Ray Ortlund to his family, written in 2000.

*Dear Family,*

*"The time has come for my departure" (2 Tim. 4:6). It's strange to write this when I'm feeling well and vigorous, but unless Christ returns first that departure time will come. When you read this it will have happened.*

*I have had a great journey with Jesus Christ. From childhood I have known about God and revered Him. The name of Jesus has always been precious to me. I thank my dear parents for this heritage. Now, life on earth is over and I go to meet the Lord face to face. I trust in Him as my sure Savior and rest in His grace at this momentous time of my death. I do not fear death. (I don't like the pain, blood, and guts of it all!) Actually I have been anticipating this new adventure and at the time you read this I will be with Christ in heaven. So it's happened and I'm now in God's presence, probably shocked at all I'm seeing for the first time.*

*I am sorry for my sin and failures which have been many, but I know Christ has forgiven them. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Some of those sins have been against you, my dear family, and I am sorry. You probably know my sins better than I. Some you don't know, I know all too well. But "where sin abounds grace does much more abound."*

*My dear Anne has been my most treasured friend. If she is still living as you read this I know you will treat her well. When she goes to heaven God will give her blue ribbons and gold medals. What a great woman and wife! She has loved and stood loyally by me all our life together. And our last years have been our best. May God reward her for hard work, a forgiving spirit, relentless faith and enthusiastic acceptance of life as it came. She is a woman of God... my Cadillac. We shall meet on the other side and sing a duet of praise to God. As you know, Psalm 34:3 has been our verse. We trust you've seen that we did magnify the Lord.*

*Each of you children and spouses have been the joy of my life, as have been the grandchildren. I include Melinda and John in this because they are family to us, too. I have never doubted your love for me and you have been too kind. I will see you in heaven and we'll bless God together.*

*I urge you to remain true to your Savior. I have no doubt that you will. Love each other deeply in your marriages. Keep your family ties strong. Lay up treasure in heaven because the stuff of earth is empty. Bank accounts, houses and furniture mean nothing to me now. Actually they never did. Beware of sin, and confess it as soon as you discover it in your life. And let the Spirit's gift of joy color all your life. As you mature remain a happy person in Christ. Get even sweeter as you get older. Sour old people are a pain.*

*In my death be sure God is glorified. Jesus glorified the Father most in His death. John 17:1-5 tells us He faced impending death with that prayer for the Father to be glorified. So at my memorial service glorify God. Have a holy party. I was saying to Anne recently that this world has become less attractive lately and I feel a bit out of place. So it's good to go "home" now. I'd like to make my burial simple. Cremation is fine with me. Bury my remains in a simple container to wait for the resurrection of my new glorified body. If cremation upsets you then don't do it, of course. I want you to be comfortable with it all.*

*Heb. 13: 20,21: "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

*I love you all and each one. I'll see you sooner than you think!*

*Dad*