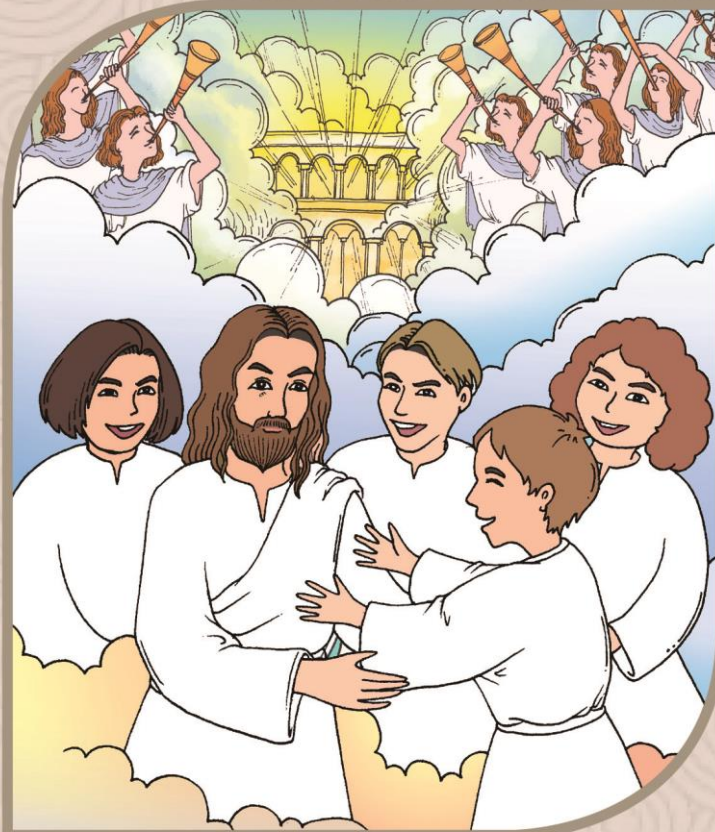




## Living in Faith

Discipleship Series



A look into  
what  
happens  
to people  
after they  
die

# Life After Death



# **Life After Death**

*A look into what happens to people after they die*



Multi-Language Publications  
Bringing the Word to the World

## LIFE AFTER DEATH

### *Living in Faith* Discipleship Series

*Adapted from* The Bible Teaching Series

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# Getting Started

In this book you will learn about life after death. That may sound like a pretty big topic to study in a small book. It is! So we are going to limit ourselves a little bit. We are going to look at what life and death are, and what some people believe about life after death. Most important, we are going to look at what God teaches us about life after death. We will do this by studying his Word, the Bible.

## READ THE TEXT

Each lesson is broken up into smaller sections with a review question after each section. Feel free to stop at any of the passages to make sure you understand them or to dig more deeply into what they are saying. Circle, underline, or highlight key words.

## GRAPPLE WITH THE QUESTIONS

In this book there are also questions to start, review and end the lesson. If you are studying this on your own, think through the questions for yourself. If you are studying in a group, use the questions for deeper discussion. Designate someone as a facilitator. Allow each individual a level of comfort to ask questions and freedom to discover and grow.

## NOTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each page also includes additional references on the sidebar for those who want to dig deeper (You will need a Bible or a Bible app to read those sections). They are available to use in group or in personal study.



= Location of Bible Story



= Search options – related passages

## MAP OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS



After connecting the timeless truths to your life, make sure you map out Next Steps before ending the lesson.



# Chapter One

## What is Life?



Have you heard people exclaim, “Now, this is living!” or when really enjoying themselves saying, “This is the life!” What do they mean? Most people want a meaningful and enjoyable life. But what is life? What makes you feel alive?

1. How would you define life?

What is life? In some ways, that question can be very simple to answer. Look in the mirror: the fact that you can see yourself moving and your eyes blinking shows that you are alive! The very fact that you are able to read this book shows that you are alive!

But is “life” limited to what we can see and touch? Do we only know we are alive because we can think? Some people ask hard questions like, “What is the *meaning* of life?” Can we really answer questions like that?

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### Is “life” limited to what we can see and touch?

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In this chapter we will try to come up with a basic definition of *true* life. We will look at what some people believe life is. We will also look at what God says in the Bible about life. When we do that we will especially look at what God wants for us in this life (during our time on earth).

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LIFE?



### The Story of the Rich Farmer

Luke 12:13-21

Jesus once told about a farmer who was very rich. One year his fields produced a great crop. His crop was so great he did not have room to store all the grain. So he decided he would build bigger barns. He was so happy with his crops and with himself he thought, “Next year, I really do not have to work



very hard. I can sit back, relax, and take life easy.”

This is part of a story Jesus told when he was talking about what true life is. We know people like the farmer in the story, do we not? The kind who want to sit around and take life easy. The kind of people who are only interested in getting all they can out of life while they have the chance. The kind who think that this life is all there is, so we need to make the most of it!

But if life is only about getting what we can out of it, will we ever be truly happy? If we somehow could get \$100,000, would not \$200,000 sound even better?

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**Will we ever be happy with life if we only think about getting more and more things?**

---

If we get a bigger house than what we had before, would we not start wanting an even bigger house?

Will we ever be

happy with life if we only think about getting more and more things? Jesus answers this question for us in Luke 12:15,

*“Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has.”*

True life is only found by living in the blessings of God – physical, spiritual, and eternal blessings.——

2. Describe different ways that people build their lives around things they want or own.



**Dangers of falling in love with money**

Matthew 19:16-26

1 Timothy 6:6-11;  
17-19

## IS LIFE MEANINGLESS?

Many people believe that some “god” or some “power” created the earth, people, and everything else and just watches from a distance. Some imagine we are just chess pieces in a game the gods are playing. Other people believe that reality is an illusion. They say that what we *think* is real, is *not*

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### Are we just hostages in the hand of fate?

---

real. Take pain, for example. When is the last time something fell on your toe or dropped on your head or you twisted an ankle? It hurt, did it not? But some people believe that pain is all in your mind. “Life” is only what you believe it is.

Sadly, still others end up becoming very depressed and sad because they believe life has no true meaning. “If my life does not matter to anyone, if I cannot make any real difference in this world, what does it matter if I am here?”



King Solomon wrote about what life is like without God. It all seemed “*Meaningless, utterly meaningless*”



Paul talks about  
Athens’ unknown  
god

Acts 17:16-27



Without God...  
Life seems  
meaningless

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11,  
2:1-26

(Ecclesiastes 1:2). He said, *“What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?”*

(Ecclesiastes 1:3) In the end you leave it someone who has not worked for it. He tried filling his life with parties and wine and great projects and wealth and anything his heart desired. His heart started to despair. *“So, I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it was meaningless, a chasing after the wind”* (2:17).

What is life about, then?

3. Describe other examples of when life seems meaningless.

## GOD CREATED LIFE WITH PURPOSE

So what is life all about? The best answers to this question come from the one who created life: God

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**What is life all about? The best answers come from the one who created life.**

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himself! God created the whole world. Its beauty and complexity display God’s wisdom and

glory so that people enjoy him.

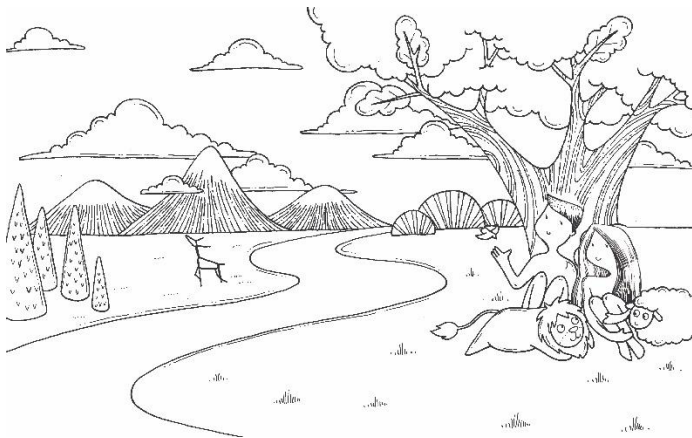
The last and most important things God created before he rested were two people, Adam and Eve, a man and a woman. In fact, when God created these people, he put them in charge of the whole world! To the first people he said, *“Fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Rule over every living creature that moves on the ground”* (Genesis 1:28).



**The Created World  
Proclaims God’s  
glory**

Psalm 19:1-4

Romans 1:20



It is even more important that God created people “in his image” – having a similarity to God’s mindset and heart so they could enjoy a perfect relationship with God. It was a wonderful way for God to share his love. Just think of it! Adam and Eve did not have to pray to a God they could not see. They talked face-to-face with God just like you talk to the person next to you. Adam and Eve never wondered whether God existed or if he cared about them. God spoke directly to them and showed them he loved them.

It is clear that from the very beginning God gave life meaning. He provided us with a wonderful world to live in. He gave us everything we would ever need. He planned for us to live forever with

---

**It is clear that from the very beginning God gave life meaning.**

---

him in this beautiful and perfect world. He was the perfect Father who made us his perfect children.

When God created the world, people did not have to worry about how much “stuff” they had. The entire world was theirs. They would discover the pleasure



**Joy in being God’s children**

Romans 8:15-17

Galatians 4:4-7

of caring for it and seeing it thrive! Life was enjoyable. It was filled with meaning and purpose.

It is obvious that things have changed in our world since the beginning. (We will address that in the next chapter). God could see that coming. But already before the creation, he set plans in motion to provide

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**Whoever has the Son  
has life**

---

life where it was  
lacking, give meaning  
where things seemed  
meaningless, to bring

us in close fellowship with God and his love when we had wandered from it.

Those plans centered in the one Apostle John called "The Word" who gives life:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known" (John 1:1-4, 14, 18).*

Jesus himself says,

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" John 10:10).*

So fullness of life is found in a blessed relationship with the mighty Creator of our world. It is filled with awe at the blessings and love he would shower on us and the amazing things he accomplishes through us. There is only one way for that to happen. It comes down to this:

*"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not*



**Meaningful  
fellowship with  
God**

1 John 1:1-4

Ephesians 1:17-23

Colossians 1:9-14

*have the Son of God does not have life"* (1 John 5:11-12).

But what does that mean? (We'll look more at that in the next chapters).

4. Summarize the meaning and purpose that God created human.



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. How would you respond to someone who thinks life is meaningless?
2. Our world teaches us that you will get what you want as long as you put effort in it. How do you respond on it?
3. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
4. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Two to begin to understand life as we contrast it with death.*

## Chapter Two

# What Is Death?



Many people don't like to talk about death or anything that even sounds like it. But all of us face the reality of death – in our own families or friendships and even our own lives. It is hard for us to avoid that reality. Think about the last time you went to a funeral. What reality struck you? At some funerals, undertakers work so hard at making the dead person look “natural.” And as you look at the person lying in the coffin, maybe it is easy to think of that person simply being asleep, since he or she looks so peaceful. Or if the body was cremated, the pictures displayed of the person may help you remember the good times. Does that lessen the reality?

1. Describe your experiences at different funerals and the impact they had on you.



Dealing with the death of someone you were close to can be painful. It is natural for people to grieve at times like those. We miss people who were a regular and important part of our lives. Now we have to adjust to life without them. But what has really happened with them?

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### Is death really all that bad?

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Let us take a brief look at death in this chapter. Just as we saw when we looked at “life,” there are different ideas about what “death” is. We will look at how some people have incorrect or wrong views about death. We will also see that in many ways death is something terrible.

## IS DEATH A HAPPY ENDING?

Not always! Maybe you have heard Shakespeare’s story of “Romeo and Juliet.” It is a story about two young people who were very much in love, but their parents did not approve of their relationship. Secretly they would meet and made plans to run away together. But Juliet’s parents had decided she would marry another man. So Juliet took a drug that caused her to appear dead. The plan was that her family would bury her, Romeo could rescue her from the burial vault, and they would run away together. But when Romeo found Juliet, he believed she was really dead. So, he took poison and killed himself. When Juliet awoke and found Romeo dead, she also killed herself (for real, this time). It is not a very happy ending. But many think of this story as being a great “love story.” But what did Romeo and Juliet gain by killing themselves? They simply ended up dead. And then what happened to them?

We see other glorified ideas about death in our lives. A hero is shown to be so dedicated to his cause that he is willing to die fighting hard, even though he

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**We see other glorified  
ideas about death**

---

knows it will cost him his life. But the hero still ends up dead! Some think

death is just temporary and beneficial for becoming someone new in another life. At times we start to believe everything we read and see about death and lose the sense of how awful it is to have death affect our world. *(Note: We will see later in this book that death really isn't that bad for the Christian!)*

2. Share different people's views on death.

## WHERE DEATH CAME FROM

Remember from Chapter One that God created people to live forever. God did not create death. There was no death in the world until Adam and Eve, the first people, sinned against God. In fact, in the middle of the Garden of Eden God planted the

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**God did not create  
death**

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“Tree of Life” (Genesis 2:9). It had a role in providing the gift to live forever. There was

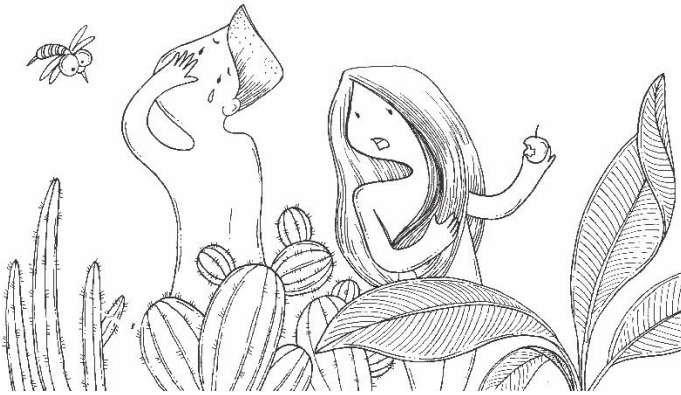
another tree at the center of the Garden, the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” God told Adam that if they ate fruit from that one tree, they would die. Their obedience would provide a unique way Adam and Eve could show honor and worship of God. By avoiding that tree, they would demonstrate their loyalty to him.



**The account of  
Adam and Eve's  
rebellion against  
God**

Genesis 3:1-19

But Satan, also known as the Devil, and many other angels rebelled against God. They have become demons that plague our world today. In order to get Adam and Eve to disobey also, Satan told them that the forbidden tree would do them no harm – and would in fact enrich their life. And what happened? That is right – they ate from that one tree even though God warned that if they ate from it they would definitely die.



Now, Adam and Eve did not fall down dead on the spot. Many years later their bodies would finally wear out and they would die. But for the moment they suffered the worst effect of sin, a spiritual death. This aspect of death comes from being separated

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**They suffered the worst effect of sin, a spiritual death**

---

from God, their loving father. Their loving relationship and unity with him had died. They were

afraid to be around God anymore and tried to hide. Instead of thinking of God as their kind father, they started thinking of him as their mean and angry

judge. God banished them from the beautiful Garden he had designed for them and kept them from the Tree of Life.

From then on, every person born has to die someday. And before we die, we suffer many other bad effects of that first sin against God. We get sick. We have pain of all kinds. We get cancer. We have heart attacks. We break bones. We get cut. The perfect world God had created to enjoy his loving companionship became a world hostile to God always inclined toward evil instead of good.

3. Retell the story of how death entered the world and the effect it has on us.

## THE EFFECT GOES BEYOND THIS WORLD

Again, this is not what God wanted for us in the first place. He loves us and only wants us to be with him. Just think – if Adam and Eve had not sinned, we would live forever in a perfect relationship with God! There would never be any trouble or pain or death in our lives at all.



**Adam's sin  
brought us death  
too**

Romans 3:9-20

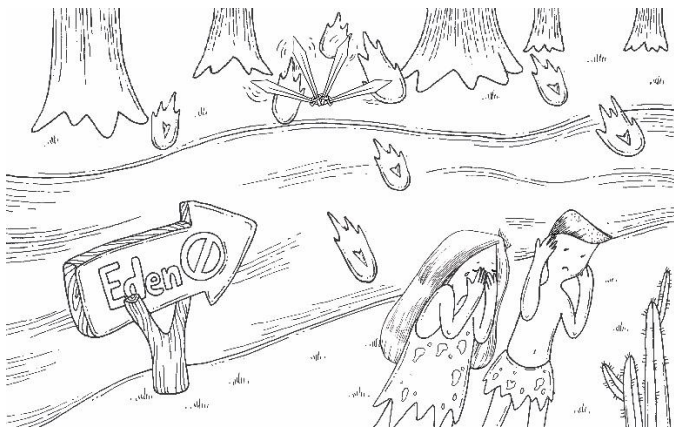
5:12-19

**3 types of death  
involve  
separation from  
the blessings of  
God:**

**Physical** separation

**Spiritual**  
separation

**Eternal** separation



But the effects of death go far beyond the aches and pains of life and physical death. When Adam and Eve turned their backs on God, it immediately separated them from that perfect fellowship they had with him. From birth our souls also inherit the same disconnect with God. That spiritual corruption in our hearts has been passed down through all generations since Adam. Paul explains:

*“Sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned... The result of one trespass was condemnation for all men... through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners” (Romans 5:12, 18-19).*

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**Spiritual death leads to an eternal separation from the blessings of God. The Bible calls it Hell.**

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The final outcome of spiritual death is eternal separation from all the blessings of God.

The Bible calls it the condemnation of Hell. Everyone has been on the road toward that eventual outcome because of sin.

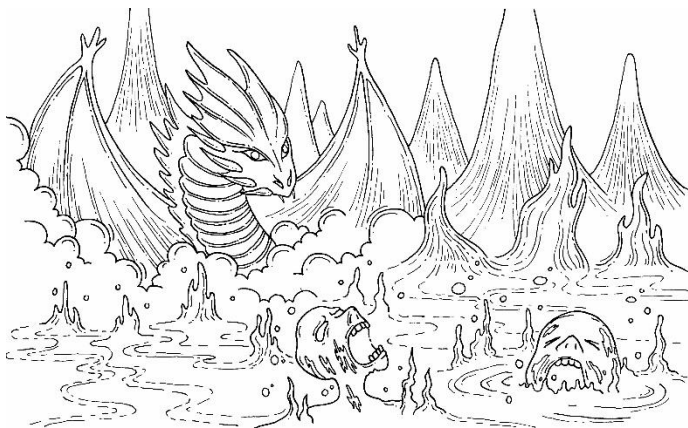


**We all inherited this spiritual death**

Ephesians 2:1-5

Romans 8:5-8

Psalm 51:3-5



### The separation at the last day

Matthew 13:24-30,  
36-43

Matthew 25:31-46

What is Hell like? It is the place initially created for the Devil and his demons (Matthew 25:41) – a place of intense pain, unrest, unhappiness, eternal sorrow, and never- ending punishment of sin. It is sometimes called the “*second death*” or the fiery lake of burning sulfur (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8). The Bible pictures its inhabitants as being locked in darkness (Matthew 8:12) and where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth (Luke 13:28). Paul explains:

*“He (Jesus) will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might”* (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).



### A rich man suffers the anguish in hell

Luke 16:22-26

4. Summarize the long-term consequence of sin.

## IS THERE ANY HOPE?

Because Adam and Eve did sin, the ugliness of death is now real and so is all its consequences. Death

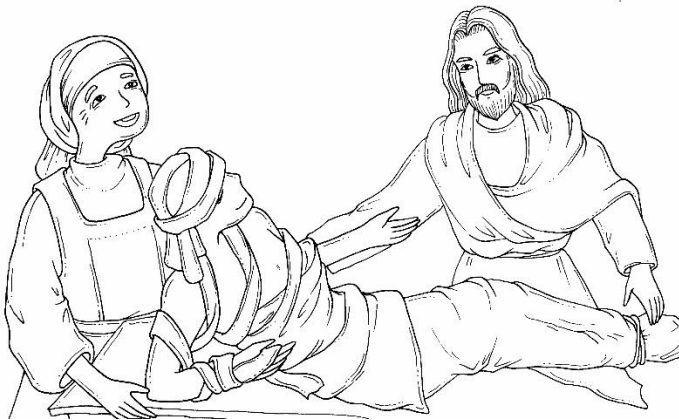
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**Death makes us sad,  
especially when someone  
close to us dies**

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makes us sad,  
especially when  
someone close to us  
dies. People who do  
not believe that

Jesus died on the cross to take away their sin can  
only see death as a tragic end.



Jesus told his followers that whoever obeys his word will not see death (John 8:51). What was he talking about? He once stopped a funeral procession and brought back to life the deceased son of a widowed woman (Luke 7:11-17). He raised up his friend Lazarus from his grave after Lazarus had already

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**Jesus said, “I am the  
resurrection and the life.  
Whoever lives by believing  
in me will never die.”**

---

been dead for four  
days. He told  
Lazarus’ sister  
these words that  
also can comfort us,

*"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."*  
(John 11:25).



**Jesus raises  
Lazarus from the  
grave**

John 11:1-45

Never die? What did he mean? When Jesus himself came alive three days after dying on a cross, then people began to understand.

In the book of Revelation, we again hear about the Tree of Life.

*"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God"* (Revelation 2:7).

What can he mean?

5. Express what you imagine were the reactions of people when Jesus brought the dead to life.





## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Discuss how the different views of death held by people affect their living in the world.
2. Some people say, "I have never been afraid of death. Death is natural." How does this lesson help you to respond to them?
3. Discuss how Jesus chases away despair whenever we face death. Can you think of one of your friends or relatives who especially needs to hear that right now?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

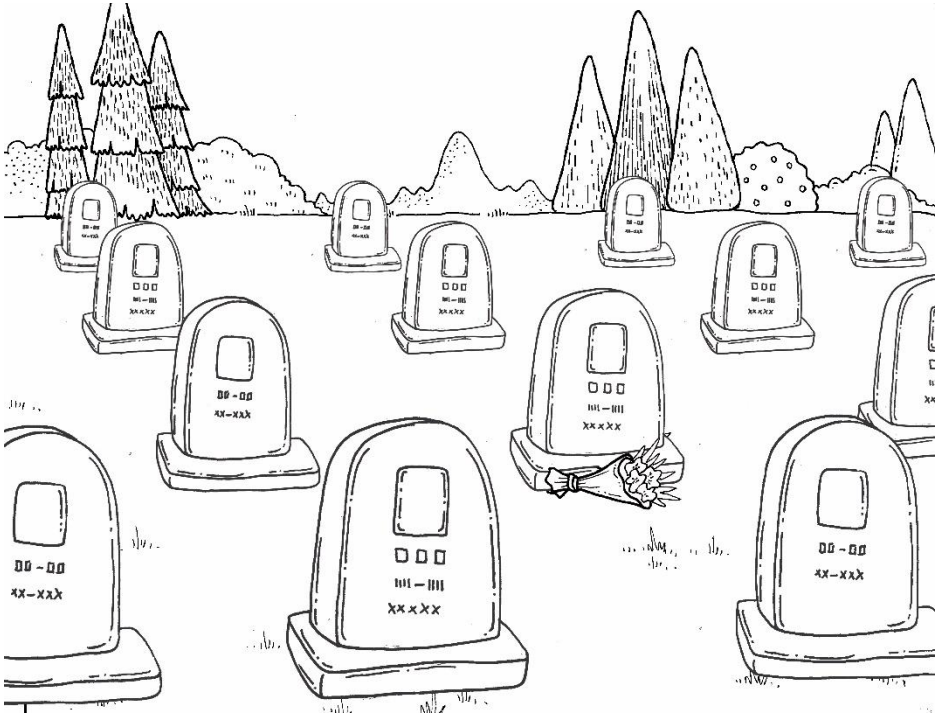
### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Three to begin to investigate life after death.*

## Chapter Three

### Is There Life After Death?



A trip to a cemetery not only reveals the reality of death, but also demonstrates the respect we give to those who died. Often in parks we also see public monuments or memorials of those considered heroes of the country or region. We desire to keep their memory alive. But what is happening to them now?

1. Describe the views people have of the afterlife.

Is there life after death? How do we know for sure? After all, there have not been that many people who have died and lived to tell about it! When we look to what the Bible says, we can answer that question, “Is there life after death?” with confidence.

## YOU ARE MADE OF BOTH SOUL AND BODY

The Bible tells us that people are made up of two main parts – body and soul (Matthew 10:28). At creation, God formed the first human body out of the

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**People are made up of two parts – body and soul**

---

dust of the earth (body) and then “breathed into” him the breath of life (soul) to make him a “living being” (Genesis

2:7). The body makes up the physical part we can touch or see. The soul is the invisible part of us that we identify with our personality or “self.” It is the center of our intellect, our will, and our emotions that relate to the God in whose image we were created.

It is our soul that reaches out to God because it understands its dependence and fulfillment in God. Many times the Bible mentions the soul together with the term “heart.” We were made to “*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength*” (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-40).

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**Even though sin brought physical death to the body, the soul never dies**

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But as we saw, sin marred that relationship. Death has entered the scene. The Bible tells us

that when we die, the body decays (Genesis 3:19) and the soul lives on after death (Philippians 1:23,24).

*“The dust (body) returns to the ground it came from, and*



**The soul thirsts for God**

Psalm 42:1-6

Psalm 103



**Beware of the deceitfulness of the heart**

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Mark 7:21-23

*the spirit (soul) returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Even though sin brought physical death to the body, the soul never dies. But what happens after death? It depends on what is happening in your life right now.*

That is why the Bible tells us to pay attention to our souls. Jesus told his followers, *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*

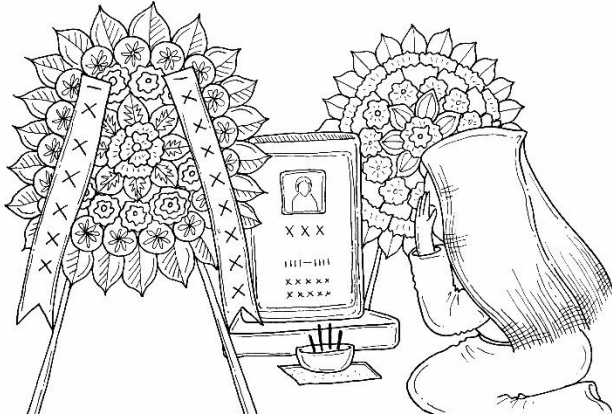
2. Summarize what you learnt in this section.

## **DIFFERENT BELIEFS ON LIFE AFTER DEATH**

A man was very sick and about to die. He once said that he did not really worry too much about what was going to happen to him after he died. "I have had a pretty good life," he said. "And since this life is all there is, what more can I ask for?" He believed that his soul was simply going to stop existing when he died. But in Matthew 10:28 Jesus warns, *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the One (God) who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* Something to take serious.

So what does actually happen after death? How do you explain things we cannot observe or experience? In some cultures, it is believed that complex rituals must be performed to assist the departed soul's safe passageway into the underworld. They fear that if the ritual is not conducted properly, the soul will be

confused and become a restless spirit or offended and come back to trouble us. Paper (joss) houses, servants, cars, spirit money and other items are burned at the funeral to provide to the deceased in the afterlife. Incense and food offerings are set out to keep the ancestors happy and fed.




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**What a person does and believes in this life becomes the deciding factor of what happens when a person dies**

---

deciding factor of what happens when they die. There is nothing we can do after they die to change that or to help them out.

Religions touched by Hinduism and Buddhism believe in *reincarnation* teaching that long after a person dies, his soul continues to come back in a different physical body. The level of person (or animal) the soul enters is at the mercy of his karma or the right thoughts at death. The hope is to break free

But the dead no longer need what we offer. The Bible emphasizes that it is what a person does and believes in this life that is the



**God warns against mediums trying to consult the dead**

Leviticus 19:31

2 Kings 21:1-6

2 Kings 23:24-25

Isaiah 8:19-20



**Truth of God suppressed and ignored**

Romans 1:18-23

Galatians 1:3-9

of the vicious cycle of life, death, re-birth, and re-death. The cycle never ends unless the person's soul is absorbed into the Brahman (the source of life) or reaches the Nirvana (the ending of all desires and feelings into nothingness). Not much certainty there.

Still others hope that everyone goes to heaven at death, no matter what their life or faith. We hear, "He's in a better place. He's much happier now" unless the dead was viewed as evil. No clarity there.

**All these deceptions have people heading to the wrong place!** The real truth isn't so complex.

In Hebrews 9:27 we read,

*"People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."*

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**People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment**

---

The souls of believers in Jesus go to heaven, and the souls of those who do not believe in Jesus will go to hell

(Mark 16:16; Luke 16:22,23). On the last day, God will raise the dead and reunite souls with their bodies (Job 19:25-27). Believers in Jesus will live in heaven with Jesus forever (Matthew 25:34). Unbelievers will spend eternity in hell (Matthew 25:41).

3. Summarize the different views of life-after-death and what the Bible teaches.



**God is our only  
Hope in trouble  
and Source of  
blessings**

Isaiah 40:10-31

Isaiah 42:5-9

44:6-11

Psalms 44:1-8

Psalms 78

## WHAT ABOUT OUR ANCESTORS?

The family made their trip to the cemetery to put flowers on the grave. A little girl asks, "Where is grandpa now?" The father replies, "He is still with us." Is that true?

In some religious traditions, it is a belief that the deceased soul continues its interaction with people to

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**When a person dies,  
they are no longer active  
in our world**

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bring fortune to the family or protection from evil. Relatives burn incense and give food offerings to the

ancestors in hopes they will intercede in the spirit world. If rituals are forgotten, ancestors can become angry and trouble the family. A spiritual mediator (Shaman, priest, witchdoctor) is consulted to find out how to appease the ancestor. No peace or rest there.



**Remembering the  
good examples of  
ancestors**

Acts 7

Hebrews 11

It is honorable to respect deceased relatives. Events to commemorate their lives gives depth to ours. Learning their stories provides lessons we can follow. But when a person dies, they are no longer active in



our world nor are we any longer able to influence their existence. We can't change the judgment of how they stood with God in this life. The funeral is to support those who grieve the absence of a loved one not to influence the fate of the one who died.

In the Bible, neither Abraham, the great ancestor of God's people, nor Moses their great leader, were involved in the events of the world after they died. Their words and examples encouraged millions of people (Romans 15:4), but also direct us to focus on the God of those ancestors (2 Chronicles 14:4; Deuteronomy 10:12-22). The prophets frequently also pointed out the many sins of the ancestors to warn us not to follow those ways (2 Kings 17:13-17). Their prayers found confidence in the covenant God had made with their ancestors (Leviticus 26:42, 45).

Ancestor worship, guardian spirits, spiritual mediators – all of this denies what the Bible says happens after death and pushes God into the background of a person's devotion and focus. It is

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**Jesus, not guardian  
spirits, is the only  
mediator between God  
and man**

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God, not ancestors, who is our refuge, our blessings, our help (Isaiah 42:5-9). It is Jesus, not guardian spirits, who is the only

mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Any interference in our lives is an activity of the Devil and his demons or the protection of God and his angels.

So what does happen? For those who have died, there is no crossing the boundaries between hell, earth, and heaven. To illustrate that, Jesus told a



**Telling the next  
generations the  
story of the God of  
their ancestors**

Psalms 44:1-8

Psalms 78

story of a selfish rich man who went directly to hell and a faithful poor man named Lazarus that went directly to heaven. No one could give the rich man any relief from the agony of hell, nor was the rich man able to intervene with his brothers who were still alive.



## Rich man and poor Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31



Peter instructs new believers,

*"It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18).*

When Jesus was dying on the cross, a dying thief turned to him in faith and said,

*"Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus told him, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."*

When you die, there is no time of wandering in limbo. No drifting around this earth or the underworld. No need for people to guide your

journey with rituals. No need for relatives to sustain you. Immediate arrival at the feast and joys in heaven.

4. What is the positive impact if Christians sweep the tomb of their ancestors? And what is not proper?



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Discuss how a person's view of what happens after death affects how they live in this life.
2. Today, some people think of the ritual of the funeral. As a Christian, based on the understanding of death, what is your view on it?
3. Determine how to respectfully talk with non-Christians about the part their deceased ancestors play in their lives.
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## YOUR NEXT STEPS

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

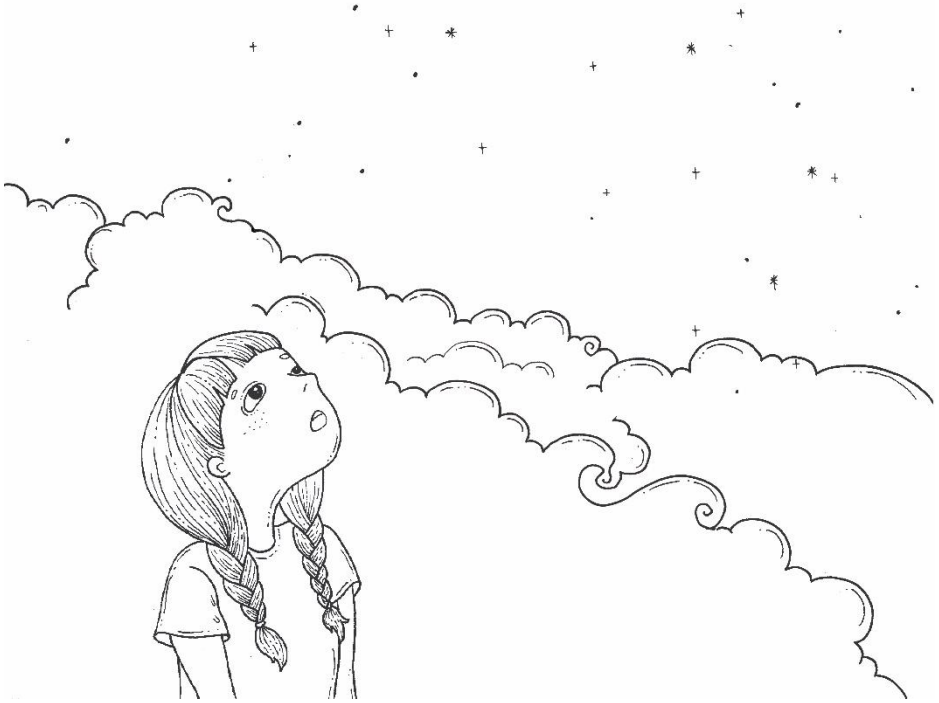
### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Four to learn how life after death is worth looking forward to.*

## Chapter Four

# What Will the Perfect Life after Death Be Like?



Ever since death came into the world, people have looked for ways to escape death. Some of the great explorers of the world looked for a magic spring of water that would keep them alive forever. Scientists keep looking for ways for people to live longer. Is that the goal?

1. Discuss how efforts to live longer are sometimes cut short.

## OUR LONGING FOR ETERNITY

When God first created us, he made us to live forever. King Solomon said,

*“[God] has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

In other words, we know that there is more to life than *this* life and long for it. Humanity seeks answers to figure out what it is. Only God can show us.

Some people who struggle with the abuse and neglect of this world often have problems

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**If “life after death” is only more of the same of what this life is, would anyone want it?**

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anticipating anything better after this life. Ancient religions often depicted life after death as filled with the same types of power

plays and struggles between people as they experienced while they are alive. If “life after death” is only more of the same of what *this* life is, would anyone look forward to it?

And what about those who believe they will be caught in an unending cycles of reincarnation? If that were true, you would be stuck having to live life over and over and over again to try to do it better. If that is eternal life, it isn’t much to look forward to. The biblical reality reveals that there is only hell or heaven waiting us after this life.



**Paul looked forward to heaven more than anything on earth**

Philippians 1:20-24;

3:7-14

2 Timothy 4:6-8

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

In God's plan, death was not to be the end. In God's plan, there is not only life after death – **there is a perfect life after death.** Death for the Christian is

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**Life in heaven with God  
is true life after death**

---

merely the transition into this perfect life with God in heaven.

In Matthew 25:34,

Jesus says that at Judgment day those who believe in him will hear him say,

*“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”*

And when you know what heaven is going to be like, it changes things – including your attitude about this life.



Apostle Paul told one struggling group,

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on*



**Heaven called  
“eternal rest” from  
our hard labor**

Hebrews 4:9-11



**We can have true  
life because of  
Jesus**

John 6:49, 58

John 17:3

Hebrews 2:9-15

*what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).*

He tells another group,

*“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14)*

2. Explain why existing forever might be a frightening or complicated thought to some people.

## KNOWING WHAT HEAVEN IS LIKE

Think back to how life was for people when God first created Adam and Eve. Life was perfect. Everything was harmony and peace. Every moment had meaning and joy in continual fellowship with God himself. But now life is a struggle. There are all kinds of bad things that happen to our bodies while we live on earth. Cuts and broken bones and bruises and sicknesses inside us – sometimes our bodies give out before we are ready for them to. But in heaven, our bodies will be perfect. St. Paul says in Philippians 3:21,

*“[Jesus] will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*

Revelation 21:4 tells us that in heaven

*[God] “will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*



**Our bodies  
transformed for  
heaven**

1 Corinthians 15:35-57



No tears! No death! No sadness! No crying! No pain! What a perfect place!

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**Jesus describes heaven  
like the greatest  
wedding feast ever!**

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Jesus also describes  
heaven like the  
greatest wedding feast  
ever!

*"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb"* (Revelation 19:9).



**Jesus clothes us  
with his robe of  
righteousness**

Isaiah 61:10

Ephesians 5:25-27

Galatians 3:26-29

Revelation 7:9-17

Heaven will be a continual celebration of Jesus receiving his people like a *"bride beautifully dressed for her husband"* (Revelation 21:2). And who will be there? Those who have trusted in Jesus while they lived in this life. Jesus described that grand fellowship in heaven:

*"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 8:11).

3. What parts of these descriptions of heaven most appeal to you? Why?

## HEAVEN – THE GREAT REUNION

Then at the end of this world Jesus will return to separate all people into two groups for judgment and re-join souls with their bodies. On the last day, the bodies of believers who already died will join with their souls and meet Jesus in the clouds. Those believers who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). They will live in heaven with Jesus forever (Matthew 25:34).



### Joining the hosts of heaven

Hebrews 12:22-24

Revelation 7:9-17

Whether at their death or at the end of the world, those taken to heaven will also be reunited with believers they knew and loved who also went to heaven. The mother who died as a believer in Jesus – her Christian children will see her again! The husband who was killed in a terrible accident – since he believed in Jesus, his Christian wife will see him in heaven! We will get to meet face-to-face those “pillars of faith” whose heroic or quietly faithful lives lived in Jesus encouraged us in this life.

Most important, when we get to heaven we will be

with our Savior forever. The relationship with God will be perfect again.

***“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among ... his people, and God himself will be with them”***  
(Revelation 21:3).

We will see Jesus face-to-face!

***“But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like him. We will see him as he really is”*** (1 John 3:2).

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**We will see Jesus face-to-face!**

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Someone described our arrival in heaven like a lost child excitedly running

into a strange room to jump into the waiting arms of his father. There also the child is embraced by his big brother, the one who had risked his own life to rescue him. That child may not have known much about what else was in the room, but he knew Papa and big brother were there.



There are a lot of things we may not yet know about



**Whoever believes  
already has eternal  
life**

John 3:36,  
6:40, 47  
10:27-30

heaven, but what we do know is our heavenly Father waits for us there. Jesus and all the angels stand ready to welcome us. That is what the Christian finally longs for.

It is often the anticipation of that future that keeps us going through the hard times. Job was a man in the Old Testament who endured tremendous loss of family, possessions, and health. But in the middle of the misery, a memorable sentence rose from his faith and hope in God's promises,

*"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27).*

One famous world evangelist said, "When I die and go to be with Jesus, I will be more alive than I am now."

Although the Bible teaches that life in heaven lasts forever, all of us wonder, "Just how long is forever?" A "long" time to a mother having a baby might be a few hours of pain. A "long" time to a little child might be one hour, if he has nothing to do, or the time waiting for a trip to Disneyland! But God looks at time differently. He operates outside of time (2 Peter 3:8). One thing we do know. However long our life on earth may be, it is not even a drop in an ocean full of water compared to how long eternity lasts! Now is the time to be sure you will spend it not in hell but in heaven. Heaven will be perfect and it will last forever!



**Compared to  
eternity – this life is  
like the brief  
blossom of a flower**

Job 14:1-2

Isaiah 40:6-8

Psalms 103:13-17

4. Summarize in your own words the reunion in heaven



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. How would this chapters teaching about eternity help you deal with the problems of this life?
2. How would you explain the joys of heaven to a friend?
3. Compare the shortness of this life in contract to the eternity after death. How will that change how you live your moments and days here on earth?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

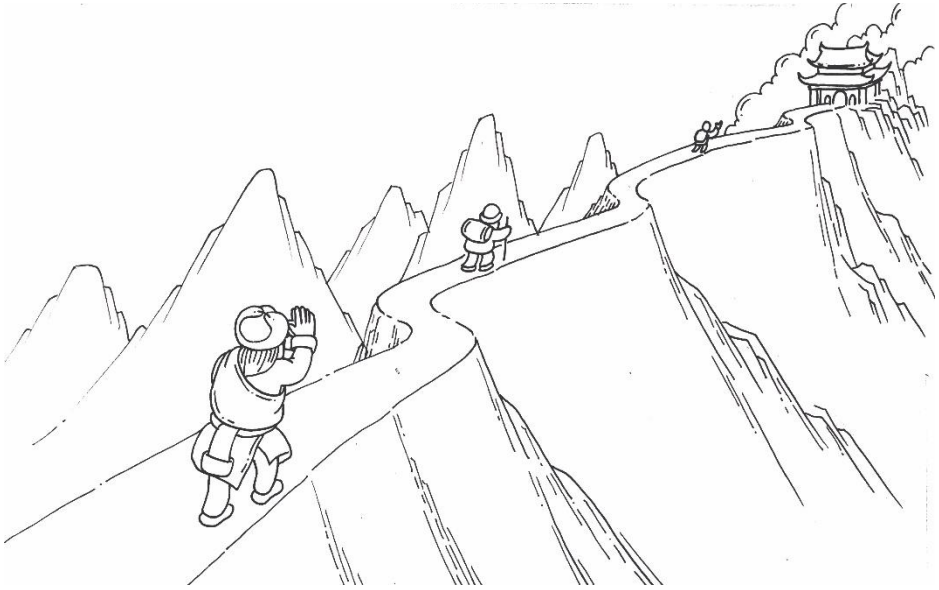
### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Five to learn how we get true Life after Death.*

## Chapter Five

# How Do I Get Life After Death?



How do you find that eternal life? Many search for it inside themselves to reach some sort of enlightenment or find the god within. Others become monks in hopes that begging and repeated mantras will give them a better place in the afterlife. Another hopes that frequent rituals will guide or feed deceased souls to a better place in the afterlife. Still others hope their activity in the afterlife will bring them god-ness or immortality. Who gets it? Only the best?

1. If the perfect life after death depends on good works, how do we know we did enough good works for it?

## HEAVEN – A HIDDEN TREASURE?

Imagine that you are visiting a huge mansion. As you walk through, you see very fine furniture that looks too nice to sit on. You see gorgeous and colorful rugs that look too good to walk on. Someone in the house says, “I am happy to tell you that before the owner of this mansion died, he included each one of you in his will. The owner gave each one of you one million dollars. The money is yours.” Finally, a person next to you asks in a quiet voice, “Where is it? How do we get the money?” You are told, “Oh, umm, OK. Well, we think it is in a hidden place in one of these rooms. But do not worry – the money is still yours!” Now, what kind of gift would that be? Not much of one!

It is wonderful that life after death is not like that missing million dollars. How good would it be if God told us about the treasures of heaven but left us in the dark to search for it on our own?

Many personal theories and cultural beliefs don’t match with biblical reality about life after death. Ask someone, “How do you think you get to heaven?” More than likely he will tell you something like this: “I am a pretty good person when it comes down to it. I have tried to make up for all the bad things I have done by doing good things.” The Bible tells us,

***“There is a way that may seem right to a man. But in the end, it leads to death” (Proverbs 16:25).***

Jesus explains further

***“Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to***



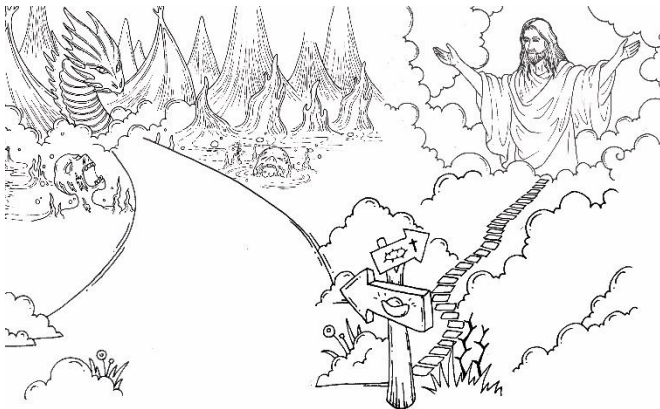
**You can’t save  
yourself by what  
you do**

Romans 3:9-20

Galatians 3:10-14



*life, and only a few find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14).



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**The Bible reveals how to  
take hold of life that is  
truly life**

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God hasn't hidden this life from us or left it up to mystic guides or spiritual gurus to figure out. The Bible,

reveals how to *"take hold of life that is truly life"* (1 Timothy 6:19).

2. Summarize the main message of this section.

## **YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE HEAVEN – JESUS DID**

A man came up to Jesus and asked, *"What must I do to get eternal life"* (Matthew 19:16-29). He felt he had kept the commandments good enough. But God says if it depended on us to gain life after death, we cannot do *any* wrong things. Never! Even if we slip up just once, we lose out on life after death!

*"Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just*



**They asked, "What  
must I do to gain  
eternal life?"**

Matthew 19:16-26

Luke 10:25-28

*one part of it. Then you are guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10).*

The reality that hangs over humanity because of guilt of sin, is the curse of sin,

*"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels... eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:41,46; Mark 16:16).*

But getting life after death is not a lost cause even though we cannot be perfect. The Bible says that

Jesus *"has been tempted in every way, just as we are. But he did not sin"* (Hebrews 4:15).



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**Jesus was not just  
perfect in our place.  
Jesus also was  
punished in our place!**

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God takes Jesus' perfect life and credits us as if we had lived it. In other words, he counts Jesus'

perfection as being ours. But then there still is the problem of punishment. God's punishment for sin is death and damnation in hell. But Jesus also was



**God credits Jesus' perfect living to those who believe**

Romans 4

Galatians 3:6-9, 26-29

punished in our place! Peter tells us,

*“[Jesus] himself carried our sins in his body on the cross” (1 Peter 2:24).*

When Jesus was killed on the cross, he was not killed for his own sins (he did not have any), but for the sins of all people. The justice God requires for our sins has already been taken care of by Jesus. Jesus gives us heaven! No people can rob us of that joy (John 16:22).

The Bible says,

*“[Jesus] shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Hebrews 2:9,14-15).*

He *“has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”* (2 Timothy 1:10).

3. Summarize what Jesus did in order to give us have eternal life.

## TRUE LIFE AFTER DEATH – A GIFT OF FAITH

The gift of true life after death is not hidden. It is right where Jesus put it for all people to see. Jesus offers us the gift of life after death in the Bible, his Word. Very simply said, the Bible tells us that Jesus gives us eternal life in heaven through *faith*. “Faith” is simply believing that Jesus is your Savior. When a jailer in Philippi asked Paul



**While we were still sinners, Jesus died to give us life**

Romans 5:6-10, 14-19

Hebrews 10:1-14



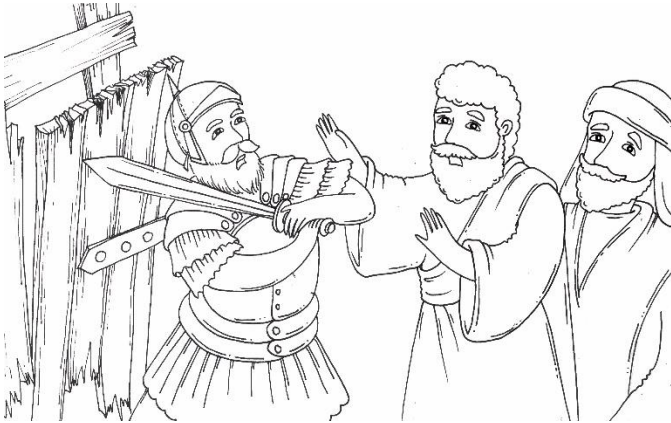
**Saved – a gift received by faith**

Ephesians 2:7-9

Romans 4

Romans 6:21-23

*"What must I do to be saved," Paul simply told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and your household" (Acts 16:31).*



### **The Jailer at Philippi about to commit suicide**

Acts 16:16-34

Immediately he and his household were baptized. It

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**What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ**

---

is a gift - for us to receive without cost (Isaiah 55:1-7).

God gives life after death and all its blessings to us as a gift! Romans 6:23 tells us,

*"the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Even our faith is a gift from him worked in us by God,

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9).*



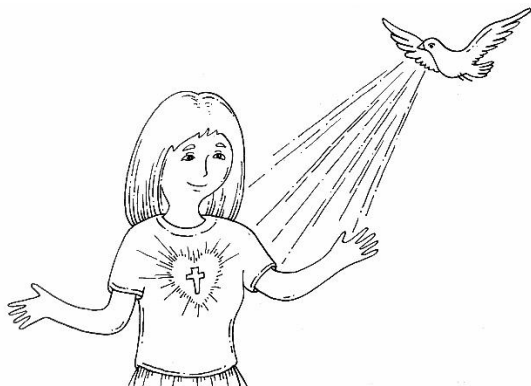
### **God's pledge to us in baptism – new life in Christ**

Acts 2:36-42

Romans 6:3-5, 9-10

Titus 3:3-7

1 Peter 3:19-22



Jesus told his followers he was going back into heaven to prepare a place for them in the mansions of his Father. One day he will come back to take us to be with him forever (John 14:1-7).

This hope gives us a new life already now. Peter exclaims,

*"In [God's] great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).*

4. Based on this section, what does God give to us other than the life after death?

## **REFLECT ETERNAL LIFE EACH DAY**

In Chapter One we looked at the rich farmer who

built greater barns for his harvest so he could enjoy life. Jesus called him a “fool” because all the hard-gained riches would be taken away from him when he died. He would have to leave them all behind. But he had not prepared for his life after death. He was not “rich” toward God (Luke 12:19-21). Jesus said,

*“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul. Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”* (Mark 8:36).

There are no second chances after death... no reincarnations to come back and try again... no relatives that can change your situation with their rituals or praying after you have died.

Jesus also told about another rich man didn’t pay attention to his life with God. When the rich man died and was in torment in hell, he pleaded that poor Lazarus would be sent back from the dead and be seen by the rich man’s five brothers. Maybe they

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**These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah... and may have life in his name**

---

would repent and not have to also end up at the place of torment after they died. God’s answer was,

*“They have Moses and the Prophets (the Bible), let them hear them... If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead”* (Lk 16:27-31).

The Bible is there to prepare us for life after death. Listen while you can.

*“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”* (John



**Listen while you can**

Hebrews 3:12-15,19;  
4:1-2



**Prepared for life after death**

Psalms 90  
Luke 12:35-44  
Matthew 25:1-10  
1 Timothy 6:12

20:31).

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**Since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found ...at peace with him**

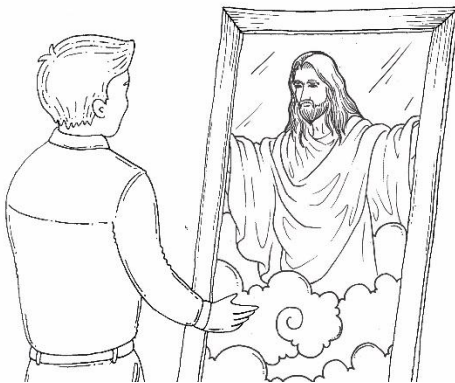
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Jesus will return one day and reveal where everyone stands with him. At that time the earth as we know it will be destroyed.

Those who follow him in this life, will live in the new heaven and earth, the home of everything that is right (Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 13:24-36).

So how should that affect us today? Peter says,

*“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God... So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him”*  
(2 Peter 3:10-12,14).



In Revelation 14:12-13 it says,

*“This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven*

*say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

5. How can we live a life of hope?

## INVITE OTHERS TO LIFE AFTER DEATH

Jesus already sees what is in the heart.

*"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:18)*

It is unnerving to think about friends and relatives who died without Jesus. We respect how God used them to contribute many benefits our lives. But no matter how highly we value them or how highly honored by the world, they must face the truth Jesus shared about life after death. There is nothing we can do to change their situation after they have died. But what about the rest who are still alive? Look around you and see what God sees.

He wants *"all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:3-6; 2 Peter 3:9).

How does God reach them? Through people like you. This life is our only chance to tell our parents, or children, or grandchildren about Jesus. It is our opportunity to talk to our neighbors and coworkers.

*"In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks*



**How will they believe unless someone tells them?**

Romans 10:6-18



*you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." (1 Peter 3:15-16).*



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**Always be prepared to give an answer...with gentleness and respect**

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Pray that God would open doors for you to share his message and to help you make the most of those

opportunities.

The Bible ends with an invitation to the feast of heaven carried to the world through God's people (the bride) with the power of the Holy Spirit:

*"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirst come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).*

Live and share – leave the result up to God.

6. List some of the ways God reaches people to help them know Jesus and the eternal life.



**God's word has a powerful effect**

Isaiah 55:10-13

Romans 1:17



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Summarize the main points of this study into a brief talk to share with others about life after death.
2. List some names of people with whom you can share about life after death. If you share to the people in different ages, characters or religious belief, how do you adjust your talk?
3. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
4. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Study it!**

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

### **Memorize it!**

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you)

# Life After Death



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