

SEPTEMBER 27 - NOVEMBER 1 | NEXT STEPS

# IMAGINE HEAVEN

NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES, GOD'S PROMISES  
AND THE EXHILARATING FUTURE THAT AWAITS YOU

## Relationships in Heaven

When I die, will I still be myself? Will I have a body or will I be some kind of angel or spirit? Will I see the people I know and love and will we recognize each other? These are some of the most fundamental questions of the heart and soul in each person, and the Bible has something to say about each of them! Work through the following questions on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or family around the dinner table and talk through your answers.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do people find it so unfair when someone's life ends before it seems to truly begin, like 18 year old Ben?
2. In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world." Do you think this is true?
3. Between the words of Jesus and Paul, and the incredible glimpses of lies beyond this life through the accounts of NDEs, it seems that the fear of death should hold no power over us. And yet fear of death and the unknown are devastating to so many people. Has this series affected how you think about the inevitability of your own death?
4. Would you say you are primarily a physical being that happens to have a spiritual soul, or you are primarily a spiritual soul that happens to have a physical body, or something else?
5. Read Luke 24:38-43. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to show His disciples that He had a physical, resurrected body?
6. Who can't you wait to see in Heaven in their resurrected, upgraded body?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-9. Do you feel like you have the same kind of confidence in the world to come as Paul? If not, what kinds of steps could you take over the course of this series to grow in your understanding of God and His promises for your eternal future? If so, how are you living out that confidence in your daily life?

### Key Scriptures

"Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched. Luke 24:38-43 (NLT)

For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his

Holy Spirit. So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. 2 Corinthians 5:1-9 (NLT)

### **Digging Deeper**

Christianity teaches about the value of spiritual renewal, of replacing old ways of thinking with new ways in order to become a better version of ourselves. Both Jesus and Paul taught about the renewal of our bodies after we die, where we will become the optimal version of ourselves. How can you begin to prepare yourself for this journey of transformation? One great place is to study the resources available for character building at <http://lifegroup.gatewaychurch.com/be-transformed/new-creation/>.