

SEPTEMBER 27 - NOVEMBER 1 | NEXT STEPS

IMAGINE HEAVEN

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

What About Hell?

Although most reports of near death experiences are overwhelmingly positive, there are some who describe what appears to be a hellish afterlife. God, however, doesn't want us to fear death or condemnation. Maybe pain and suffering are simply a warning and a chance to choose him! But even in the presence of God, would everyone choose him? 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. Do you ever find yourself drawn to entertainment that involves human interactions with angels? (e.g., the T.V. series "Touched by an Angel", the movie "Angels in the Outfield", etc.?) If so, why are you drawn to these shows? Was there anything that stood out to you in the message that left you with a different impression of angels than you thought previously?
2. People who experience hell in their near death experience communicate feelings of shame, fear, or lack of love. How is this similar or different to what you might imagine about being in hell?
3. Read Isaiah 63:9. Do you ever struggle with wondering why a God who loves us would allow us to go through so much pain and suffering? Although the choices of others can cause us pain, how have you experienced comfort in knowing that when we suffer, God suffers with us? What other thoughts do you find encouraging when you "taste hell" – the absence of God and his ways?
4. Read John 5:24. Similar to the angels, it seems that God has also left us with a choice. Why is the freedom to choose or reject God necessary for love? In what ways might our suffering lead us to reject God? In what ways could our painful experiences lead us to choose him?
5. Read Matthew 16:26-27. How does the thought of a "life review" make you feel? Are you surprised that the life reviews NDErs experience are described as a preview rather than a judgment? Which would you expect to experience if God's love is truly unconditional?
6. Do you believe God's promise, "If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me" (Jeremiah 29:13 NLT)? How can we help ourselves and others know that they don't have to fear death or judgment but know that they can have life with God now and forever?
7. How is God prompting you to live your life differently this week as a result of hearing this message and engaging in this conversation? What next steps do you need to take in light of your answer?

Key Scriptures

In all their suffering he also suffered, and he personally rescued them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them. He lifted them up and carried them through all the years. Isaiah 63:9 NLT

“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.” John 5:24 NLT

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. Matthew 16:26-27 NIV

Digging Deeper

Spiritual Outcome – Trust Christ

Common perception is that a follower of Christ is someone who believes in the existence of God and believes in the deity of Christ. Simply believe that God exists and that he sent his son, and you are considered a Christ-follower. Such thinking, though, is flawed. It misses the critical distinction between belief and trust. Abraham was called a friend of God, not because he believed God exists, but because he entrusted his life to God. Have you made the choice to trust God with your life? Go to lifegroup.gatewaychurch.com/trust-christ for more information and deeper study.