



NEW
HOPE
WINDWARD

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU DIE

2. WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE

ICEBREAKER

If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves**.



To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following questions:

Describe your perfect day. What would it be like? What would you do? Where would you go? What would you eat?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

What happens after you die? Think about it. What's it going to be like? Some of us don't like thinking about it. It's scary. It's confusing. It gets us stressed out! But if we truly knew what heaven was like, then we would want so badly to be there right now. How can that change the way we live our lives until then? In this week's small group discussion, we hope to convey a little bit more how wonderful heaven truly is so that we can begin to loosen our grip of this world and lessen our love for it. What are some myths that have misled us to fully understand how we ought to really live our life while we are still living here on earth?



TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: AVOID TALKING or TEACHING TOO MUCH. Small groups are designed for everyone to share and grow together.

Tip: IN PERSON GATHERING. Per State current requirements, please observe the following if your group decides to meet in person: No more than 5-10 people at this time. This may change based on what Tier we are currently at in the State of Hawaii; wear a mask; and maintain 6 feet social distance.

ONLINE Tip: ZOOM &/OR IN PERSON. If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time. If your group decides to meet in person, please practice safe social distancing by following the guidelines of being 6 feet apart and wearing a mask.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) The idea of heaven is...well, it can be confusing. Where is it? What does it look like? How long will we be there?

There are so many questions that we don't have answers to. What will we look like? Will I recognize people? How hot or cold will it get? Will I have lots of hair or still be bald?

One reason that these questions are so hard to answer is because heaven is so hard to comprehend. Last week, we heard from a man who died and visited heaven, then came back to life. He's not the only one to experience that. Read the following story from the Bible:

I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell. *2 Corinthians 12:2-4 (NLT)*

(NOTE: Some translations write “I know a man,” but nearly every scholar agrees that Paul was talking about himself in third person.)

Have you ever had an experience that was hard to put into words? Maybe it was falling in love with your spouse or seeing the birth of your first child. It could even be seeing some amazing natural wonder. Think about that moment. Now, what kind of words would you use to describe it? Why do you think it's hard to explain?

2.) There is another picture of heaven in the Bible, one of what heaven will be like. The Word of God teaches us that when we die, we are immediately in the presence of God (*2 Corinthians 5:8*). But there is coming a time at the end of the age when we will all be with Him together forever. That's what the following passage talks about:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God's home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” And the One sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” *Revelation 21:1-5 (NLT)*

This is what most of us think of when we think about being in heaven. Again, it's hard for our minds to comprehend. Anything we experience on earth will be changed in one of two ways: **"Brand New" or "No More."**

All the great stuff you like on earth will be there too, but just brand new. Food, fun, family - all of them are there, just better! And the stuff you don't like? It's no more. No more crying. No more pain. No more dying.

How does it make you feel knowing that everything on earth will either be "Brand New" or "No More?"

3.) One way to try and explain what heaven will be like is to look at **three myths of heaven.**

Myth #1 - Heaven will be boring!

First of all, the devil is a liar and he will make us believe that heaven is boring. He will deceive us to think that hell is not a real place and with this mindset, we'll end up just living for today thinking that what we have here on earth is all that matters. Because of Satan's deceptive strategy, he will lead a lot of people to think that God is boring - that God kills all the fun. These lies are all far from the truth.

If you ever had the image of living in heaven being turned into an angel with wings and a harp, floating around on a cloud, get that out of your head. It's not in scripture. It won't be boring at all! We will do many things we do on earth and more. In fact, the Bible says that everything great in life comes from God (*James 1:17*). If that's the case, then when we are with Him it can't be boring!

The truth is heaven is the absence of all evil and everything bad. It is the presence of everything good. It is the total opposite of boredom. We get to be in the presence of God. We get to look forward to working with Jesus without being entangled in our sin. Therefore, we can fully serve Him with the fullness of joy!

What are you most looking forward to in heaven? Is it seeing a loved one who's passed, or maybe trying a new talent or skill, visiting a new place? Meeting new people?

4.) Myth #2 - Heaven will be completely different because this world is really your home!

Don't get too used to living on earth because your real home is in Heaven. Jesus is making it for us (*John 14:2*). We aren't really citizens of earth, because we belong to heaven (*Philippians 3:20*).

If we truly understand that our life here on earth is but a mist as James describes it plainly -- "*Your life is like the morning fog--it's here a little while, then it's gone,*" (*James 4:14 - NLT*) then we'd realize that this world is not our home. What matters most is eternity. Because of that, let's live our lives here on earth with eternal purpose.

Myth #3 - Everyone is going to heaven anyway, so it doesn't matter what I do here!

Most people in the world believe in heaven, in some form or another. But they don't all agree on how to get there. John 14:6 says that Jesus is the only way to the Father. And Revelation 21:7 says that heaven is only for those who are victorious in life through Him.

Heaven is not a default destination where we think we will all end up. Good people don't go to heaven. The Bible says that no one is good.

*"Why do You call Me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone."
Mark 10:19 (NIV)*

The truth is forgiven people go to heaven when they die. It is by God's saving grace that we end up in heaven when we choose to accept what Jesus did on the cross for us. It is through the blood that He shed on the cross that makes us in right standing with God the Father.

What is one point or idea in this discussion about the 3 myths that stuck out to you? Was there something you learned or were reminded of that you are looking forward to about Heaven?

5.) Think again about what happens the moment after you die. Here's another picture, almost step-by-step, of what happens:

At the same moment and in the same way, we'll all be changed. In the resurrection scheme of things, this has to happen: everything perishable taken off the shelves and replaced by the imperishable, this mortal replaced by the immortal. Then the saying will come true: Death swallowed by triumphant Life! Who got the last word, oh, Death? Oh, Death, who's afraid of you now? It was sin that made death so frightening and law-code guilt that gave sin its leverage, its destructive power. But now in a single victorious stroke of Life, all three—sin, guilt, death—are gone, the gift of our Master, Jesus Christ. Thank God! With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for Him is a waste of time or effort.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 (MSG)

Notice the last thing the Bible says about it. Not about what your body looks like or how things feel, but what we need to do now - **stand your ground and work for God!** What matters now while we are still living here on earth is to live with a sense of urgency. What we do from this moment on matters for eternity.

What can you do right now on earth to get ready to live in heaven? Who will you reach out to today, tomorrow, and moving forward to help them also get to heaven?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



Jesus taught us to pray, “On earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10) For believers, this life is just training us for when we live forever with Him. How can you do that this week?

- **Find a way to share Jesus and the reality of heaven with others.**
- **Look out for opportunities to serve the Master by serving others.**
- **Get your heart right so sin doesn’t get in your way.**

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other’s prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other’s prayer requests to remember throughout the week.



Sample Prayer:

Father, we look forward to spending forever with you. But we know we don’t really have to wait! We can spend time with You every single day, and live out a little bit of heaven here. So would You show up when we call, and comfort us this week? We ask for Your Holy Spirit to stir within us the urgency to live for what matters eternally. We don’t want to get comfortable in our temporary home here on earth. When we do get into that mindset, shake us, stir in us and cause us to wake up to the reality that we need to be ready for Your return and when You take us home to be with You. Help us to pray and reach out to those who are still lost and haven’t found their way to You. Bring those people in our lives to remembrance and give us the courage to reach out. We look forward to meeting You face to face one day. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen!

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

SCRIPTURE...

*That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him."
1 Corinthians 2:9 (NLT)*

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

*May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.
Ephesians 3:19 (NLT)*

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.”
John 14:1-3 (NIV)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

My friends, we want you to understand how it will be for those followers who have already died. Then you won't grieve over them and be like people who don't have any hope.
1 Thessalonians 4:13 (CEV)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...
