

SEPTEMBER 27 - NOVEMBER 1 | NEXT STEPS

# IMAGINE HEAVEN

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

## Rewards That Last

"What's the purpose of this life?" That is one of the most universal questions in our shared human experience. As it turns out, what we do on Earth has eternal implications! But how? 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. Using both Scripture and the NDE accounts, John painted a picture of the sheer awesomeness of Heaven, one that's very different from the common picture of angels sitting on clouds playing harps. If Heaven is really that great, why don't we talk more about it as a church?
2. Scripture and NDEs both describe a book containing our life's events, how confident or concerned are you about the details being written about you?
3. Do you anticipate receiving any rewards in heaven for what you have done with your life? Why?
4. Read Matthew 25:14-30. The Bible says that our deeds don't save us, but they determine the extent of God's rewards for us in heaven. Why do you think our deeds should matter? Should it be enough for us to just get into Heaven, or are we expected to do more?
5. What has been the easiest way for you to serve God by serving others? What has been the hardest?
6. If our life on Earth is truly about preparing us for eternal life, what do you think you'll be doing to serve God in heaven?
7. How has your imagination of heaven changed as a result of reading the book and having these discussions?
8. Read Colossians 3:23-24. How can you approach your work in the days ahead – whether on the job or at home or elsewhere – with a fresh attitude of doing that work for God Himself, rather than for a boss, a family member or even yourself?

### Key Scriptures

"[The Kingdom of Heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have

been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.' "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)

### **Digging Deeper**

Spiritual Outcome – Spiritual Gifts

God has given every single person a unique combinations of gifts, skills, passions, interests and desires, allowing us opportunities to contribute to the world and the people around us in ways that no one else can! Not every talent we have is a spiritual gift, but our spiritual gifts tend to be reflected in those activities and pursuits that most fire our imaginations and get us jumping out of bed in the morning. If you've never explored your spiritual gifts before you can complete a Spiritual Gift Assessment – among many other resources - at [lifegroup.gatewaychurch.com/being-transformed/spiritual-gifts/](http://lifegroup.gatewaychurch.com/being-transformed/spiritual-gifts/)