

SEPTEMBER 27 - NOVEMBER 1 | NEXT STEPS

IMAGINE HEAVEN

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

The Highlight of Heaven

A common, beautiful thread weaving many stories of near death experiences together is that of the overwhelming love they felt in the presence of Jesus, the being of light. This was in spite of the fact that He knew everything about them, good and bad. That kind of all-seeing, unconditional love is what we all crave deep within our hearts. 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. Encountering a personal “being of light” is consistently reported among those who have had near death experiences, even those from various cultural and religious backgrounds. How is this significant to you in considering heaven?
2. In Ian's story, he describes how he understood that this “being of light” was God, who knew every secret thought and action, and with whom no mask could hide anything. If you were standing in front of Jesus at this moment, how would that thought of being completely seen and known make you feel?
3. In response to the sin and brokenness he saw in his life, Ian expected judgment and punishment. Instead, he explained how he felt an indescribable, unconditional love wash over him. What would you expect Jesus' reaction to be to the way you've chosen to live life?
4. Over and over again, the stories of the near death experiences relate how freely and fully forgiveness was given by God. In her complete life review, one woman said, "Throughout, I not only saw everything from my own point of view, but also I knew the thoughts of everybody who'd been involved in these events. . . . And throughout, the review stressed the importance of love." Do you think considering the thoughts and motivations of others would help you also forgive freely?
5. Read John 3:16-17. If a personal, loving relationship is what motivates God, what implications does this have for our lives here on earth? What implications does it have in regards to heaven?
6. Many conclude after their experience with the God of Light that the point of everything is love. Read how Jesus describes us in Matthew 5 below. So if our purpose in this world is to shine the light and love of God into a dark and despairing world, what are some small steps you can take to live this way at home and at work? What do you think holds us back from showing that kind of love to people?

Key Scriptures

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17 (NLT)

Digging Deeper

Spiritual Outcome - Trust Christ lifegroup.gatewaychurch.com/trust-christ/

It's tempting to assess God's love for us based on our circumstances and His answers to our requests. What we don't understand is that He sees a bigger picture that we won't comprehend until we see Him face to face, and He takes us through the chronicle of our lives. Only then will we see how He has always been with us, and always loved us. For now, we have to choose to believe Him if we are to find real peace and joy in this life. Have you made a decision to make a focused commitment to follow Christ? If not, what is holding you back from making that decision?