



Lesson Title: The Why's of the Gospels—Why Eternal Life?



Key Concept: The Gospels' themes are often obscure to us, but God has a reason for including them. Believing and living a life in Jesus gives us hope and the promise of eternal life.



Scriptures:

“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life.”

(John 5:24 *New Living Translation*)

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.”

(John 6:47 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: John 3; John 11:25–26; John 14:2–3; John 10:30; Matthew 19:16–30; Mark 10:17–31; Luke 18:18–30; John 11:21–26; John 4; Hebrews 1:10; John 6:68; Romans 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18



Lesson Thoughts:

Eternal life is a concept that is hard to grasp, and yet we long for the promise of living forever with Jesus. We can think of the kingdom of God and eternal life as counterparts in God's loving plan of redemption for humanity. While the kingdom of God is heaven coming to earth and God reaching to us, the promise of eternal life is us looking toward heaven and reaching to God. John 3:16 declares God's all-embracing love for his creation: “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.”

During his ministry, Jesus often spoke of eternal life. He told Nicodemus that everyone who believes on the Son of man may have eternal life. When the rich young ruler asked how to inherit eternal life, Jesus told him to take care of the poor and to follow him. Jesus told Martha that Lazarus, who had died, would rise again. Martha understood the Jewish belief that everyone would rise at the last day. But Jesus revealed to her, “I am

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the resurrection and the life. . . . Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25–26). In his conversation with the woman at the well, Jesus told her she would never thirst again if she drank his living water that gives eternal life. And to his disciples Jesus said, "There is more than enough room in my Father's home. . . . When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am" (John 14:2–3). When Jesus declared, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30), he revealed himself as the giver of eternal life.

The age to come, eternal life, eternity, forever, heaven, immortality, life everlasting—these are words in the Bible that refer to a life beyond this world. "Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God" (Hebrews 11:10). Peter stated emphatically that only Jesus has the words of eternal life. Paul offered uplifting words to the Thessalonian church that the Lord will return for all believers, both those who have died and those who are alive, and "we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18). John and Paul refer to eternal life as a gift from God, available to all who believe in him. And just as the writers of the New Testament believed that heaven was coming, so we also look up anticipating the return of the Lord.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Have you ever imagined eternal life with Jesus? Share your thoughts.
- 2) The kingdom of God is a calling to do things God's way. Eternal life is promised to those who believe. How do these two relate?
- 3) How did Jesus turn conversations about everyday circumstances to help people understand eternal life in him?
- 4) Romans 6:23 says the gift of God is eternal life. What makes something a gift? How do those descriptions apply to eternal life?

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Jesus had conversations with several individuals about eternal life. Take time to read in the gospels about his conversations with Nicodemus (John 3:1–21), the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16–30; Mark 10: 17–31; Luke 18:18-30), Martha (John 11:21–26), and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). Think about what Jesus was doing in each of these stories.

- 2) We don't have to look far to notice many of the songs we sing refer to eternal life. What a Day That Will Be, Just a Little While to Stay Here, When the Roll is Called Up Yonder, It's Going to Be Worth it All, When Jesus Comes Again, etc. Make a list of songs and Bible verses that include eternal life and reflect on their importance in your walk with God.

Notes and Reflections, cont.