

## ETERNAL LIFE

Andrew Wommack

John 3:16 is one of the most familiar, though often misunderstood and misapplied, passages in the Bible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Traditionally, this verse has been used to teach that Jesus came and died for our sins so we wouldn’t perish, which is where the emphasis has been placed; but it really says that the purpose of his coming to earth and dying for us was so that we could have everlasting life. It is true that our sins were a barrier between us and everlasting life, and it is true that Jesus died for our sins so that if we believe on him we will not perish, but there is much more to it than that. The real message of the Gospel is that God wanted to give us everlasting life.

In John 17:2-3, the night before His crucifixion Jesus prayed concerning himself, “As thou hast given him power [authority] over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” This says that everlasting life is knowing God, the only true Father, and knowing Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Many people think everlasting life is living forever, and it is true that every person does live forever; it is a misconception to think that when a person dies he ceases to exist. The spirit and the soul go back to God and the body decays in the grave, but the truth is that every person who has ever lived on earth will continue to live in spirit form. To say that eternal life is living forever is not the whole truth; John 17:2-3 makes it very clear that eternal life is not given to everyone. Some say eternal life is living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell, but that is not what this passage is saying.

John 3:36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth [obeyeth] not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” This says that everlasting life can be a present tense possession, not something that will take place in the future but a present reality. In 1 John 5:13 it says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” Notice that it says you have eternal life, a present tense possession.

The Scriptures reveal, therefore, that eternal life is not just living forever or living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell, but it is exactly what Jesus said in John 17:3: knowing God and Jesus Christ. It is more than intellectual knowledge. This word “know” is used throughout Scripture to describe the most intimate, personal relationship one can have, e.g. Genesis 4:1 says that Adam knew his wife Eve and, she conceived and had a son. It is referring to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman . . . intimacy. So when this says that eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, it means that eternal life is having intimacy, personal relationship, with God.

Couple that with John 3:16 and this says that God loved you and me so much that He gave His only begotten Son so we would not perish but have intimacy, closeness, personal relationship with God Almighty. That has not always been the message we have heard.

Often you hear, “Repent or else! Turn or Burn! Either you repent, or go to hell!” There are many people who are drawn to the Lord because of fear, so they confess Jesus out of desperation because they don’t want to go to hell. If the only benefit of salvation was having our sins forgiven in order to escape hell, it would be more than we deserve. It would still be goodness on God’s part worth preaching and sharing with people, but these scriptures reveal that there is much more to salvation than just getting your sins forgiven.

If a person’s only motivation for coming to the Lord is to get his sins forgiven so he won’t perish, if that is what his faith is released for, he may be born again and have a ticket to heaven, but he will miss out on the real purpose of salvation. The real purpose is not missing hell or even living forever in heaven, as great as that will be. The real purpose of salvation is to have intimacy, a personal relationship with God. There are multitudes of people who have cried out to God to forgive their sins, but their goal has never been intimacy with God.

By not explaining the real purpose of salvation, we do a disservice to the Gospel. When we present it as something that deals only with spiritual things, which will take place and benefit us in eternity, we are also doing a disservice to people. There are many who live in a literal present hell on earth: depressed, living in poverty, dealing with strife, rejection, hurt, and failed marriages, just trying to keep their heads above water. When salvation is presented as dealing only with the future, many will put off the decision to accept Jesus because they are too busy trying to survive today.

The truth is that Jesus came to affect our eternal destiny so we can live forever in heaven in blessing instead of in the punishment and the curse of hell, but He also came to deliver us from this present evil world. Jesus came to give you intimacy and personal relationship with God the Father today (Galatians 1:4).

The first-century church had a concept of this that I believe our modern-day church has lost. We can see this in many writings, but also in history. I was in Rome when I was 18 years old and went to the Circus Maximus and the Coliseum where Christians were thrown to the lions and burned at the stake. Other Christians then buried the dead in the walls of the catacombs to prevent the Romans from defacing their graves and wrote inscriptions on the walls where they buried them. One inscription which was translated into five or six languages, said in English, “Here lie my wife and my six-month old daughter, who gave their lives today for the glory of Jesus Christ in the Circus Maximus!” It was written like something the man was proud of, something for which he was glorifying God. I didn’t sense grief in what he wrote . . . there was no despondency.

These Christians had a quality of relationship with God so dynamic that there are actual accounts of Romans jumping out of the stands and running into the arena to join them, knowing they would be put to death as well. They would confess this Jesus that the Christians had died for because they saw such joy on their faces. Nero, the emperor of Rome, literally stuck his fingers in his ears and said, “Why must these Christians sing as they die?” There was such grace, such joy, that there are accounts of the Christians actually fighting over who would go first to be martyred. I say this to point out that there was a quality of relationship with God, which was the true intent of Christianity that sometimes we miss today.

Jesus didn't come only to forgive you of your sins, as wonderful as that would be. Sin is the barrier that stands between you and intimacy with God, and Jesus came to bring you into close personal relationship with Him. Jesus loves you and wants to know you personally. He wants to give you a quality of life that is greater than anything you could obtain from any other source. Jesus said it this way in John 10:10, "The thief [speaking of Satan] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." God wants to give you eternal life. He wants to give you abundant life.

I believe that you need and want that. God died not only to forgive your sins, but to bring you into close, personal relationship with Himself. If you don't know the Lord, you need to know Him for that purpose. If you have already been born again, you need to go beyond just getting your sins forgiven and enter into everlasting life with the Father. God bless you as you consider that today.

## ETERNAL LIFE (Outline)

1. The Purpose for the Gospel is Eternal Life.
  - A. Jesus came to give eternal life. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
  - B. Sins were a barrier.
2. Everlasting life is knowing God. John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
  - A. Everlasting life is not just missing hell.
  - B. Everlasting life is not just going to heaven.
3. Knowing God is an intimate relationship.

This intimacy is similar to that found in the marriage relationship: Genesis 4:1 says “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”
4. Eternal life is available now. 1 John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Galatians 1:4: “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”

John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Quality relationship with mankind is God’s goal.

## ETERNAL LIFE (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to John 3:16-17, what was the purpose of God sending Jesus into the world?

To save the world, giving all who believe everlasting life by removing sin's penalty.

2. Explain "know" in the biblical usage of Genesis 4:1.

"Know" means to have an intimate relationship with a person—the sexual union in marriage.

According to John 17:3, what is eternal (everlasting) life?

Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ.

3. According to 1 John 5:11-13, when does eternal or everlasting life begin?

At the time of belief . . . NOW!

4. According to John 10:10, what kind of life did Jesus come to give us?

Abundant life! Explain in your own words the quality or attributes of an abundant life.

The thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy. What does Jesus do that is the opposite of this?

He gives us life for death, and restores what has been destroyed.

Many think salvation is just the forgiveness of sins. The word "saved" in the Greek is "sozo" and means "to save, heal, cure, preserve, keep safe and sound, rescue from danger or destruction, deliver. Sozo saves from physical death by healing, and from spiritual death by forgiving sin and its effects. Sozo in primitive cultures is translated simply, 'to give new life' and 'to cause to have a new heart'" (SFLB p. 1525). This is abundant life!

5. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of the world, thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlasting life?

Yes.

6. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is not only a length of time (eternity) but a quality and quantity of life?

Yes.

## ETERNAL LIFE (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

<sup>1</sup>The Bible states in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Most people focus on the part of this verse that promises we won't perish. Although it's certainly a wonderful promise, it is not the focus of this verse. The primary purpose of Jesus coming to this earth was not forgiveness of sins but to give us eternal life.

<sup>2</sup>Sin separated us from God so Jesus dealt with sin. However, His payment for sin was just a step toward His ultimate purpose of reconciling man to God. If someone believes that Jesus died for his sins but doesn't go on to enter into the close fellowship with God that Jesus made available, then he is missing eternal life.

<sup>3</sup>Eternal life is not a length of life but rather a quality of life. Eternal life is intimacy with the Father and Jesus (John 17:3). Many people have been done a disservice in being told that Jesus came to forgive their sins, period. If that was all He did, it would have been wonderful and much more than we deserved—but much less than what He actually accomplished.

<sup>4</sup>Today, take full advantage of your salvation and go beyond the basic forgiveness of your sins into intimacy with Almighty God.

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<sup>1</sup> According to John 3:16, the real message of the gospel is that God wants you to have what? Eternal Life.

<sup>2</sup> (a) According to John 17:3, eternal life is what? Knowing God and Jesus Christ.

(b) How is the word “know” used in scripture according to Genesis 4:1? Of a close intimate relationship and union.

(c) When the Bible says eternal life is “knowing” the only true God and Jesus Christ, it is saying what? Eternal life is having an intimate and personal relationship with God.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus came to give us intimacy and a personal relationship with Himself. How does Ephesians 5:31-32 show this? He uses marriage to illustrate the kind of personal relationship He wants with us.

<sup>4</sup> How does Romans 5:6-8 show God's love for us? God's love was demonstrated to us while we were sinful and going our own way.

ETERNAL LIFE  
(Discipleship Questions)

Read John 3:16-17 out loud.

1. What was God's motive for sending Christ into the world?
  
2. What two things were accomplished by God sending Jesus into the world?
  - A.
  - B.
  
3. God sent Jesus into the world to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. condemn us
  - B. save us

Read John 3:19 out loud.

4. What is the biblical definition for "condemnation"?

Read Romans 8:1 out loud.

5. If you are in Christ Jesus, having accepted Him as your Savior, how much condemnation (shame and guilt) are you to have?
  
6. If Christ isn't condemning you, who is (besides yourself)?

Read Genesis 4:1 out loud.

7. Explain the word "know" in this passage. In what context is it used?

Read John 17:3 out loud.

8. What is eternal life?
  
9. Read this passage again, and when you come to the word "know thee," replace it with "have a personal intimate relationship with."

10. How does reading this passage with this new understanding change the way you have thought about “eternal life”?

11. Read 1 John 5:11 out loud.

Does it say that

- A. God will give us eternal life
- B. Might give us eternal life
- C. Has given us eternal life

12. Is this a past present future condition? (circle one)

13. Where is this eternal life according to verse 11?

Read 1 John 5:12.

14. What must you have to have life?

Read 1 John 5:13.

15. What two reasons did John give as to why he wrote these things to those who believe in the name of Jesus?

- A.
- B.

16. What is the condition of the eternal life we have? Past Present Future

Read John 10:10 out loud.

17. What is Satan’s purpose in coming?

18. Why did Jesus come?

19. What kind of life did He provide for us?

- A. mediocre
- B. dismal
- C. abundant

20. Describe what abundant life looks like to you?



21. Are you living an abundant life now? \_\_\_\_\_  
What would you need to do to begin walking in the abundant life Jesus provided for you?
22. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of the world, thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlasting life?
23. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is not only a length of time (eternity) but also a quality of life right here, right now?

Read Romans 10:9 (NKJV).

24. If you \_\_\_\_\_ with your \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus  
And \_\_\_\_\_ in your \_\_\_\_\_ that God has  
raised Him from the \_\_\_\_\_, you will be \_\_\_\_\_.
25. This says that you \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. might be saved  
B. it's a gamble you would be saved  
C. WILL be saved

Read Romans 10:13 out loud.

26. Who is it that calls on the name of Jesus will be saved?
27. Do you believe, regardless of what you have done in your life, that if you were to call upon the name of Jesus right now that you would be saved?
28. Is that amazing love or what?!!!

ETERNAL LIFE  
(Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Love
2. A. We should not perish  
B. But have eternal life
3. B. Save us
4. Light has come into the world, but  
Man loves darkness rather than light.
5. None
6. The devil
7. Sexual intimacy, a deep level of relationship
8. To know God and Jesus Christ
9. "And this is eternal life, that they may have a  
personal relationship with You, the only true  
God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."
10. How does reading this passage with this  
new understanding change the way you  
have thought about "eternal life"?
11. C. Has given us eternal life
12. Past
13. In Jesus Christ
14. The Son of God, Jesus
15. A. That we may know we already have  
eternal life  
B. To continue to believe in Jesus
16. Present
17. Kill, steal, and destroy
18. Give us life
19. C. abundant
20. Describe what abundant life looks like to you?
21. Are you living an abundant life now? \_\_\_\_\_  
What would you need to do to begin walking  
in the abundant life Jesus brought you?
22. Do you believe that God sent His Son Jesus  
into the world to die for the sins of the world,  
thereby giving us who believe eternal/everlast-  
ing life?
23. Is it clear to you that eternal/everlasting life is  
not only a length of time (eternity), but also a  
quality of life, right here, right now?
24. Confess – mouth – believe – heart- dead –  
saved
25. C. WILL be saved
26. Whoever
27. Do you believe, regardless of what you have  
done in your life, that if you were to call upon  
the name of Jesus right now that you would be  
saved?
28. Is that amazing love or what?!!!

## ETERNAL LIFE

by Andrew Wommack  
(Additional Information)

One of the most familiar passages of Scripture is John 3:16. It seems like everybody seems to know that verse at a young age, yet I believe it has really been misunderstood and misapplied. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (KJV).

Traditionally, this scripture has been used to teach that Jesus came and died for our sins so that we wouldn't perish. As true as this is, this verse is saying that the real purpose of Jesus coming to this earth and dying for us is so that we could have everlasting life. It just so happened that our sins were a barrier that stood between us and this everlasting life.

It is true that Jesus did die for our sins, and it is true that if we believe on Jesus, we will not perish, but there is much more to the Gospel than that. The real message of the gospel is that God wants to give you everlasting life. Now let me explain that.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus was praying, and He said this in John 17:2-3: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

This says that everlasting life is knowing the Father, the only true God and knowing Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. That's what everlasting life is. Many people think that everlasting life is living forever. Well, every person lives forever. It's a misconception to think that when a person dies he ceases to exist. The spirit and the soul go back to God. The body decays in the grave. The truth is, every person who has ever lived on the face of the earth will continue to live in spirit form. So to say that eternal life is living forever is not the whole truth—everybody lives forever. This verse makes it very clear that eternal life is not given to everyone.

Some people would say, “Eternal life is living forever in heaven versus living forever in hell,” but that's not what this verse is talking about. In John 3:36, it says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Right there it says that everlasting life can be a present tense position—a possession. It is not something that's going to take place in the future, but something that is a reality right now. First John 5:13 says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have [present tense] eternal life.”

The Scriptures reveal that eternal life isn't just living forever, and it's not just living forever in heaven or hell. Eternal life is just what Jesus said in John 17:3—to know God and Jesus Christ. It's more than an intellectual knowledge. This word "KNOW" is used throughout Scripture to describe the most intimate, personal relationship that you can have. For instance, in Genesis 4:1, the scripture says that Adam "knew" his wife, Eve, and she conceived and had a son. It's talking about the sexual relationship between a man and a woman—intimacy. So when the Scripture says that eternal life is "knowing" the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, what it means is that eternal life is having intimacy—a personal relationship with God.

Now include this with John 3:16, and this verse says that God loved you and me so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that we would not perish but have intimacy, closeness, and a personal relationship with God Almighty. This has not always been the message that we've heard. Often you hear, "Repent or else; turn or burn; either repent or you will go to hell." There are many people who are drawn to the Lord out of fear of going to hell. They confess the Lord out of desperation because they do not want to go to hell.

Now let me say this: If the only benefit of salvation is getting your sins forgiven so you will not go to hell, then that would be more than you deserve. It would still be goodness on God's part and still worth preaching and sharing with people, but the Scriptures reveal that there is much more to salvation than just getting your sins forgiven. If all a person does is come to the Lord to get his sins forgiven so that he will not perish, and that is his only motivation, he may be born again and have a ticket to heaven, but he will miss out on the real purpose of salvation.

The real purpose of salvation is not missing hell. The real purpose of salvation is not living forever in heaven, as great as that will be. The real purpose of salvation is to have intimacy—a personal relationship with the Lord God. There are multitudes of people who have cried out to God for the forgiveness of their sins but have never had intimacy with God as a goal.

By not explaining the real purpose of salvation, we are doing a disservice to the gospel. When we present salvation as something that deals with just spiritual things that will only benefit us in the future, in eternity, we are not helping people. There are some people who are living in such a literal hell right now on earth. Many are depressed, living in poverty, dealing with strife, rejection, hurt, and failed marriages. People are just trying to survive day to day. They are just trying to keep their heads above water. By making salvation something that deals only with the future, many people will put off that decision because they are too busy just trying to survive today.

The truth is that Jesus not only came to affect our eternal destinies so that we can live forever in heaven in blessing instead of the punishment and the curse of hell, but Jesus also came to deliver us from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). Jesus came to give you intimacy and a personal relationship with God the Father today.

The first-century church had a concept of this that I believe our modern-day church has lost. We can see it in many writings, and also in history. I went to Rome when I was 18 years old. I remember going to the Circus Maximus and to the Coliseum where they threw Christians to the lions and burned them at the stake. I remember reading an inscription on a wall in the catacombs. The Christians had to bury their dead in the walls of the catacombs because the Romans would deface their graves. They would bring their dead back and put them in the walls. This inscription had been translated into about five or six languages. I read it in English, and it said, “Here lies my wife and six-month old daughter who gave their lives today for the glory of Jesus Christ in the Circus Maximus.” It was written like something this man was proud of, something he was glorifying God for. You didn’t sense grief in what he wrote. There wasn’t despondency.

These people had a quality of relationship with God that was so dynamic that there were actual accounts of Romans jumping out of the stands and running out in the arena, knowing that they were going to be put to death. They would confess this Jesus that the Christians had died for because they saw such joy on their faces. Nero stuck his fingers in his ears and said, “Why must these Christians sing as they die?” There was such a grace, such a joy, that there are accounts of Christians actually fighting over who got to go first to be martyred. I am telling you this to point out that there was a quality of relationship with God that I believe was the true intent of Christianity that we sometimes miss today.

Jesus didn’t come only to forgive you of your sins, as wonderful as that may be. Sin was just a barrier that stood between you and intimacy with God. Jesus came to bring you back into close, personal relationship with Him. Jesus loves you. Jesus wants to know you personally. Jesus wants to give you a quality of life that is greater than anything you could obtain through any other source.

Jesus put it this way in John 10:10: “The thief [speaking of Satan] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” God wants to give you eternal life. God wants to give you abundant life, and I believe that you need that today—that you want that. Christ died not only to forgive your sins, but to bring you close to Him. If you don’t know the Lord, you need to know Him for that purpose. If you’ve already been born again, you need to go beyond just getting your sins forgiven and enter into everlasting life with the Father.

If you give a message in tongues in a church service, you have to stop and interpret in English. When you're praying by yourself, what I do is pray in tongues and trust that God is giving me revelation. Sometimes my attitude just changes. I don't have a specific word, but suddenly I see things clearly and get a different perspective. It may take a week before I get the full revelation, but I believe the time spent praying in tongues and believing I interpret is a part of it.

Speaking in tongues is important for many reasons, certainly more than to prove you've received the Holy Spirit. It should be a part of everyday life. It is a way to communicate directly from your heart to the Father, bypassing your brain with its doubts and fears. It builds you up in your most holy faith and releases the hidden wisdom of God. I just pray that all of you will be able to flow in this, release your faith, and receive the full benefit of speaking in tongues.

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