



COLLEGE JUNIOR

Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Discipleship Essentials Pathways

NEW VISION

DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY

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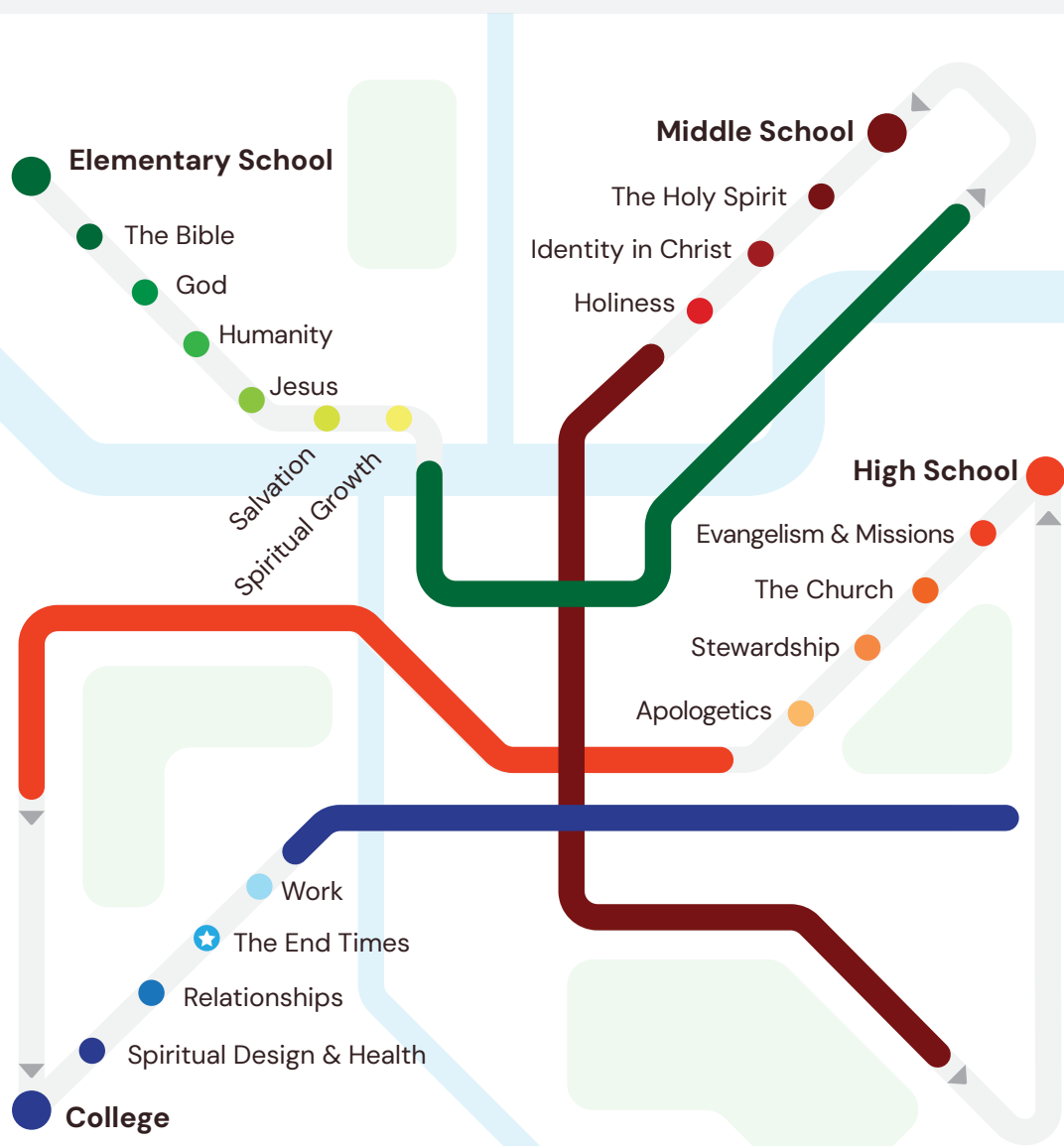
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Studying the Book of Revelation

System Map

LEGEND

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College



Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Detailed Overview

Elementary Schoolers

- Kindergarten: The Bible
- First Grade: God
- Second Grade: Humanity
- Third Grade: Jesus
- Fourth Grade: Salvation
- Fifth Grade: Spiritual Growth

Middle Schoolers

- Sixth Grade: The Holy Spirit
- Seventh Grade: Identity in Christ
- Eighth Grade: Holiness

High Schoolers

- Ninth Grade: Evangelism and Missions
- Tenth Grade: The Church
- Eleventh Grade: Stewardship
- Twelfth Grade: Apologetics

College Students

- Freshman: Spiritual Design & Health
- Sophomore: Relationships
- Junior: The End Times
- Senior: Work

Introduction

Note: You may be a young adult going through this Pathway on your own. That is awesome! If you would like, continue through the Pathway on your own; but you may also consider doing so with a small group leader, friend, or mentor. This is also an opportunity to invite someone in your family to study with you. Feel free to reach out to the College or Young Adult Team for help or guidance as you walk through your own discipleship journey.

To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to lead others to follow Jesus, too. Contrary to the spirit of the famous “The Buck Stops Here” placard on President Harry S. Truman’s desk, Jesus’ desk placard might have said something like “You’re One Link in a Long Chain.” You don’t have to disciple anyone alone; you’re an essential part of the process. To be a *disciple* of Jesus is to be a *discipler* of others, just as Jesus told us in what is known as the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.”
– Matthew 28:18–20

Often, when we think of people discipling to fulfill the Great Commission, we think of men and women discipling other men and women at coffee shops, a collegiate minister discipling students at the student union, or perhaps a church staff discipling its members on the church campus. All of that is true, of course, but one of the most important places for discipleship is our homes. Whether you are a young adult planning on discipling others in the future, or you are a parent, grandparent, family member, or mentor, your calling is discipleship. As a Christian, God has called you to disciple others. This is the central point of what God told His people Israel through Moses:

“The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). This is what we want to help you with through the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*.

How to Use the Discipleship Pathway

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* is built on a framework of seventeen modules to be used one per year. This book includes Module 16: The End Times and is designed for junior-aged college students or young adults. Modules 1–6 are to be used for kindergartners through fifth graders. Modules 7–9 are to be used with sixth through eighth graders. Modules 10–13 are to be used with ninth through twelfth graders. And finally, Modules 14–17 are to be used with college-aged young adults. Throughout the seventeen modules, you will have the opportunity to engage with the core doctrines of the Christian faith and many practical aspects of following Jesus.

Each module contains twelve lessons, one for each month beginning in August and ending in July of the following year. Here’s how to use *the Pathway*:

The First Week of August

STEP ONE

Choose a day and time when it is easiest to block out about fifteen minutes for a weekly devotion. You can do this alone, with family, friends, or a small group. Of course, if you already have a regular devotion time, that would be the best time to choose.

STEP TWO

During your family devotion time in the first week of August, open the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book to August’s content.

STEP THREE

Begin by reading the catechism to your family. A catechism is a method of instruction based on a question-and-answer format that has been used throughout church history. The catechism provides the main idea that your family will focus on for the month. You may notice definitions or further definitions provided. These are provided to help you learn these important terms.

STEP FOUR

Next, read the Bible story, either from the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book or from a Bible. The CSB is used in Modules 14 through 17.

STEP FIVE

Now, it is time to read the devotional.

STEP SIX

Next, find the memory verse and prayer prompt for week 1. These will provide your focus for the rest of the week. Begin by reading the memory verse a few times, saying as much as you can by memory as you do. Then, close your devotional time in prayer, using the prompt as a guideline for what to pray about. Of course, you can pray about more than that, but at least pray about the topic provided.

That's it! You're done.

You will notice that each lesson concludes with a next step, a challenging thought, or reflection questions. These are for you to use during the week and on the rest of the devotion days of the month

During the week, look for opportunities to talk about the main ideas of the catechism, Bible story, and devotional that you covered. The goal is to keep God at the top of your mind and deep down in your heart. Also, continue working on memorizing the memory verse and praying for the topic of the prayer prompt.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks of August

STEP ONE

During your devotion time in the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month, go over the catechism again, perhaps memorizing it along with the memory verses.

STEP TWO

You do not need to read the Bible story or devotion again, but of course, you can if you want.

STEP THREE

Spend more time working on the memory verses.

STEP FOUR

Close your time in prayer, once again using the prayer prompt as your baseline.

The First Week of September

Once the calendar flips to September, it's time to move on to the next lesson, repeating the process. Then, once July arrives, it will be time to get Module 17 to begin using that next August.

A FEW FINAL TIPS

If you have multiple people going through different modules, that's awesome! Go through the lesson with the youngest student in the first week, and move to the second youngest the next week, and so on. Review together as needed, and turn your prayer prompts into a prayer list!

If you miss a devotion one week, that's okay! Give yourself grace and pick back up next week. Consistency over the long term is the key.

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If you use the *Pathway* in a group setting, try to encourage questions as a part of your time as you grow more comfortable. Dialogue is always better than monologue when it comes to discipleship.

If you are starting your journey using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* with this Module, you might consider using what you have missed during Christmas break, Spring break, or the summer as a short-term intensive, covering one lesson per day instead of per month, and forgoing memorizing the memory verses. Of course, there's also nothing wrong with starting right where you are and moving forward without ever looking back!

If you already have a devotional plan, or if you find one along the way, feel free to couple it with the Discipleship Essentials Pathway. Do both on the same day or choose a second day to stretch your discipleship efforts further throughout the week.

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* doesn't provide you with all the answers about our faith, but it should give you a solid framework from which you can explore additional questions as they come up.

The Gospel Message

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1). He formed light and darkness, land and sea, fish and birds, plants and animals. But on the final day of creation, He saved His best work for last: He made people. God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and designed us to love, trust, worship, and follow Him.

Although He created us to do so, God didn't force us to love Him; He gave us a choice. We can choose to trust and obey Him, or we can go our own way. When we choose to go our own way instead of God's way, that's called *sin*, and sin breaks our relationship with God. The Bible tells us: "Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory" (Romans 3:23). Essentially, no one can measure up to God's perfection because we have sin. The bad news is that our sin separates us from God, and we cannot fix this problem alone. We need help.

The good news is that God, in His great love, made a way for us to be forgiven through Jesus. God sent Jesus, His one and only Son, to live a perfect life and take the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross (John 3:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). Even though he physically stopped breathing and died, He didn't stay dead. On the third day, He rose again, defeating sin and death so we could have new and eternal life in Him. Why is this important? Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves – pay the price for our own sin.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, a restored relationship with God has been offered to us. To accept this offer, we turn away from sin and choose to put our faith in Jesus as both Savior and Lord. The Bible tells us: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9). To break that down, We trust Jesus as Savior, because His death in our place is the only way we can be forgiven for our sins. We trust and follow Jesus as Lord, meaning we submit to His ultimate authority and allow Him to lead our lives. When we trust Jesus for our salvation and submit to His authority as Lord, we receive forgiveness and are saved from the power and punishment of our sins.

If you're ready to follow Jesus, here's what you need to do:

01

Admit that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness.

02

Believe that Jesus is God's Son, who died for your sins and rose again.

03

Confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord, choosing to follow Him daily.

The following is an example of what to pray if you are ready to put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord today. The words themselves aren't special. It's your heart behind them if you believe it.

Dear God,

I know that You created me to love, trust, and follow You. I confess that I have sinned against You. I have chosen my own way instead of Yours, and my sins have separated me from You. I know that I cannot fix this problem on my own.

Thank You for loving me so much that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins – taking my place. I believe that He paid my punishment, and I believe that He rose from the dead, defeating sin and death so that I could have new life in Him.

Today, I turn away from my sin and I surrender my life to You. I ask for Your forgiveness and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Please change my heart, help me to follow You daily, and give me the strength to live for You.

Thank You for Your love and the gift of salvation.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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If you just prayed that prayer for the first time, don't keep it to yourself, share it with someone! Tell a parent, guardian, pastor, or trusted Christian friend. They would love to celebrate with you, encourage you, and help you to take your next steps in following Jesus.

The End and New Beginning

What is eschatology?

Eschatology is the study of how the world as we presently know it will end and how God's eternal kingdom will be ushered in. Eschatology includes beliefs about Christ's return, final judgement, the new heaven and earth, hell and the Lake of Fire, and eternity.



Further Inspection

The study of the “end times” can be one of the more mysterious and most debated topics in Christian theology. For this reason, some tend to shy away from it. However, eschatology matters because it involves truths that help us live the Christian life today as we look toward what is yet to come for the world and for us as followers of Jesus.

Bible Story

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

³ Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

⁵ Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.”

— Revelation 21:1–5

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

AUGUST

Devotion

Have you ever taken a class, attempted to learn an instrument, or perhaps tried to develop a skill but you just couldn't get the hang of it? You tried and tried, but all you did was struggle and get more and more frustrated. In times like those, it's easy for us to throw in the towel and walk away, especially if it isn't

really something important anyway. It might be nice to learn to play golf, but we really don't *need* to.

Eschatology, or the study of the end times, can be like that. Of all the areas of theology, this one is perhaps the most challenging. The Bible tells us quite a lot about

what will happen, but it leaves us with more unanswered questions than answered ones. Even scholars struggle to understand the prophetic and apocalyptic literature that is filled with symbolic language, imagery, and numbers. And because of that, many different views have developed about what will take place and how it will all happen. As a result, some people have decided that they simply don't see a reason to study eschatology. No one really knows what will happen, and does it really matter anyway? What God will do, He will do.

Others don't want to study eschatology because it frightens them. That's understandable. All you need to do is thumb through the Book of Revelation to see quite a bit of crazy things in store. And when we think of what will happen to all those who don't trust in Jesus, it can be overwhelming.

But know that God didn't give us passages on eschatology to confuse us or frighten us; He gave us these passages to fill us with hope because of the promise of what is to come! Are there difficult and even sad aspects of eschatology? Certainly. But are there also wonderful and

joyful parts? By all means! God wants us to understand His final plans and for that understanding to develop deeper trust in Him and a stronger commitment to live on mission for Him. By learning more about the end times, prayerfully, you will increase in hope and confidence, develop a deeper assurance of your faith, and be motivated to point others to Christ day by day.

While eschatology can be quite challenging to grasp, not all of it is. Do you want to know the most important truth about eschatology? Do you want to understand its central idea? Here it is: Jesus wins! We might not know exactly when or how, but we know that He will. That's how the story ends. And that's what matters most.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another,

just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

— Matthew 25:31–32

Prayer

Thank God for the promise of Jesus' return, when He will make all things right.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

When he has swallowed up death once and for all, the Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face and remove his people's disgrace from the whole earth, for the Lord has spoken. — Isaiah 25:8

Prayer

Thank God that Jesus has already defeated sin and death, but when He returns, that victory will be made complete.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. — Ezekiel 37:27

Prayer

Ask God to help you live each day with the sure hope that one day you will see Jesus face to face and live with Him and all other believers for eternity.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

They said with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!
— Revelation 5:12

Prayer

Ask God to help you worship Jesus with all your being now, giving you a taste of what is in store for you for eternity.



Reflection Questions

01 How much have you studied eschatology? Have you begun to develop a view on the end times?

02 If you haven't studied eschatology much, why is that?

03 What questions do you have about the end times?

04 What difference do you think studying eschatology might make in your day to day life?

Notes:

AUGUST

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Our Eternal Future

Who will enter into eternity?

God created people as eternal beings. Everyone—believers and unbelievers—will live forever, but they will not live forever in the same way. Everyone who has trusted in Christ will spend forever with God, and everyone who has not trusted in Christ will experience eternal judgment.



Definition

Eternal: People are not eternal like God is. God is eternal in two directions; He has always existed and always will exist. People are eternal in one direction: into the future. As created beings, we had a beginning, but we will have no end.

Bible Story

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. ²⁰ But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. ²¹ He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.

²⁴ 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!'

²⁵ "'Son, 'Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.'

²⁷ "'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house—
²⁸ because I have five brothers—to warn them, so that they won't also come to this place of torment.'

²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

³⁰ "'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

³¹ "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

— Luke 16:19–31

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Eternity. Forever. It's almost impossible to wrap our minds around something that never ends. It's so foreign to us. And if we're honest, this season of life lends itself to being consumed with the *now*. Between school, work, friendships, family, and maybe a dating relationship, it's easy to lose sight of anything beyond this week.

But Jesus constantly reminded His followers that this life is not all there is. There's something beyond today, this week, this month, this year, this decade, and even this century. Jesus came to earth to bring an *eternal* kingdom and to invite us into it. So, when Jesus talks about eternity, it's not to frighten us; it's to give us perspective and purpose—an eternal perspective and purpose of our days on earth.

Jesus is crystal clear: eternity isn't just a concept; it's a reality. That's the central message of Luke 16:19–31. Scholars debate whether this was a parable. It has more detail than most parables and it would be the only one that mentions a person by name. But even if it is a parable, it is highly unlikely that Jesus would teach

truth—the purpose of a parable—through untruth. In other words, even if this is a made-up story of a parable, it would be rooted in truth. And the key truth we see in it is that people—believing and unbelieving—live beyond the grave in full and total consciousness.

Every person will stand before Christ one day, and whether we surrender to Him as Savior and Lord will determine not if we enter eternity, but rather where we spend eternity. That's why what we believe about eternity matters so much. For believers, eternity will be on a new earth, the fulfillment of God's promise to dwell with His people forever. It will be a place of worship, joy, community, and being in God's glorious presence, with no more sin, pain, or death. But Jesus also warned about the reality of eternal separation from God. All those who remain in rebellion against Christ will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, separated from God and all that is good.

Eternity isn't something to think about only later in life; it should shape how you live today. If you know

your future is secure in Christ, you can live with confidence, purpose, and urgency to share Jesus with others. So what should you do?

Keep perspective. Are you stressing over a bad grade or a hard conversation? Zoom out a bit. Just think, in one thousand years it won't matter, but your relationship with Jesus will!

Live with urgency. If eternity is real and the gospel is true, then people around us need to hear it. Don't wait.

Rest in assurance. If you've placed your trust in Jesus, your eternity is secure. Nothing can change that.

Jesus promises that He's preparing a place for us (John 14:2). This world as we know it isn't our home. So, live like eternity actually matters.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts, but no one can discover the work God has done from beginning to end.
— Ecclesiastes 3:11

Prayer

Ask God to help you focus on Jesus, instead of fixating on temporary worries and distractions.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.
— Philippians 3:20

Prayer

Thank God that heaven is your true home, and ask Him to help you look forward to the hope of heaven.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." — Matthew 25:46

Prayer

Ask God to give you opportunities to share with friends and family who don't know Jesus, and that they would come to know Him.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment. — Hebrews 9:27

Prayer

Ask God to give you a burdened heart for all who don't know Jesus.



Next Steps

What things of today tend to pull you down or distract you?

Take some time to identify what these are and to think about why these things affect you the way they do. Then, consider how you can maintain an eternal perspective instead. What can you do when these things entice you to focus too much on the now? How can you reorient your mind and heart not to ignore today, but to live today without ignoring eternity?

Notes:

When Jesus Returns

What will happen when Jesus returns?

When Jesus returns, He will defeat sin and Satan once and for all and put an end to all the death and destruction that sin has wrought. Jesus will establish a new heaven and a new earth where He will dwell with His people forever. As believers, we are called to live with anticipation of Christ's return and share the gospel so that others might come to know Him.

Bible Story

¹ "Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. ⁴ You know the way to where I am going."

⁵ "Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

— John 14:1–6

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

OCTOBER

Devotion

Right now, you're likely in a season filled with many uncertainties and unknowns. You might not know what career you will have, if you will be married, and where you will live. Or, you might be uncertain about more immediate things: how you will pay your bills, what grades you will get, or if you'll have plans this weekend. In a world full of uncertainties, one thing is certain and known: Jesus is coming back!

When Jesus declared, "I am coming soon" (Revelation 22:12), it was more than a promise. It's a point in history that everything is leading toward. Jesus' return isn't just some abstract, theoretical idea; it's the culmination of God's plan to put an end to sin and death and establish His kingdom forever.

The return of Jesus means final victory. Sin, suffering, and death will be no more. For those who have trusted in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, this is the fulfillment of our greatest hope: eternity with Him and all others who have placed their faith in Him. But Jesus also makes it clear that His return brings accountability.

When He says, “my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work” (Revelation 22:12), He isn’t saying that we can earn salvation by our works. Instead, He’s pointing to the reality that faith leads to action (James 2:20), and our lives should reflect the transformation that happens within us when we follow Him.

And then Jesus makes a bold statement: “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 22:13). Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last. This means that Jesus is before all things, above all things, and will reign as our Heavenly King. Our King will come back to rescue His people.

So, how does this affect your everyday life and walk with Christ? In at least four ways:

Stay ready. Jesus is coming back, but we don’t know when. Live in a way that reflects His kingdom now.

Keep an eternal mindset. Again, it’s normal that the many unknowns at this stage of your life can prompt worry. Give yourself grace for that, but also remember what will matter forever is your relationship with Christ.

Share the gospel. If we truly believe Jesus is returning, we shouldn’t keep that to ourselves. People around us need to hear the hope that Jesus brings.

Find peace in His promise. If your faith is in Christ, your future is secure. His return isn’t something to fear; it’s something to yearn for.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

"This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." — Matthew 24:44

Prayer

Ask God to reveal anything in your life that distracts you from living for Him.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

"Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." — Revelation 22:12–13

Prayer

Ask God to help you focus on the main thing—your relationship with Jesus—and to help you surrender the unknown things that are out of your control.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven." — Acts 1:11

Prayer

Pray for courage and boldness to have spiritual conversations with friends and those around you.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." — Matthew 24:27

Prayer

Thank God for the peace and confidence that comes from the truth about Jesus' return.



Next Steps

Who do you know who needs to come to know Jesus? Perhaps it is a friend or classmate. Maybe it's a coworker. It might even be a family member. Spend some time praying for this person and ask God to give you an opportunity to share Jesus. Then, keep your eyes open for that opportunity, and when it comes around, be loving and bold!

OCTOBER

Notes:

OCTOBER

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What to Expect

How will we know when Jesus returns?

Where Jesus' first coming was in obscurity, Jesus' return will be unmistakable. It will be physical and visible. He will return from heaven in the same way that He ascended after His resurrection. Jesus came to earth the first time as the Suffering Servant, but He will return as our conquering King and righteous Judge.

Bible Story

¹ I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴ While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. ¹¹ They said,

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.”

— Acts 1:1–11

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Let's be honest; Jesus' return is one of those areas of the Bible that can be quite confusing, so it can be easy to think, *Ahh, let's just not worry about that and leave that to the theologians.* But the promise of Jesus' return is a key part of our faith! And that means it's worth wading into the waters of what it will be like.

Scripture does not describe Jesus' return as a metaphor; it will be a literal event. Neither does the Bible present His return as a mysterious, hidden event where only a few people will experience it. Rather, it will be visible to all, just like seeing the clouds in a blue sky. Jesus was crucified as a sacrifice for us. He ascended as our risen Savior who defeated sin and death, and He will return with power and glory as the conquering King and righteous Judge! The world will know when He comes—every eye will witness His glory. All across the globe, people will be able to experience this event, and Jesus' power and authority will be undeniable.

At Jesus' ascension angels were sent to describe how He would return. The timing of this message was no accident; it was exactly what the disciples, who had spent so much time with Jesus, needed to hear. When you consider the intense suffering that the early church went through for simply bearing the name of Jesus, it's understandable why they would need Jesus' promised return to be their hope and motivation in moving forward with spreading the gospel.

We need to remember that the return of Jesus is a central anchor for our hope. It gives us clarity and certainty about our future. Jesus wins! Therefore, as we wait to see Jesus return in all His authority and power, this promise helps us look beyond any temporary trials we may experience, no matter how difficult they truly might be, and see that eternity with Christ lies before us! Jesus' return one day is what we need to carry us through each day.

WEEK ONE**Memory Verse**

So also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those

who are waiting for him.

— Hebrews 9:28

Prayer

Thank God that because of your faith in Jesus, you have nothing to fear concerning Jesus' return.

WEEK TWO**Memory Verse**

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in

the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

Prayer

Ask God to stir in you a passion and boldness to share the gospel so that more people will come to know Jesus.

WEEK THREE**Memory Verse**

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will send out his angels with a loud

trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

— Matthew 24:30–31

Prayer

Thank God for the hope of eternal life with Him.

WEEK FOUR**Memory Verse**

He will settle disputes among the nations and provide arbitration for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not take up the sword against nation,

and they will never again train for war. — Isaiah 2:4

Prayer

Thank God for the promised peace, both within and with others, that will be ushered in upon Jesus' return.



Next Steps

Think about the challenges you're currently experiencing or the ones that are sure to come. How can Jesus' sure return help you navigate them? Spend some time considering this question and developing practical steps you can take to help you navigate life's challenges. Perhaps that's committing relevant Bible verses to memory. Maybe that's writing this truth down and placing it where you can see it throughout the day. Or perhaps that's spending time gazing into the skies as you talk with Jesus about your troubles. Whatever you come up with, put it into practice the next time you feel the world's weight on your shoulders.

Notes:

NOVEMBER

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The Time Unknown

When will Jesus return?

The Bible says that no one except God the Father knows the day or the hour of Jesus' return (Matthew 24:36). However, we do know that Jesus is patiently waiting because, in His mercy, He desires that more people from all over the world have the opportunity to trust in Him.

Bible Story

³⁶ "Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels of heaven nor the Son—except the Father alone. ³⁷ As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. ³⁸ For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. ³⁹ They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding grain with a hand mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this: If the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

— Matthew 24:36–44

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

If you've ever been on a long road trip with a kid in the backseat, you've probably heard the famous question: "Are we there yet?" They can ask this over and over, sometimes mere seconds apart, not because they doubt they'll arrive, but rather because waiting is hard.

In a way, we can do the same thing when it comes to Jesus' return. We know *that* He's coming back, but we don't know *when*. And that can be frustrating. Especially when we experience so much brokenness in the world around us. While we wait, the Bible tells us to "be ready" (Matthew 24:44), but how are we supposed to prepare for something that could happen at any moment, perhaps years from now, or maybe not in our lifetime?

But that's the point! If we knew the exact day and time of Jesus' return, we would be tempted to procrastinate and have no urgency in our spiritual lives. If we knew Jesus was coming back in thirty years, we might think, *I'll get serious about*

my faith later. I have time. But if we knew He was coming next week, we'd rush to make last-minute changes. Instead, Jesus calls us daily to "follow Me." We are to live every day with urgency—urgency to walk in holiness, to love others well, and to share the gospel.

So, why hasn't Jesus come back yet? Second Peter 3:9 tells us: "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." Jesus is waiting because He's merciful. His delay isn't forgetfulness or apathy; it's grace. He desires for more people from across the world to come to know Him.

The fact that Jesus hasn't returned yet means our job isn't done. We're called to live with expectation, but also with purpose. Instead of asking, *Are we there yet?* ask, *How can I live today in a way that honors Jesus and points others to Him?*

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

"Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels of heaven nor the Son—except the Father alone." — Matthew 24:36

Prayer

Pray that God would strengthen your trust and dependence on Him, especially in areas of your life that you don't fully understand.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

"This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."
— Matthew 24:14

Prayer

Using joshuaproject.net, pray for the unreached people groups around the world who do not yet have access to the gospel.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. — 2 Peter 3:9

Prayer

Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you've become complacent with sin.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. — Titus 2:12–13

Prayer

Ask God to give you a renewed, joy-filled anticipation of Jesus' return, so that you live each day with your hope set on Him.



Reflection Questions

- 01** Do you tend to be patient or impatient more often?
When is it hardest for you to wait on something?

- 02** Deep down, would you rather Jesus return today or farther off in the future? Why?

- 03** Are you ready for Jesus' return? If not, what steps can you take today?

Notes:

DECEMBER

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Life After Death for Believers

What happens to believers when they die?

Upon death, the believer's soul immediately enters God's presence. At Christ's Second Coming, all those who have died in Christ will be resurrected, receive glorified bodies, and dwell with Him forever in the new heavens and earth.

Bible Story

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. ⁵⁴ When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ Where, death, is your victory?

Where, death, is your sting?

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

— 1 Corinthians 15:50–58

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In Luke 23:39–43, just before Jesus' death on the cross, we receive a glimpse into an interaction He had with one of the thieves who was being crucified next to him. In this moment of total agony and pain, one of the thieves humbly requested Jesus to show mercy. In reply, Jesus made this powerful promise: "Today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) This promise of immediate and eternal fellowship with Christ highlights the reality of what happens to believers upon their passing from earth to eternity. For those who trust in Him, death is not the end but the beginning of a new phase of eternal life, being in God's immediate presence.

We see this truth emphasized later in Paul's writings in 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10 when he says: "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him." This means that whether we die (which is what being "asleep" here means) or remain alive until Jesus returns (which is being "awake" here), we have the promise that we will live with Him forever. Therefore, the assurance that the repentant thief experienced

on the cross is the same for those who believe in the gospel today.

Many believers think that's the end of things; we end up as disembodied spirits in some far-off heaven forever and ever. But that's not the case. Passages like 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 20–22 remind us that God has promised to raise all believers from the grave. When Jesus returns, all the dead in Christ will be resurrected and given new, resurrected bodies. It is in these perfect bodies that we will live forever on the new earth that Christ will create.

In our culture today, the fear of death is one of the greatest fears that people have. While no one wants to be separated from their family and friends, even for a time, or to go through the experience of the end of their lives, we shouldn't view death as something to fear. Because Jesus lives, we have the promise that death is truly a passing from this place of pain and suffering to an eternity in the presence of Christ. It further reminds us that Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place where we get to be forever in His presence with all others who love Jesus (John 14:1–2).

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. — Revelation 21:3

Prayer

Thank God for the promise of eternity with Him, where there will be no more suffering.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Prayer

Ask God to give you a heart that longs for His presence more than anything in this world.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." — John 14:2–3

Prayer

Thank God for His deep desire to dwell with His people forever.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.
— Philippians 3:21

Prayer

Thank God for the promise of complete health and well-being that awaits you and all other believers.



Reflection Questions

01 How much do you fear death?

02 Does the thought of eternity with Christ motivate you, frighten you, bore you, or prompt something else in you?

03 What do you think eternity will be like?
What questions do you have about it?

Notes:

JANUARY



The Kingdom and New Creation to Come

What will happen to the world when Jesus returns?

When Jesus returns, He will usher in His eternal kingdom. The world as we know it will pass away, and a new heaven and new earth will be established. It is upon this new earth that all believers of all time will dwell with God and one another forever.

Bible Story

⁸ Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness ¹² as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat. ¹³ But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

— 2 Peter 3:8–13

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Powerful stories are often known for the suspense that the characters experience just before the story's climax. In *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, all seemed lost for the humans, the hobbits, the elves, and the dwarves. But then at the last minute, Frodo was able to destroy the One Ring, and victory was achieved.

As powerful as they can be, no work of fiction and no event in human

history will ever compare to the second coming of Christ. It is truly the climactic event of all time. Jesus will return in power and glory to judge the living and the dead and to establish His eternal Kingdom.

We know what will happen to believers and unbelievers when Jesus returns, but what happens to our current world? Scholars disagree on what will happen in part, but then

they agree completely in another part. Some believe that the present heavens and earth will be completely destroyed in judgment, and the new heavens and new earth will be just that—completely new. The fire of 2 Peter 3 is a destructive fire. In other words, they see the new heavens and new earth *replacing* the current heavens and earth. The thinking here is that because sin has corrupted creation, it must be destroyed to make room for the coming perfection.

Other scholars believe that the present heavens and earth won't be destroyed, but they will rather be purified. The fire in 2 Peter isn't a destructive fire, but rather it's a purifying fire. And while the new heavens and new earth will be pure and new, it will be the same at its core as it is today. In other words, they see the new heavens and new earth *redeeming* the current heavens and earth. The thinking here is that God will not allow the current heavens and earth to be destroyed because that would give Satan a victory.

While the Bible isn't crystal clear on this issue, the scholars agree that the new heavens and new earth will indeed be a perfect, pure creation or recreation. Remember, Jesus is making all things new. This begins with the transformation of our hearts when we trust in Him, and it extends to all creation when He returns.

Thus, the return of Jesus is not just about our personal salvation; it's about the complete restoration of all creation. When Jesus returns, evil will be destroyed, justice will be served, and God's perfect kingdom will be fully established forever. Jesus will fulfill His promise to bring restoration and wholeness to all creation.

Revelation 21:3–4 describes what comes next: "Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away." Jesus' return brings final victory over sin, suffering, and death. This is what we long for.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness.

— 2 Peter 3:11

Prayer

Ask God to help you live with an eye on eternity rather than the temporary things of this passing world.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

"For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind."

— Isaiah 65:17

Prayer

Thank God that He is preparing a future home for His people, and ask for a greater longing for eternity with Him.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

— Matthew 25:34

Prayer

Ask God to give you a longing for His eternal kingdom and the new heaven and earth that He will provide.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

— Revelation 21:1

Prayer

Ask God to help you set your mind on things above and to trust in His promises, no matter what challenges you face today.



Reflection Questions

- 01** Which understanding of the new heavens and new earth makes the most sense to you—that it will replace the current heavens and earth, or that it will redeem the current heavens and earth? Why?

- 02** How do you think the promise of a new heavens and new earth should affect our care for creation today?

- 03** What are some things you hope will be true about the new heavens and new earth?

Notes:

FEBRUARY



The Character of the New Creation

What will the new heavens and new earth be like?

The new heavens and new earth is God's new perfect creation where we will dwell in His glorious presence, free from sin, suffering, and death. We will be with all other believers in our glorified bodies, worshiping, serving, and fellowshiping forevermore. The new heavens and new earth will be a place of unending joy, peace, and contentment.

Bible Story

² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.

— John 14:2–3

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

MARCH

Devotion

In John 14, Jesus had just finished washing His disciples' feet as part of the Passover celebration that would become known as the Last Supper. Just a few hours later, Jesus would be arrested, and shortly after that, He would be crucified. Needless to say, this was a very emotional evening. The disciples were full of fear, doubt, and uncertainty as they heard Jesus share what was soon to come. Yet, during these struggles,

Jesus shared some of the most comforting words in all the Gospels, telling them not to let their hearts be troubled. Then, Jesus offered a comforting promise to His disciples: "I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." These words of Jesus bring a profound sense of hope, reassurance, and joy.

Often, we talk about spending eternity in heaven, but that's not quite correct. While believers who die now go to heaven to be in God's presence, that's not where we will spend eternity. Rather, when Jesus returns, all those who have died in Christ will be resurrected to spend eternity on the new earth.

This new earth is not a distant fairytale; it's a real place, a home prepared by Christ Himself for those who follow Him. It will be a place of perfect peace, free from pain, sin, and suffering. Revelation 21:4 assures us, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away."

But more than just being a physical place free of difficult things, the new heavens and new earth is about being in God's presence. Revelation 21:3 reminds us, "Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God." While the Bible speaks of rewards for faithfulness on earth, this is by far our greatest reward. We were made to be in relationship with God, and

on the new earth, we will experience that perfect relationship forever. And because God is our greatest treasure, we will have complete contentment and joy.

We don't know exactly what life will be like on the new earth. We know we will worship and serve God, but that doesn't mean we will sit in an eternal worship service. Rather, just as God created Adam and Eve to worship and serve Him in a variety of ways, including enjoying their relationship with one another, tending the garden, and fulfilling the cultural mandate to subdue the earth, so too will our worship look equally diverse. There will surely be times of corporate and private worship like we experience now, but we will also enjoy being with other believers and fulfilling the cultural mandate in a new way. Whatever daily life will look like, we can be sure that it will be a joyful, purposeful adventure like none before.

As we wait for this glorious day, we can find strength and peace in knowing our future is secure in Christ. It gives us hope in hardship, purpose in our daily lives, and a deep longing to be with our Savior forever.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived— God has prepared these things for those who love him.

— 1 Corinthians 2:9

Prayer

Even though we cannot fully imagine it, thank God for how incredible it will be to be with Him in heaven.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

For we know that if our earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands. — 2 Corinthians 5:1

Prayer

Ask God to help you live with the sure hope of what awaits you because of Jesus.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. — 2 Peter 3:13

Prayer

Ask God to help you see the value of living for His kingdom rather than seeking worldly success.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. — Hebrews 11:16

Prayer

Ask God to give you peace, comfort, and joy knowing that all the difficulties, pain, and suffering of this world will one day end.



Reflection Questions

- 01** What do you think the new heavens and new earth will be like? What do you think or hope will be there? What do you think or hope will not be there?

- 02** We can learn much about what life on the new earth will be like from Genesis 1–2 in Eden. What clues can you draw from that passage?

- 03** Part of the joy of heaven is fellowshiping with other believers. Who do you know who has not trusted in Christ that you can tell about Him so they can be there too?

Notes:

MARCH

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A Second Death for Unbelievers

What happens to unbelievers when they die?

When Jesus returns, those who have not trusted in Christ will be resurrected to appear before God. Each unbeliever will acknowledge Jesus as Lord and their rebellion against Him, not for salvation, but rather to affirm God's righteous judgment of their sins. They will then be cast into hell, or the lake of fire, and experience their righteous punishment forever.

Bible Story

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

³⁵ "'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?'

⁴⁰ "And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you didn't take me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe me, sick and in prison and you didn't take care of me.'

⁴⁴ "Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help you?'

⁴⁵ "Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

— Matthew 25:31–46

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

When someone stands on one side of the Grand Canyon and looks across to the other, there is a noticeable separation between the two sides. The huge chasm is deep and, in some parts, treacherous to navigate through. When those who have rejected the gift of eternal life provided through faith in Jesus Christ die, they experience eternal separation from God's goodness.

This separation will take place in hell first. Although like the present heaven, hell is not permanent. When Jesus returns, all unbelievers will be resurrected to stand before Christ in what's called the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11–15). They will acknowledge Jesus as Lord (Philippians 2:10–11), but not for salvation. That can only happen during this lifetime (Hebrews 9:27). Rather, they will acknowledge Christ's identity and their own sinfulness to affirm God's righteous judgment of their sins. Then, they will be cast into the lake of fire, along with death and hell, forever. This is called the second death, one that believers will not experience. There, they will be separated from God's goodness for eternity. While sometimes we

speak of being separated from God Himself, that's not exactly right; God is omnipresent. There is nowhere, including hell and the lake of fire, where He is absent. Thus, this eternal punishment is not His absence, but rather the absence of a relationship with Him and His good provisions, namely Himself.

Hell is a difficult and offensive topic for many in our culture. People often say, "I don't believe a good God would ever send anyone to hell." But the truth is, we all deserve hell because of our sinful rebellion against God. Sin, in whatever form it occurs, is at its heart a declaration for autonomy from God. Hell, and then the lake of fire, is God giving sinful people what they long for—an eternity apart from His goodness. Thus, hell is not an unfair punishment; it is justice. Romans 3:23 reminds us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Yet, in His mercy, God made a way for us to be saved. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only bridge across that eternal chasm.

Even though hell is an unpopular topic today, it is an essential truth in Scripture. Jesus spoke often about hell to warn people of its reality and to call them to repentance. Understanding the reality of hell should lead us to two things. First, it should give us a deeper appreciation for the grace of God. When we realize what we were saved from, we can fully grasp the beauty of Christ's sacrifice. Second, it should ignite a sense of urgency within us. If hell is real, then the people around us desperately need to hear

the gospel. We cannot be passive in sharing the good news. As 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us, "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." The reality of hell should drive us to prayer, compassion, and boldness in proclaiming the gospel. God has given us the privilege of being His messengers, sharing the hope of salvation with a world in desperate need. Let's not take that lightly.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. — John 3:18

Prayer

Thank God for His grace and good gift of salvation that you did nothing to deserve or earn.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to disgrace and eternal contempt. — Daniel 12:2

Prayer

Ask God to help you be unashamed of the gospel, and to boldly share the truth with those who need to hear it.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

When he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength. — 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9

Prayer

Ask God to help you see lost people all around you and to have a burden for them to come to know Jesus.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

"Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!'" — Matthew 25:41

Prayer

Ask God to stir the hearts and actions of all believers around the world, so that we would see a global movement of the gospel.



Next Steps

Because hell and the lake of fire are real, so should our urgency to share the gospel with others be just as real. Take some time and think of those you know who do not know Christ. Although it's uncomfortable, consider how right now, they are on a path toward eternal separation from God's goodness. Pray God gives you the love and courage to share the gospel with these friends. And then seek to do just that.

Notes:

Hell and Judgment

What is hell?

The Bible uses many references and metaphors to describe hell, including the blazing furnace and the lake of fire. Hell is a real, physical, and eternal place of condemnation, where those who have rejected Christ will face His righteous judgment and be left to the consequences of their own sin. Scripture describes hell as a place of suffering, darkness, and eternal fire.

Bible Story

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish, ⁴⁸ and when it was full, they dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out the worthless ones. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the evil people from the righteous, ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

— Matthew 13:47–50

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

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Devotion

Just as believers who die go to an intermediate heaven before Jesus returns and ushers in the new heavens and the new earth where they will live forever, so too do unbelievers go to an intermediate hell until Jesus returns, when they will then go to the eternal lake of fire. It's difficult for many of us to think about such a place, and especially when we think of people we know or who we have known ending up there. But while this can understandably

be uncomfortable to think about, we shouldn't ignore it altogether. Just like fireworks need a pitch black sky behind them to accentuate their splendor, we can't fully appreciate the good news of the gospel unless we first understand the bad news of what Jesus came to save us from. The reality of hell and the lake of fire makes the cross and the love of God so much grander in our minds and hearts.

The New Testament uses the Greek word *Gehenna* for “hell.” *Gehenna* was an actual place in Jesus’ day; it was a valley just outside the city of Jerusalem where trash was dumped and burned in an ongoing fire. It’s not surprising that Jesus used this powerful imagery to communicate what eternal judgment is like. Hell and the lake of fire aren’t some never-ending party where unbelievers are finally free of God’s oppressive rules. Rather, hell and the lake of fire are places devoid of anything good. Often, people speak of unbelievers being separated from God for eternity as their judgment, but that’s not quite right. God is omnipresent, so He is indeed present in hell just as He will be present in the lake of fire. But His presence is not the same as being in relationship with Him. And His presence does not mean He is pouring out good on those unbelievers. James 1:17 tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from God. This means that unbelievers will spend eternity aware of God’s presence but receiving not a single good thing from Him. There will be no joy, no peace, no hope, no love, nothing good at all. Instead, there will be only despair, agony, and regret.

The reality of the lake of fire should break our hearts, as every day we see people who do not know Christ pass away without a personal relationship with Him. But here’s what we need to understand: Jesus didn’t talk about hell to condemn people. He spoke of hell to warn people and call them to repentance and to follow Him. In John 14:6, He declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Christ is the only way to avoid the eternal judgment that we all deserve because of sin.

The good news is that eternal punishment is not for those who follow Jesus. When we place our faith and trust in Christ, we don’t have to fear His judgment anymore. Instead, we should be moved with urgency to share the gospel so that others can know the hope and salvation found in Christ.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

"But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

— Revelation 21:8

Prayer

Thank God that He is a loving but just God who will deal with all sin.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

— Revelation 20:15

Prayer

Ask God to help you understand and trust in His coming judgment.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

He told them, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." — Luke 10:2

Prayer

Ask God to open doors to share the gospel and for boldness, compassion, and clarity as you tell others about His salvation.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 6:23

Prayer

Thank God for the gift of eternal life He has given you in Jesus.



Reflection Questions

01 How often do you consider that you deserve eternal judgment because of your sins? How much do you believe this?

02 How amazed are you at God's grace, which saved you?

03 Does the reality of heaven and hell affect the way you live each day? Why or why not?

Notes:

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Remain Ready

How should we live as we await Christ's return?

As we wait for Christ to return, we should live with urgency and an eternal perspective. This means not putting off repentance, obedience, and spiritual growth. We should actively seek to grow spiritually each day by achieving victory over sin, building godly habits, prioritizing godly community, and helping others come to know Christ by sharing the gospel.

Bible Story

¹ "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ When the foolish took their lamps, they didn't take oil with them; ⁴ but the wise ones took oil in their flasks with their lamps. ⁵ When the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come out to meet him.'

⁷ "Then all the virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

⁹ "The wise ones answered, 'No, there won't be enough for us and for you. Go instead to those who sell oil, and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰ "When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

¹¹ Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, 'Master, master, open up for us!'

¹² “He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you!’

¹³ “Therefore be alert, because you don’t know either the day or the hour.”

— Matthew 25:1–13

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Have you ever known something would happen, but when it did, you were still surprised at how it occurred? For example, a couple might discuss getting married one day and plan a future together. And while the girlfriend will come to expect her boyfriend to pop the question, often when it happens, she is caught completely off guard.

In Matthew 24, Jesus discusses the signs of the end of the age. But when His followers asked Him when this would happen, He instead told them to “be alert, since you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.” He then told them the parable recorded in Matthew 25.

In Jesus’ day, before a groom would marry his betrothed, there would be a time when he would unexpectedly arrive at her parents’ home where she lived. In Jesus’ parable, He tells of ten friends of the bride-to-be waiting for the groom to arrive. Five were wise and brought oil for their lamps, but five did not. When the groom came suddenly, the five foolish friends had to rush out to buy oil, and by the time they returned, it was too late. They missed the groom’s arrival.

While the imagery of this parable might be foreign to us, the point is not. It’s simply foolish to know something is going to happen and not be ready for it. We know that Jesus’ return is certain, even if we don’t know its timing. Instead, we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, “For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” That’s not to say that Jesus will return with evil motives like a thief; rather, this is to say that because we don’t know when a thief might come, we prepare. We lock our doors every night. We install exterior lights and security systems.

Not knowing when Jesus will return isn’t meant to cause confusion or doubts about the promises of God being fulfilled. It is designed to prompt us to live with anticipation and readiness, always prepared for His return. Just like wise friends bring oil and wise homeowners lock doors, so too should we busy ourselves being prepared for the glorious return of Jesus.

The problem that many of us face is that we become easily distracted by the cares of the world.

While our daily experiences indeed matter, they shouldn't consume us. It's when they cross that line that we experience a problem. Our minds, hearts, time, and energy can easily be channeled into our own plans for each day, instead of being fixed on Christ's plans. But Jesus' sudden return means we cannot afford to be complacent or distracted. We have to keep our eyes and our attention on our relationship with Him. We do that by structuring our lives and our schedules around worship, godly community, personal time with God and His word, and running away from temptation.

To put it another way, staying prepared means living intentionally, keeping our hearts focused on Christ, and remaining faithful in prayer and obedience.

Preparation is easiest when done in community—none of us are meant to do this alone. If you are struggling with sin and seeking victory, invite trusted believers to walk alongside you. If you desire to develop spiritual habits like Bible reading or prayer, invite others to grow with you. Walking with Christ in anticipation of His return is a journey best traveled together.

Thus, as we wait for Jesus' return, let us not grow weary or complacent but keep our hearts focused on demonstrating faith, love, and grace with others. Our readiness speaks volumes about our relationship with Him. Prepare well, so that when Jesus comes, He will find you faithful. Stay prepared, for He is coming soon!

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — 1 John 2:28

Prayer

Ask God to remind you each day of people who need to hear about Jesus before it's too late.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. — Hebrews 10:23

Prayer

Ask God to help you live with absolute hope and confidence and to not budge from the truth of the gospel.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. — Hebrews 12:1–2

Prayer

Thank God for other believers He has put in your life and for their encouragement and accountability.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming. — Matthew 24:42

Prayer

Ask God to help you identify the steps you need to take to be prepared for the return of Jesus, and for His help in doing whatever that is.



Next Steps

Consider asking yourself this question on a regular basis: *If Jesus returned right now, would I be overjoyed, or would I be ashamed?*

How you answer that tells a lot about your preparedness. Take proactive steps to be prepared by determining ways to fight against sin in your life while at the same time seeking to be obedient to Christ in all areas of your life. It's not just a matter of not sinning when Jesus returns; it's also a matter of living in joyful obedience.

Notes:

Studying the Book of Revelation

How should we study the Book of Revelation?

As prophetic–apocalyptic literature, the Book of Revelation combines rich symbolism and literal content. As such, great care and humility are required to study it. There are several starkly different approaches to studying Revelation, but one consistent thing is the book’s overarching message: Jesus has won, and He is returning!

Bible Story

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.

⁴ John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

— Revelation 1:1–8

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

The Book of Revelation is one of the more challenging books of Scripture to understand, largely because of its genre. Revelation is prophetic-apocalyptic literature. In one sense, the book reads like the Old Testament prophecies, in that it points toward God's plans for the future. In another sense, it reads like an apocalyptic piece of literature, dealing with various levels of imagery throughout, including visions and dreams and symbols.

There are four primary and distinct ways to interpret this book:

Preterist. This interpretation sees Revelation describing the events of John's day, the first-century AD. More specifically, Revelation describes the rise of the Roman empire and its destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Futurist. This interpretation sees Revelation as providing a blueprint for future events that will take place, namely Jesus' return and what will precede and follow it.

Historicist. This interpretation sees Revelation as starting in John's immediate day and then continuing to describe a pattern of events that run throughout church history.

Idealist. This interpretation sees Revelation as mostly symbolic, addressing conflict and resolution that is ever-present for the church.

It's not hard to see that how one approaches Revelation greatly affects how they understand it. This is one of the challenges when it comes to studying it. Not only is it complicated no matter how it is interpreted, you will often encounter people and resources that approach it in a different way than you might.

Because of this, some people choose to avoid Revelation all together, thinking it is too mysterious and complicated. But we know that "all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Peter 3:16–17). "All Scripture," of course, includes Revelation.

Revelation was written to encourage us. If we are facing persecution, it reminds us that Jesus is sovereign and that our suffering is not the end of the story. This book assures us that God's justice will prevail, evil will be defeated, and Christ will reign forever. Though some passages are

filled with symbols and imagery, the core message is clear: Jesus wins.

While Revelation is one of the Bible's most unique and challenging books, it is also a book of hope. When we approach it with humility and a focus on Jesus, we see that it's not about confusion or fear; it's about Christ's ultimate victory over sin and evil.

Here are a few key principles to keep in mind when studying Revelation:

Jesus is the focus. Revelation isn't primarily about decoding world events. It's about Jesus reigning as King and calling us to faithfulness through trials.

Scripture interprets Scripture.

Revelation builds on Old Testament prophecies, especially those in Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. So cross-referencing these passages can help bring clarity. It would be good to use a quality study Bible if you want to study Revelation for yourself.

Avoid speculation. It's tempting to read Revelation through the lens of current events, but its primary purpose is to encourage believers to persevere, not to predict dates or times.

Revelation calls us to faithfulness.

This book is not just about the future; it challenges us to remain faithful today, living in obedience and trust as we await Christ's return.

Rather than fearing Revelation, let it strengthen your faith and anticipation of Christ's return. Ultimately, pray for understanding and clarity as you study Revelation, keeping in mind that Scripture's purpose is for God to reveal the glory of Christ and strengthen your hope in His promises. Therefore, studying Revelation should stir your heart with awe, wonder, and eager anticipation for Christ's return.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is

one that will not be destroyed.

— Daniel 7:14

Prayer

Ask God to help you read Revelation and other end times prophecies, looking primarily for God's glory to be made known.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near. — Revelation 1:3

Prayer

Thank God that even though Revelation can have challenging aspects, its central message is clear: Jesus wins.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. — Revelation 19:16

Prayer

Ask God to remind you day by day that Jesus is returning—perhaps soon—and when He does, He will rule perfectly over all creation.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the

holy city, which are written about in this book. — Revelation 22:18–19

Prayer

Ask God to guide you in understanding Revelation and applying it to your life, without adding to or taking away from it in any way.



Next Steps

If you are unfamiliar with the four basic interpretations of Revelation, research them online at some reputable sources.

Make a note of any strengths and weaknesses you see for each. It's okay if you don't land on one of these approaches right away. And it's okay if your approach changes over time. What matters most is that you study humbly and diligently, and that your desire is knowledge and understanding to grow your love for Christ.

Notes:

Memory Verse Tracking Log



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