

Group Study – Heaven

First read this story below, once you've read this have a look at the bible verses, answer the questions and have a chat!

'Hey Chelsea! You going to Explosion tonight?' Luke asked as he tossed his backpack on his shoulders. 'Sure want to. But I've got tons of chemistry homework. I'm hoping I can finish it in the library before I head home.' 'Exactly where I'm headed' Luke said as he waved to some of his friends across the hall. 'Pretty good crowd last night, huh?'

'I couldn't believe it! The church was packed'

'Pastor Steve was right when he said God wanted us to saturate this youth revival with prayer. We've prayed, we've fasted, we've invited kids till we're blue in the face-'

'And God's blessing our efforts' Chelsea finished.

'I really liked what Pastor Steve talked about last night, You know – heaven and stuff'

'Yeah me too, Luke. He made it sound like we could know for sure if we'll end up there'

'I've been a Christian for almost three years, but I always have these nagging doubts about whether I'll really make it to heaven'

Chelsea smiled. 'I know exactly what you mean'. 'You too?' Luke replied.

'Yep. My grandparents are Christians. My parents are Christians. And I became a Christian in the fourth grade. I'll never forget asking Jesus to forgive my sins and make me a new creature in him. But still-'

'You doubt where you'll spend eternity' Luke finished.

'Exactly'

'Sometimes I wish I were Pastor Steve. He seems so confident spiritually'

Chelsea agreed. 'I wanna be that confident, Luke'

'Yeah me too. That's why I'm going back tonight. I want to make sure I get it, you know?'

'Yeah I know exactly what you're talking about. So help me with this chemistry homework. I wanna go too!'

Bible Verses

Read: John 3:16

Romans 10:9-12

Questions

Do you sometimes find it difficult to be sure going to heaven?

What do you think heaven is going to be like? What do you think you'll do there?

Read the verse from Romans again, It says that if you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. What times do you find it difficult to confess that Jesus is Lord?

Group Study – Hell

First read this story below of a conversation between a Christian called 'Lucy' and her Pastor 'Steve', once you've read this have a look at the bible verse, answer the questions and have a chat!

'I really want my non-Christian friends to get to know Christ,' Lucy told Pastor Steve, 'but I keep getting tripped up on these tough questions they're throwing at me'. 'They're asking you questions because they're curious about your faith. Take it as a compliment.' Replied Pastor Steve. 'I still have a few more questions about hell' She said 'Is it a real place?'. 'Yes, hell is a physical place' Pastor Steve said. 'The bible tells us that our bodies will be raised on Judgment day. The Christians will spend eternity in heaven and the non-Christians will spend eternity in hell.' 'Some of my friends say that hell will be one big party' Lucy said 'I know that's not true, but I don't know what to say'

'Think of it this way: Every time hell is talked about in the bible, it's described as a place of great torment and pain. It's also described as a place of total separation from God. That means love will not exist in hell. Neither will laughter or meaningful relationships. Every single person in hell will be there because they rejected or didn't follow Jesus Christ. Hell will be comprised of hate, selfishness and all that is evil' Pastor Steve replied. 'It seems too easy to just accept Christ, live for him and get to spend eternity in heaven' Lucy said. 'So why don't more people accept his gift and avoid going to hell?'

'Lots of reasons' Pastor Steve said, 'But let's just chat about two. One reason is that many people still haven't heard the wonderful news. And that's why it's so important to support missions through our local church, give in the offering and participate on mission trips. And another reason is that many people simply don't believe in God'

'So because they don't see him they choose not to believe in him?' Lucy replied. 'Lack of faith keeps a lot of people from coming to know Christ' Pastor Steve said 'But we can actually ask God to give us faith and he will! And it doesn't take a ton of faith to come to Christ. The bible says all it takes is a small amount – the size of a mustard seed.'

'What a gift we have!' Lucy said smiling from ear to ear.

Bible Verse

Read: Matthew 7:13-14

Questions

What is your opinion of hell? What do you think it's like?

What other reasons do you think people have for not following God?

What do you think about the verse in Matthew which talks about the way to heaven being narrow and the road to hell being wide? Do you agree? Why?

Philippians Study

Read the bible extract from Philippians and then think about the questions in your group.

12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

15All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Questions

1- When Paul says 'Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead' What do you think he is talking about?

2- The verse tells us that as Christians we are citizens of heaven. What do you think that means?

3- Which verses from this show us that Paul is certain that he is going to heaven when he dies?

4- Think of times when we are in tough situations, maybe think of one particular situation you are each in at the moment, do you think that God is there helping you? If so in which ways?

Maybe if you have had a tough situation before and God has helped you you might like to share stories in your groups.