

**Get Over Your Selfie
Eternity Over Temporary
LEADER NOTES
Sunday, November 17th, 2019**

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God — truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:21-24 NLT

Hi LifeGroup leaders! The focus of this week’s study is to help our group members get over living for temporary things and to embrace living for eternity. For our study, we’ll focus first on how Jesus defines eternal life – knowing God. There is a difference between knowing *about* God (studying the subject of God) and actually knowing *Him*. My hope is your group members will grow not only their understanding of what eternal life is, but they will grow their desire and passion to know God. To do this, we must “get over” our natural bent to live for temporary things. In Jesus’ parable of the seeds in the second part of our study, we’ll identify what it looks like to get caught up in temporary things. Encourage your group members to consider how they are living for the temporary, and what it might look like to get over it. To start your group time, look once again at Ephesians 4:21-24 and talk about the steps we are taking in this series to focus on Jesus, get rid of the old and put on the new. Then, check out the icebreaker. God bless you and your group as you dive in!

Series question: How do I get over myself and experience God’s best?

Three steps: Focus on Jesus, get rid of the old, put on the new (God’s righteousness).

ICEBREAKER: Quick! In one minute, how many movies or TV shows can your group come up with about heaven? The movies or shows you reference don’t have to be an accurate depiction, just something you’ve seen or heard about that touches on the topic of heaven. Ready. Set. Go!!!

VIDEO: Watch this week’s video – Eternity Over Temporary

<https://www.lifegroupleaders.ca/studies/>

STUDY:

To start off your study time, have someone in your group read the introduction below out loud. This will set up the context for the study.

Sacrificing the eternal on the altar of the temporary is never a wise way to live. Yet it is so easy in our culture to elevate what has less value over what has greater. God calls on us to live out our lives with eternity and the permanent in view. This approach puts us on solid ground and makes all we do matter. Our goal today is to help one another live in light of eternity. By doing this, we choose to live valuing the permanent above the temporary. We can't do this on our own. We need God's wisdom and power. He makes it possible for us to get over ourselves and experience God's best - living for eternity!

DEFINING "ETERNAL LIFE"

Ask someone in your group to read John Ortberg's quote below. John refers to a time Jesus defines eternal life. Jesus does this in John 17:3, the verse you'll read as a group together.

Most of us think of eternity as something that begins after we die. However, Jesus didn't talk about eternity that way. In fact, Jesus defines "eternal life" only once, with great precision, in a way that has been largely lost in our day. John Ortberg – Eternity is Now in Session

READ John 17:3 out loud together as a group.

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." NIV

- What key words or phrases from this verse help us know what eternal life is?

A key phrase is "know you". Jesus prays that we might know God the Father and know Jesus, the Son. Eternal life = knowing God.

- If you could ask Jesus one question about eternal life, what would you ask Him?

As a group, see if you can come up with 4 or 5 misperceptions about eternal life and 4 or 5 truths about eternal life. Misperceptions are common misunderstandings about what eternal life is or how to "get" eternal life.

In our culture there are many misunderstandings about eternal life. Here are some examples:

1. If I'm sincere enough, I'm in.
2. If I am religious enough, I get in.
3. My mother is a Christian, so I guess that means I'm in.
4. Eternal life is some obscure thing that may or may not happen to me after I die. I'll find out when/if I get there.
5. Eternal life has no impact on the way I live now.

Here are some truths to correct some of the misunderstandings.

1. Sincerity isn't the deciding factor. I can be sincerely wrong.
2. Religion isn't the deciding factor. I can't earn God's favour by being religious.
3. Just because I'm born into a Christian family doesn't make me a Christian. I make my own commitment to follow Christ.
4. Eternal life isn't an unfathomable mystery. Jesus tells us we can know with confidence what it is and whether we have it.
5. Eternal life should have tremendous impact on how we live because it is about living for God, making my commitment to follow Jesus the centre of who I am and how I live.

ETERNAL LIFE

Misperception

Ex. Be "good" and I get it.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Truth

I can never be good enough to earn it.

John Ortberg writes, "To know God is to live in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude soaked, participatory life together."

6. What do you think about John's definition of knowing God? Do you think this is the experience of the majority of church-goers in Canada today? Why or why not?

It may be helpful to break John Ortberg's quote down into parts. Do most Canadian church goers have a rich relationship with God? Are they living in a moment-by-moment way? What do these things look like? Are most Canadian church goers living with hearts filled with gratitude? Are they regularly participating in a relationship with God? These are tough questions to answer, right? None of us is perfect, but God looks at our heart. Is our desire to follow Him and live for Him? Does our schedule and the fruit of our life show we are moving in this direction of knowing Him?

A common New Testament word for “eternal” is *aiónios*, which carries the idea of *quality* as well as *quantity*. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with “years” at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time. Source: Got Questions – What is Eternal Life?

7. What gets you excited about the quality side of eternal life?

It may help to think again here about how John Orberg describes what it looks like to know God.

Have someone read the paragraphs below.

In his book, *Eternity is Now in Session*, John Ortberg notes that there are two ways of thinking about Jesus’ gospel. The more common version is thought to involve how people ensure they will go to heaven when they die. It’s about how to go from “down here” to “up there”. It usually involves affirming certain beliefs or praying a particular prayer that is thought to make a person “Christian”.

The other understanding is that the gospel announces the availability of life under God’s reign and power now. It’s about “up there” coming “down here”. This is in line with Jesus’ teaching about in John 17:3. Eternal life is available now, for anyone who believes. It is about experiencing eternal life now.

- Imagine you were in a conversation with someone about the topic of eternal life. The person you are talking with has doubts about whether or not they will end up in heaven after they die. Using what we’ve looked at so far in this study, how might you help your friend to understand Jesus’ perspective on eternal life?

Many people lack confidence about whether they have eternal life. This often stems from a belief that I must be good enough, sincere enough, religious enough and so on to earn favour with God. How can we help our friends move from lacking confidence to having the hope of eternal life? One helpful idea is “DO verses DONE”. DO is the belief I must DO things to earn my way to heaven. This is the misperception. DONE means Jesus has done it for me. God loves each person and offers each of us the gift of eternal life. We can experience this gift right now by believing that Jesus is God’s Son and by receiving his death on the cross for me. (see John 1:12, 13, Romans 6:23). This is the truth we can bring to our friends.

GETTING OVER THE TEMPORARY

Our goal today is to get over our tendency to live for the temporary so we can live for the eternal. In “The Parable of the Sower” Jesus talks about some of the common pitfalls that can keep us focused on the temporary.

READ. Luke 8:4-15

In this parable, Jesus describes 4 types of seed. The first 3 types get caught up in the temporary. As a group, have a look at each of the first 3 types of seed again.

The first seed. (vs. 5, 12)

What happens to it?

There are those, Jesus says, who hear God's Word, but Satan snatches it from their hearts. They hear, but they don't ultimately believe.

How do you see a temporary focus in this seed?

The seed that falls on the path never takes root. It never accomplishes its intended purpose. Many today are blinded by Satan. They can't see the truth because they are following the wrong master.

What is a modern day example of what this might look like?

In our culture we see examples of this all around us. There is an interest in spirituality in our culture that often stops short of Jesus. For example, think of the entertainment industry. There are references to God in secular movies and music, but often these fall short of the Gospel.

The second seed. (vs. 6, 13)

What happens to it?

This seed falls on rock. The young plants spring up but they quickly wither away because they have no moisture.

How do you see a temporary focus with this seed?

Jesus says these people "believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away." They believe at first, but when their faith is challenged, they give it up.

What is a modern day example of what this might look like?

Many have a religious experience at some point in their life. Many even say a prayer to receive Jesus, but then their faith withers away in times of testing. That testing can come from having their faith challenged intellectually or being influenced by friends or family who challenge their faith commitment.

The third seed (vs. 7, 14)

What happens to it?

This is the seed that springs up but then gets choked out by thorns. Jesus says the thorns stand for the worries of life, riches and pleasures that can keep the plant from maturing.

How do you see a temporary focus with this seed?

In this example, the temporary focus means the cares and concerns of this life take the place of our commitment to Jesus. Rather than living in light of eternity, we live in light only of what we can see right in front of us (money, things, career, pleasure)

What is a modern day example of what this might look like?

We see this all around us in our culture. For example, living for money might mean I love things and use people, rather than love people and use things.

How does Jesus' parable help you understand our tendency to focus on the temporary?

What might it look like for you to "get over" a temporary focus in your life?

Now let's take another look at the fourth seed. (vs. 8, 15)

What happens to it?

This seed falls on good soil, grows up and produces a crop.

How do you see a focus on eternity in this seed? (look at key words or phrases)

Jesus describes those who receive this seed as having "... a noble and good heart". They "... hear the word, retain it, and by perseverance produce a good crop."

What is a modern day example of what this might look like?

These are people who cultivate a rich relationship with God. They follow Jesus, love God and love people. They persevere through attacks from Satan, times of testing and the lure of temporary things. They are not perfect, but they live with a dependence on God and a faith that He is all they need.

How does this fourth seed help you know how to live for the eternal?

What might it look like for you to more fully embrace this perspective?

LIVING IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

For this final part of our study, read through the following passages from the Bible on eternal life. How do these passages help you understand what eternal life is and how to experience it?

Ask group members to take turns reading the following verses out loud. After each reading, ask, “what key words or phrases do you see about eternal life?”

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” John 5:24. NIV

There is an action required of us to “hear” and “believe”. There is a result – we “cross over” from death to life. We are either in one reality or the other – living in the world of death or life.

“I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.” John 6:47 NIV

By “believes” Jesus means believing in who He is and in His power to give us life. Jesus says, “I tell you the truth ...”. This truth stands in sharp contrast to the lies we see all around us about how to have eternal life or whether it is even real.

“And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life: whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:11-13 NIV

We can know with confidence that we have eternal life. We don’t have to wonder or doubt. We don’t have to wait till we die to find out. Jesus says whoever “has” the Son has life. To have Jesus means to believe in Him and follow Him.

“And now you Gentiles have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as His own, giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised (eternal life) and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.” Ephesians 1:13-14

The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that we have eternal life. When we commit to follow Jesus, His Spirit comes into our life. He changes our desires to live for eternity rather than temporary. We experience the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). All of this is for God’s glory.

PRAYER: For your group prayer time, ask God to work in your lives to help you put aside your focus on the temporary and live in light of eternity. Ask Him to show you specific ways you can live this week with an eternal perspective.

LifeGroup Script

Hey Creekside LifeGroups! Welcome back to our series called #GetOverYourSelfie. My name is Jeff and I'm so excited that you are part of a LifeGroup for this six week adventure. The goal of our study is that you would ask this question – "How do I get over myself and experience God's best for my life?" Each week we're looking at something we need to get over, something that keeps us from experiencing God's best. You know your LifeGroup really is an ideal place for this. Your group members are there to pray for you, care for you, challenge you and invite you to take next steps in your walk with God. As we're looking at these areas to get over, let me encourage you to be open with your group. We all wrestle with things we need to get over and your group is there to help you get past them. Here's an important tip to help this process go well as you minister to each other in group. Listen, don't fix. As we talk together about these challenging issues, you have a great opportunity in group to listen to one another. Listening

well means giving everyone in the group an opportunity to speak. If you're a talker, that's great, but make sure you allow lots of time for others to talk as well. If you're quiet, ask God to help you muster up the courage to speak what's on your heart. Then, when someone else in your group is sharing, listen with your ears and your eyes. This is a powerful way to show you care about what each of your group members is sharing. Avoid the temptation to fix. After someone shares, rather than telling them about the latest podcast you've heard on that subject, or a great book you've read that has a solution for them, simply thank them for sharing. Listen, don't fix – this will give everyone in your group a safe place to talk about the challenges they are facing each week.

Alright, let's jump into this week's study. This is #5 in our series and the topic is eternity over temporary. In his book, *Eternity is Now in Session*, John Ortberg writes, "Most of us think of eternity as something that begins after we die. However, Jesus didn't talk about eternity that way. In fact, Jesus defines "eternal life" only once, with great precision, and in a way that has been largely lost in our day." In John 17, we read a prayer Jesus prays on the night he is arrested, the night before he goes to the cross. Jesus knows what is going to take place the next day. He knows He is going to be nailed to a cross, to take on our sin. So, Jesus prays a prayer to His Father that begins with a prayer for Himself. Here's what He says.

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him."

Did you hear what Jesus said there in his prayer? He says to his Father – Father, You have given me authority to give eternal life to each person you've given me. Jesus gives us eternal life. It is a gift we receive from Him. Then, Jesus goes on in His prayer to tell us what eternal life is. Let's read this out loud together as a group. You'll see the words there on the screen.

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3 NIV

In this prayer Jesus tells us what eternal life is. Eternal life according to Jesus isn't just about getting to heaven after we die. It's about knowing God. We could think of this like a math equation. Eternal life = Knowing God. That's what it is. Eternal life God's best for us. He longs for us to experience eternal life each moment, each day, starting now.

One of my favourite books is, "Knowing God" by J.I. Packer. The second chapter of the book is called, "The People Who Know Their God" and at the beginning of the chapter J.I. Packer recalls a time he walked alongside a fellow scholar who had laid his career on the line for his beliefs about God. In the conversation, this man said to Packer about that experience, "But it doesn't matter, for I've known God and they haven't." What Jesus is saying in his prayer and what that man said is this – what matters most is knowing God. Not just knowing about God, but actually knowing God. John Ortberg writes, "To know God is to live in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude soaked, participatory life together." I love how Packer describes it later in this same chapter. He writes, "Those who know God have great energy for God." "Those who know

God have great thoughts of God.” “Those who know God show great boldness for God.”
“Those who know God have great contentment in God.” This is God’s plan for you, that you would experience knowing him in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude soaked kind of way. To get there, we need to get over our focus on temporary things, and instead, live our lives in light of eternity.

In your study you’re going to explore what Jesus teaches us in John 17 about eternal life. As a group, you’re going to brainstorm 4 or 5 misconceptions about eterna life – they’re all around us in our culture, and 4 or 5 truths to speak to those misconceptions. This will help us get over misconceptions we may have learned and embrace the true. Then you’re going to look at what we need to get over - . living for what is temporary rather than what is eternal. To do that, you’ll explore a parable Jesus taught about how the temporary can keep us from the eternal. Finally you’ll explore together what it looks like to live in light of eternity. My hope for myself and for you is that this study will inspire us to fire up our passion to know God. In Philippians 3, Paul wrote, “I want to know Christ ...”. May that deep desire Paul had be our desire as well. So ask yourself like I’ve been asking myself. Do I want to know Him? This is way more than just knowing about him. Am in investing my greatest energy to live in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude soaked relationship with Him. Do I know God? Hey, I’m so excited that your group gets to look at this together. May God powerfully bless your time together. May He use your group to help you know Him more. Have a great study and I’ll look forward to seeing you next time. God bless.

What does it look like to live in light of eternity?

What will change about the way I think and live if I am living in light of eternity?

“Father, the time has come. Glorify your son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:1-3

To know you. The Hebrew idea of knowing encompassed experience and intimacy, which for Christians means love for God and obedience to Him. NLT bible study note

Eternity is Now in Session – John Ortberg

Most of us think of eternity as something that begins after we die. However, Jesus didn't talk about eternity that way. In fact, Jesus defines "eternal life" only once, with great precision, in a way that has been largely lost in our day.

What if we stopped thinking about eternal life as something we can only experience after we die?

What if we stopped thinking of Christians as people who profess beliefs *about* God and instead focus on becoming disciples who *know* God?

What if salvation isn't mostly about getting you into heaven but about getting heaven into you?

Ecclesiastes 3:11 – God has set eternity in our hearts

In her book, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament*, Brenda Colijin writes that the eternal life the Bible talks about is not primarily marked by its duration. Eternal life is "qualitatively different from mortal human life. It is 'the life by which God Himself lives.' It is 'primarily qualitative rather than quantitative. Eternal describes the kind of life one has in Christ.

Many believe eternal life is a transaction – those who believe right get in. This isn't right.

John 17:3 Eternal life = knowing God.

To know God is to live in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude soaked, participatory life together.

Eternal life in the individual does not begin after death, but at the point where God touches the individual with redeeming grace and draws them into a life interactive with himself and his kingdom.

This book contains two ways of thinking about Jesus' gospel. The more common version is thought to involve how people ensure they will go to heaven when they die. It's about how to go from "down here" to "up there". It usually involves affirming certain beliefs or praying a particular prayer that is thought to make a person "Christian".

The other understanding is that the gospel announces the availability of life under God's reign and power now. It's about "up there" coming "down here". By grace. Through Jesus. Transcending death. To all who will. For the sake of the world.

Salvation isn't about getting into heaven. It's about getting heaven into you.

Jesus' Good News is that eternal life, life *with* God and *for* God, life *under* God's care and life *by* God's power – is available now. If you want that life, the logical step is to become a disciple – a student, an apprentice, a follower – of Jesus.

Biblical salvation is so much more than having satisfied the minimum requirements. It is the grace-powered redemption of our thoughts and desires and will and action into cosmic meaning and divine love that leads us ever onward and upward.

Question: "What is eternal life?"

Answer: When the Bible speaks of eternal life, it refers to a gift of God that comes only "through Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Romans 6:23](#)). This gift is in contrast to the "death" that is the natural result of sin.

The gift of eternal life comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is Himself "the resurrection and the life" ([John 11:25](#)). The fact that this life is "eternal" indicates that it is *perpetual* life—it goes on and on and on, with no end.

It is a mistake, however, to view eternal life as simply an unending progression of years. A common New Testament word for "eternal" is *aiónios*, which carries the idea of *quality* as well as *quantity*. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with "years" at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time.

For this reason, eternal life can be thought of as something that Christians experience *now*. Believers don't have to "wait" for eternal life, because it's not something that starts when they die. Rather, eternal life begins the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. It is our current possession. [John 3:36](#) says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Note that the believer "has" (present tense) this life (the verb is present tense in the Greek, too). We find similar present-tense constructions in [John 5:24](#) and [John 6:47](#). The focus of eternal life is not on our future, but on our current standing in Christ.

The Bible inextricably links eternal life with the Person of Jesus Christ. [John 17:3](#) is an important passage in this regard, as Jesus prays, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Here,

Jesus equates “eternal life” with a knowledge of God and of the Son. There is no knowledge of God without the Son, for it is through the Son that the Father reveals Himself to the elect ([John 17:6](#); [14:9](#)).

This life-giving knowledge of the Father and the Son is a true, personal knowledge, not just an academic awareness. There will be some on Judgment Day who had claimed to be followers of Christ but never really had a relationship with Him. To those false professors, Jesus will say, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” ([Matthew 7:23](#)). The apostle Paul made it his goal to *know* the Lord, and he linked that knowledge to resurrection from the dead: “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead” ([Philippians 3:10-11](#)).

In the [New Jerusalem](#), the apostle John sees a river flowing from “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” and “on each side of the river stood the [tree of life](#). . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” ([Revelation 22:1-2](#)). In Eden, we rebelled against God and were banished from the tree of life ([Genesis 3:24](#)). In the end, God graciously restores our access to the tree of life. This access is provided through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ([John 1:29](#)).

Right now, every sinner is invited to know Christ and to receive eternal life: “Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life” ([Revelation 22:17](#)).

How can you [know that you have eternal life](#)? First of all, confess your sin before our holy God. Then accept God’s provision of a Savior on your behalf. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” ([Romans 10:13](#)). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins, and He rose again the third day. Believe this good news; trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and you will be saved ([Acts 16:31](#); [Romans 10:9-10](#)).

John puts it so simply: “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” ([1 John 5:11-12](#)).