

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Luke 16:19-31

LEADER'S STUDY

Life After Life

Luke 16:19-31

What is happening?

Jesus tells this fictional story to portray how God rewards us based on whether or not we honored Him during our lives. He doesn't focus on how well the characters kept the religious law, but how they treated others. The rich man—who apparently doesn't merit a name—had no regard whatsoever for the poor man, Lazarus, who lived in squalor just outside the rich man's house. We're told nothing specific about Lazarus's spiritual state, but we get the idea he trusted the Lord even though his faith didn't seem to pay off for him. Then after they've both died, Lazarus is at ease while the rich man is in continual, unrelieved agony. When the suffering rich man asks that someone go warn his family of what awaits them if they don't repent, he's reminded the Scriptures already tell them everything they need to know.

Jesus doesn't give many details about what the afterlife looks like, because that wasn't the purpose of the story. But we can learn some useful things here, beginning with the fact that Jesus knew that eternal souls do, in fact, live forever in a very real place, in a fully conscious condition. The Old Testament scriptures speak of this, and Jesus confirms it is a solid reality, not mere legend or myth.

Where is the gospel?

The gospel teaches us we can't be good enough to earn our way into heaven, nor rich enough to pay for our own admission. All any of us can do is surrender to Christ and trust Him to save us from the enormous penalty our sin requires. That frees us from having to worry about whether our good deeds outweigh the bad, whether we have enough to offer, or if there's anything more we should be doing. It also means we don't need to resent others when they seem better off than we are, and enables us to treat others with the compassion Jesus has poured out upon us. It enables us to be content with some less-than-ideal present circumstances, knowing that we have far greater things to look forward to; and we can live with an attitude of deep thankfulness for all God has done for us even when going through a difficult situation. Saying "Yes!" to Jesus changes our eternal destiny, but it also transforms us in the here and now.

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Do I believe in heaven and hell? Why or why not? Can the Scriptures be believed about things like this? Do I need to fully understand the afterlife in order to accept it as true? Does it even matter? How is God calling me to think and to live differently? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Psalm 16:11; 17:15; 49:1-20; Matthew 22:32; Luke 23:39-43; John 14:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Luke 16:19-31
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word
translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-
for-thought perspective. (The New Living
Translation is particularly helpful with this
passage)

Try to summarize the passage in your
own words.

**Every verse of scripture points to the
gospel. Look for how this passage
points to Jesus and what He has done.**

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your
group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer
all of these as a group

**What is significant, surprising or
confusing from these verses?**

**What seems to be the main point of
this letter?**

**How does this portion of scripture
point to Jesus and the gospel?**

**What parts of this passage are
challenging to your current way of
thinking?**

**What did you discover or learn about
God and His character from this
passage?**

**What parts of this passage can you
relate to?**

**Look at one or two key words and
define them really clearly, then look at
them in context with that definition.
Does this change your understanding?**

**Why did God bring me to this scripture
today?**

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

**How is God calling you to obey, based
on this passage?**

or

What is your "I will" statement?
(Encourage everyone to steer clear of
"we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

**With whom are you going to share
what you have learned?**

(This is a critical part of growth that is
often overlooked. If we can share it with
someone else it means we really
understand it, it cements it in our own
minds, it makes us accountable to the
truth and it blesses the one who hears it.
Rom 10:17)

**Based on this passage, what can we
pray about and how should we pray?**