





**SINCE YOUR LOVED ONE'S DEATH**, you've probably starting thinking more about heaven, what it's like, and what happens when a person dies. Knowing the truth about heaven is a source of great hope.

Today's session will answer many questions about heaven and the afterlife. For example:

-  What is heaven like?
-  Should I communicate with my deceased loved one?
-  Are near-death experiences reliable descriptions of heaven?
-  And many more ...

## VIDEO OUTLINE

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you have while viewing the video.

## THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

Reunited (1 Corinthians 2:9)

It's wonderful (Matthew 6:9-10, Revelation 21:3-5)

Heaven described

*"We can endure the pain of this life because of the promise of life to come." —Hank Hanegraaff*

We'll see Jesus (2 Samuel 12:23)

Death will die (Revelation 7)

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE

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Heavenly bodies? (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Cremation?

Talking to the dead? (Deuteronomy 18:10b-12a)

Near-death experiences?

Reincarnation?

What if my loved one isn't in heaven? (2 Peter 3:9)

*"Your heart will never be the same, but it won't always be broken." –Dr. Joseph Stowell*

Do all religions lead to heaven? (John 14:6, Psalm 5:4)

**In this week's From Mourning to Joy exercises ...**

Cindy experienced a miracle moment from God, giving her hope and reassurance during a tough time. In this week's daily exercises, you'll find hope when you learn God's promises about heaven, eternal life, and being reunited with loved ones.

"This too shall pass, and a much better day is coming for you." –Dr. Joseph Stowell



# GOD'S FORGIVENESS: AN UNLIKELY SOURCE OF JOY AND COMFORT

In the midst of grief we turn to many things for comfort—food, friends, memorabilia, time alone. But we often overlook a source of joy and comfort: God's forgiveness.

Admitting your shortcomings and experiencing God's forgiveness spares you from an eternity of suffering and separation from God. That's why the Bible says forgiveness is a source of joy:

*"But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me." (Psalm 13:5 NLT)*

## HOW TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S FORGIVENESS

If you've never experienced God's forgiveness, we encourage you to pray the following prayer from your heart. If you do, your grief won't instantly lift, but you'll always have an unshakable source of comfort to lean on as you work through your grief.

*Dear God, I know I've done things that offend You. Thank you so much for sending Jesus to suffer and die on the cross in my place. Thank you for giving me a perfect standing in Your sight through His death. Please lead me and guide me. You're in charge. Show me what I should do in every area of my life. Amen.*

## THE JOYS OF FORGIVENESS

When things get tough, and they will, reflect on these truths about your forgiveness:

- ✍ God has no anger toward me for anything I've done wrong. He poured out His anger over my sin on Christ, who suffered and died for my sin, in my place. (1 John 2:2)
- ✍ God loves me enough that He sacrificed His own Son to meet my deepest need. This proves His love for me. (Romans 5:8)

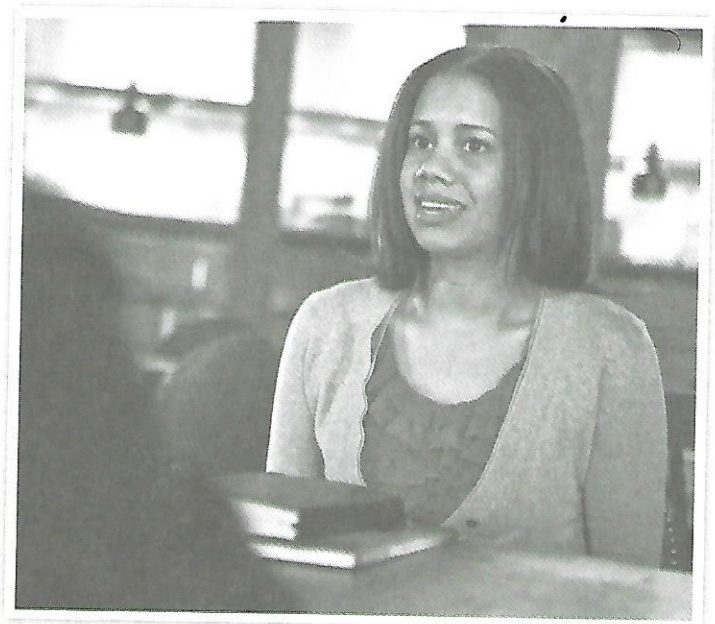
✍ God has spared me from unimaginable suffering and qualified me to experience eternal paradise. (Colossians 1:12-14)

## HOW TO COMFORT YOURSELF

Meditating on these truths won't change your immediate circumstances, but these truths can be a source of joy, happiness, and hope in the midst of your grief. Consider memorizing some of the Bible verses that support these truths so you can reflect on them anytime. Ask God to make you more and more aware of how much you are in need of His forgiveness and grace.

*"Christ died the death I should have died. That is the comfort of all comforts." –Phil Sasser*

*"Blessed [happy] is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed [happy] is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit." (Psalm 32:1-2)*





# FROM MOURNING TO JOY

ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMFORT FROM GOD'S WORD

## Session Twelve - Heaven



### CINDY: "I WILL SEE YOU SOON"

*"Earlier that day, David [my fiancé] had left a phone message on my voicemail, and it said, 'Hey beautiful. Just checking in to see how this day is going. I know this is going to be a long, hard day. I'm not going to call and bug you, because I know you've got a lot going on. But just know, Cindy, I love you. I am proud of you. And I will see you soon.' That was about 8 o'clock in the morning when he had left that message ..."*

God wants us to know that a person's death is not the end for that person. In this week's **From Mourning to Joy**, you'll receive a taste of what God has promised regarding life after death and heaven.

DAY  
1

### No more tears, suffering, or death

Our lives and our loved one's lives are chapters in the middle of a much larger story. And the conclusion of that story, God says, is awesome!

### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'"* (Revelation 21:4-5a)

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13)

1. What have you felt hopeless about?

2. What does Revelation 21:4-5a say is the conclusion of life's story (for people who have believed in Christ)?

3. What are the benefits of trusting God with your situation (see Romans 15:13)?

### CONSIDER THIS

*"There's a big difference between thinking about 'This is a bad chapter' and 'This is the last chapter.'"*

—Dr. Stephen Viars

Because of what Christ has done for you, you can grieve with hope.

## TALKING TO GOD

God, I'm glad this isn't the final chapter of my life or my loved one's life. Help me to take steps to learn more about what You've promised for this life and the next.

DAY  
2

**We'll see our loved ones again**

*"I know my daughter is in heaven and she's safe. I know I'm going to see my child again. The Bible promises me that."* –Ann

### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died."* (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 NLT)

1. God says if you are a believer in Christ, you are to grieve differently than everyone else. Why? What is the difference (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14)?
2. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14, what do Christians believe?
3. How might this verse help someone who believes Christians shouldn't be sorrowful over the death of a loved one?

## CONSIDER THIS

*"And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died ... everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life."*

–1 Corinthians 15:19–22 NLT

## TALKING TO GOD

God, I want to grieve like one who has hope: not an "I hope so" hope, but true, biblical assurance that this will come to pass.

DAY  
3

**How does anyone get into heaven?**

If God doesn't allow sin (anything we do that displeases Him) to reside in His presence, doesn't that disqualify all of us from getting into heaven?

### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you, evil people [people who have done wrong] are not welcome."* (Psalm 5:4)

*"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing."* (Habakkuk 1:13a)

*"And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ."* (Galatians 2:16b NLT)

1. According to Psalm 5:4, what kind of people are not welcome in heaven?
2. Why does God not allow sin to live in His presence (see Habakkuk 1:13a)?

*"We sorrow, but not like those who don't have hope."* –Dr. Stephen Viars



3. If God won't allow sinful people to reside in His presence, on what grounds do you think God will let you into heaven (see Galatians 2:16b)?

### CONSIDER THIS

No one will be granted access to heaven on his own merit, but ...

*"God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."* –2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT

*"When God saves us, He makes us new, instantly. When He looks at us, we are a hundred percent okay. We have Christ's righteousness."* –Susan Lutz

### TALKING TO GOD

God, in Jesus I can be freed from sin and live eternally in Your presence! Thank you! I know that I've done things that offend You. Thank you for sending Jesus to suffer and die on the cross in my place, to be condemned for my sake. Thank you for giving me a perfect standing in Your sight. Please lead me and guide me. You're in charge. Show me what I should do in every area of my life.

**DAY  
4**

#### The only path to heaven

Some people claim that all religions lead to heaven. Others say that everyone who is basically good, honest, and hardworking goes to heaven. What does God say?

#### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6)*

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)*

1. What have you believed in the past about who goes to heaven?

2. What does God say, according to John 14:6 and Acts 4:12?

3. How certain are you of your eternal destiny?\*

\* If you are not certain, read the article on page xii to learn more about how to place your faith in Jesus and secure your place in heaven.

### CONSIDER THIS

Heaven is a wonderful place. But the only way to spend eternity with God there is to believe in Jesus Christ. Please take time to consider this important topic. Your eternal destiny depends on it.

*"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved ... for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" –Romans 10:9, 13*

### TALKING TO GOD

God, I realize that getting into heaven is a choice, and it's not a choice of "where" I'm going, it's "Whom" I'm surrendering my life to. Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and that I need You desperately. I believe You died on the cross to pay my sin-debt to God and to enable me to live now and eternally in freedom and rest.

### IS MY LOVED ONE IN HEAVEN?

If you're concerned your loved one isn't in heaven, keep in mind that your loved one may have become a Christian without you knowing it. Simply coming to God in faith, believing Christ died on the

*"Our loved ones who died in Christ are in a place of total fulfillment." –Phil Sasser*

cross for you, saves you from sin. In some cases, you don't know for sure what your loved one believed or whether your loved one's beliefs changed prior to the death.

**DAY  
5**

### The wonders of heaven

Heaven is far better than anything you can imagine on earth. The best thing about heaven is that Jesus Christ will be there. It may be hard for you to imagine how glorious and wonderful that will be. You will be completely satisfied to the deepest levels of your soul in heaven with Jesus Christ.

#### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."* (Matthew 25:34b)

1. If you have given God control of your life, you are now His child, His heir. What is the inheritance that He promises you?
2. Describe a moment in your life that brought you great joy.
3. Describe a time when you saw something extraordinarily beautiful.
4. Name some people whom you love dearly.

5. Consider these wonderful moments and people, and be assured that the glories of heaven are multiplied far beyond all these put together. Take a moment to thank God.

#### CONSIDER THIS

*"Make no mistake about it: the thing that makes heaven heaven is the fact that God is there."*

—Anne Graham Lotz

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children."*

—Revelation 21:6b–7 NLT

#### TALKING TO GOD

Thank you, God, for providing this incredible inheritance for Your children! Please give me the strength to persevere until I get there.

#### CINDY: LOOKING BACK

*"I talked to David at 5:15 p.m. and at 5:30 he was killed. Later that night, I realized I had that message, and I pulled it up from my voicemail at work and listened to it again. It was amazing to hear the words:*

*'Hey beautiful. I'm not going to call you, but I am proud of you. And I'll see you soon.'"*

#### NEXT SESSION

Discover how to continue moving forward in your grief.

*"[In] heaven, our discovery of God is going to be an eternal adventure." —Joni Eareckson Tada*



# MY WEEKLY GRIEF WORK

## Session - Twelve




### PERSONAL CHECKUP - TRACK YOUR HEALING PROGRESS

Place a check in the box identifying how you're feeling. Insert words to explain why.

	REALLY BAD	OKAY	PRETTY GOOD	GREAT
EMOTIONALLY				
PHYSICALLY				
SPIRITUALLY				
RELATIONALLY				

### JOURNAL TOPICS - MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

Choose one or more ideas below, or choose your own topic. We encourage you to use a separate notebook for your weekly journaling.

-  How do thoughts of heaven help you endure daily difficulties?
-  What have you been taught to believe about the afterlife? Have these beliefs undergone any changes? If yes, how so?
-  Write about a miracle moment you've experienced.

### MOVING FORWARD - PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD HEALING

#### HOW TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Seeing your situation from an eternal perspective is a necessary part of learning to grieve with hope.

1. Read God's Word. Go back and read the Scriptures written out in Session 12's **From Mourning to Joy** (some are found in the "Consider this" sections too).
2. Write down which Scripture meant most to you this week and why.
3. Focus on God's Word. Reread the Scripture, underlining key truths. Meditate on these truths. (See the Session 8 My Weekly Grief Work, page 84, for direction on how to meditate on God's Word.)
4. Apply God's Word. Pray, asking God what truth can be applied to your situation and how you can live it out. Write down a possible application.