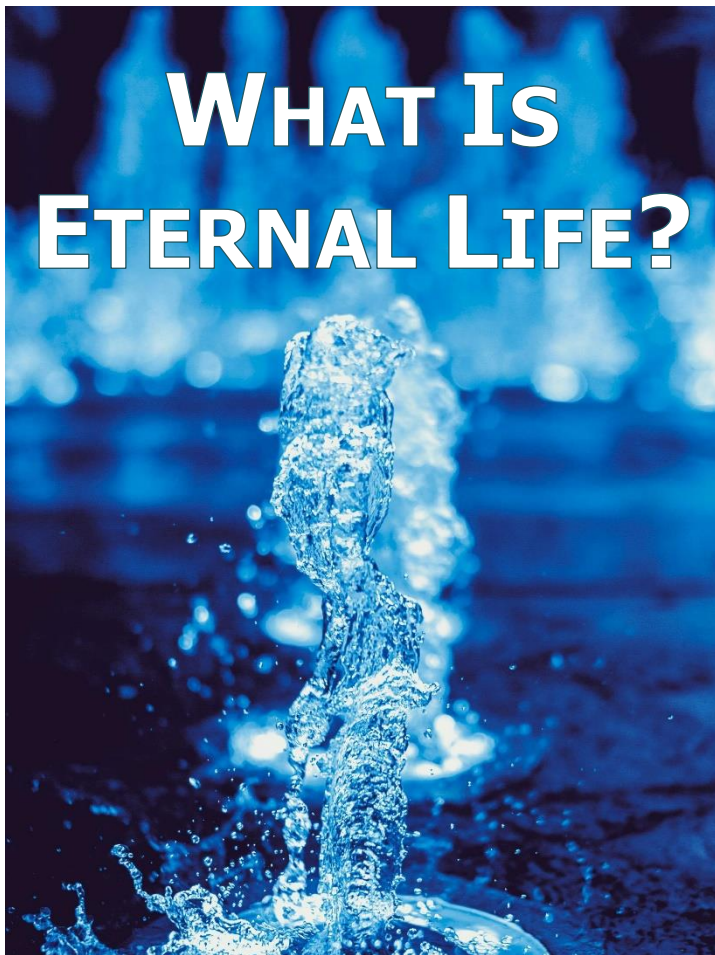


# WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?



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‘What Is Eternal Life?’  
by  
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# What Is Eternal Life?

## Why God Sent Jesus

John 3:16 says – *‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.’* God’s ultimate purpose in sending Jesus wasn’t to win us forgiveness for our sins, but to give us eternal life. That might seem surprising because we always emphasise the fact that Jesus died for our sins and it is right that we do so. But the reason He died for our sins was so that we could have eternal life. It wasn’t possible for us to have eternal life until the price for our sins had been paid.

## A Barrier

Sin stood like a barrier between us and eternal life. Isaiah 59:2 says – *‘But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.’* The sins of all people, including our own personal sins, stood in the way. That barrier had to be broken down so we could enter into eternal life. God is a holy God and cannot have sin in His presence. He is a just God and had to deal with sin – He couldn’t just brush it under the carpet and ignore it. But His love for us is so vast, that He longed to be able to enjoy a love relationship with us. It sounds like a catch 22. But God had a way.

He had to punish sin but didn’t want to punish us, so instead, He sent His own Son to earth to die in our place, suffering the punishment that we deserve. Justice has been done – sin has been dealt with finally once and for all and the barrier has been broken down forever. God has done everything that is needed

on His part, but we have a part to play as well. We have to receive what Jesus has done for us, repenting and receiving our forgiveness as we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. When we've done that, we can then enter into the end goal of Jesus coming to earth – eternal life.

## *What Is Eternal Life?*

Well you might think the answer to that question is obvious – it's living for ever. But this is something that is promised only to those who believe in Jesus, and everybody will live forever somewhere, either in heaven or hell. So there must be more to it. Look at the definition Jesus gave for 'eternal life' in John 17:3 – *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”* Now, if you haven't noticed that verse before, this will come as a surprise. Jesus said that eternal life isn't just about living forever, though obviously that is part of it. He said it is knowing God and Himself, Jesus. And it was Jesus who made it all possible. The reason He came to earth was so we might have eternal life.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus – *‘for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.’* The joy He could see before Him was you and me in a love relationship with Him and with God. It's what filled His heart with joy even as He suffered.

## *John the Baptist Prepared the Way*

The Bible tells us that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. He did it by preaching repentance to prepare people to be able to receive eternal life from Jesus. Luke 3:3 says – *‘He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of*

*repentance for remission of sins.’ John spoke almost exclusively about the need for repentance – the turning away from sin.*

## *Jesus Followed On*

Then Jesus started His ministry and He confirmed the need for repentance, but focused much more on eternal life. He said in John 12:49-50 – *“For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup> And I know that His command is everlasting life.”*

I have found eight instances in Scripture where Jesus spoke of repentance and nineteen where He talks about eternal life or everlasting life. In addition, He mentions life in the same context twenty-one times, totalling thirty times. The figures may not be completely accurate but the difference quite surprised me. However, it ties up completely with John 3:16 – *‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should ... have eternal life.’* Jesus came to preach eternal life and to make it possible. He talked about this much more than he talked about repentance because this was His end goal in coming and dying. Jesus did away with the barrier of sin once and for all, so we could enter into eternal life.

## *Knowing God and Jesus*

Remember, eternal life is knowing God and Jesus. Let me challenge you – do you know God? Do you know Jesus? You may know something about them but that isn’t the same as knowing them personally. In the Bible the word translated ‘know’ means not just having head knowledge about someone, but knowing them intimately. It says in Genesis 4:1 – *‘Adam knew Eve his wife;*

*and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.’ You can’t get more intimate than that!*

## ***Relationship Now***

Because Jesus died in our place, taking the punishment for our sins, suddenly a personal relationship with God and with Jesus was possible – eternal life had been established. Now we can know God and Jesus intimately and also come to understand how they see us and so discover who we really are.

And this relationship isn’t just for when we go to heaven – it’s for right now on earth! Jesus says in John 5:24 – *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”* Notice the present tense ‘has’. We can have eternal life right now – no waiting till we die.

## ***Where Are You?***

Eternal life is available to everyone. All sin was dealt with. But we do have to respond to the sacrifice Jesus made for us. If you’re not in relationship with Jesus then you can’t have eternal life. And you can’t be in relationship if you haven’t been born-again – made Jesus your Lord and Saviour. (To read about being born-again go to the end of this booklet.)

If you are born-again, you are in relationship with God your Father. It has been established for you. God is your Father and you are His loved child, no matter what you feel. But are you living in that relationship? A person may have chosen to have no contact with their earthly father, but the fact remains he is still their father – their blood relationship still exists even though the son or daughter refuses to live in the reality of it.

In the same way, as a born-again believer, you are in relationship with your heavenly Father regardless of how much you think about it or live by it. But God didn't send Jesus to die for you so you could have a distant relationship – He did it so you could have a close intimate relationship with Him which can benefit you in every way and bring both of you great pleasure. Psalm 149:4 says – *'For the LORD takes pleasure in his people.'* And remember, Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus – *'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.'* That is so wonderful.

So where are you in your relationship with God? Have you lost sight of it – simply forgotten about it? Or have you purposely put it out of your mind? Or are you aware of it, but don't know what it's about or how to live in it? Or maybe you are living in that close relationship and seeing the blessings that flow from it in your life. Wherever you are, there is more.

## *Go Deeper*

We won't fully experience everything about this relationship in this life. 1 Corinthians 13:12 says – *'Now I know in part, but then (when I go to heaven) I will know fully, even as I was also fully known.'* But when such a wonderful relationship is available to us here and now, why would we not want to experience more of it in this life and continue to go deeper and deeper into the love and blessings of our Father God.

The essence of any good relationship is communication and God wants to communicate with you. He wants to tell you how much He loves you; He wants to help you and guide you; He wants to listen to you and answer your questions; He wants to comfort you and encourage you. So how can we communicate with God? The answer is through the Bible and through the Holy Spirit.

## *Know God and Jesus through His Word*

The bible is the first and main way we can know God and Jesus. It is divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. It isn't a book about God written by men, it is a book written by God through men. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that – *'Every Scripture is God-breathed.'* We can trust it completely.

Not only that, but God is the Word. John 1:1 says – *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'* And John 1:14 then says – *'The Word became flesh and lived amongst us.'* Jesus is the Word too. When you read the Bible, you're not reading a dry ancient book – you're actually reading God and Jesus! This is something that's hard to get our heads round – we just have to believe it. We can never make the Bible too important. Hebrews 4:12 says – *'For the word of God is living and active.'*

As you read the Bible, expect to hear God speaking into your mind and your heart. It contains His full character, including His amazing love for you. It will show you who you are – not a mere human being, but a beloved child of God with His image and character and power inside you.

But you do have to believe it for it to impact your life. Hebrews 4:2 says – *'the word they heard didn't profit them, because it wasn't mixed with faith by those who heard.'* Make sure God's Word can profit you by choosing to believe it and by putting your faith in it. Then it will accomplish amazing things and bring you deeper and deeper into your eternal life relationship with God and with Jesus.

Don't let your Bible reading become simply something you think you ought to do. Ask God to speak to you as you start and be



alert to what He's saying. When a verse speaks to you, say it out loud. Romans 10:17 says – *'So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'* As you speak the Word aloud, you hear it and you write it deeper in your heart. Each time something from God's Word settles in your heart you are going deeper in your relationship with God – you are experiencing more of eternal life. And then determine to allow it to influence how you think, speak and live. Eternal life is exciting – enjoy it.

## *Know God and Jesus through the Holy Spirit*

When you are born-again, the Holy Spirit comes to live in you and will help you understand what you're reading in the Bible and will also speak to you directly. But remember that the Bible is the final authority on God's truth. So if you think the Holy Spirit is saying something to you, check whether it lines up with the Bible. If it doesn't, then it isn't the Holy Spirit, so just let it go.

(To understand more about the Holy Spirit and how He works in you, read my booklet 'Who is the Holy Spirit?' It will also explain how to be baptised in the Holy Spirit and so be able to enter far deeper into your relationship with God and Jesus.)

Be assured that, as a born-again believer, you can hear the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Jesus says in John 10:27-28 – *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give eternal life to them."* The question isn't 'Can I hear God?' because the answer is 'Yes.' The question is, are you recognising His voice and listening to it? The more you read the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to explain it and speak to you, the more you will know God and Jesus and that means the deeper you will go in your relationship, experiencing more and more of eternal life.

## *Your Eternal Life*

Once you have taken hold of eternal life, God wants you to live in it. Knowing God and Jesus will make your life here on earth so much more meaningful and exciting. It's so good that you don't have to wait till you get to heaven to experience it – it's available to you right now. Thank You Jesus.

Remember our opening verse in John 3:16 – *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.'* You are a 'whoever'. Take hold of eternal life and start enjoying your love relationship with God and with Jesus here and now.

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## *Being Born-Again*

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *'If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'* Say this prayer out loud and believe it in your heart – "Jesus, I declare that You are Lord and that God raised You from the dead to live forevermore. Thank You for dying for me personally. I receive my forgiveness and my salvation now. Thank You Jesus, my Lord and Saviour."

You are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. All your sins, past present and future, are forgiven and you have a new perfect spirit. And after this life is over, you'll live in love, peace and joy with your Father God for ever.

# *Life in Jesus*

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It seems obvious that eternal life is living for ever.  
So it's surprising to discover that Jesus says  
it is knowing Him and God.  
It's why Jesus came to die –  
so we could have a personal relationship with them.

And not just when we go to heaven,  
but here and now in this life.  
Sounds good? It is!



**Katherine Hilditch** has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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