

Digging Deeper

Everlasting Life

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For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

When asked to interpret this passage of scripture, most people will respond with something like, “It means that Jesus died so that we would be able to live with him forever in heaven when we die if we believe in him.” While this is true, perhaps there is more to it than simply the anticipation of a future event. Consider the following passage from the same book... [pay close attention to verse 3]:

¹ John 17:1-3 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.¹

Although the words everlasting and eternal are used interchangeably in various translations, verse three of the passage above adds another layer of meaning for us to explore. Check out this translation of this passage:

² [verse3] And this is the eternal life, namely, that they might be having an experiential knowledge of you, the only genuine God, and of Him whom you sent on a mission, Jesus Christ.²

While the general interpretation is correct in context of it being a future event, Jesus himself tells us that eternal, or everlasting life, actually begins with knowing and experiencing God personally, when you become Born Again. When we accept God into our lives and begin to explore his word on a regular

¹ The New King James Version (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson, p. Jn 17:1–3.

² Wuest, K.S. (1961) *The New Testament: an expanded translation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p. Jn 17:1–3.

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basis, we begin to see what God really wants for us as opposed to what we have been conditioned to accept in most cases. God wants nothing but the best for us! When he created us and the planet we live on, it was perfect, and everything we needed was provided for. God wants to bring us all back to that state, [dependence on Him] which is why he sent his Son as a way for our reconciliation. As we draw closer to God through his word, as we begin to experience how God works in our lives, we begin to see life from a new perspective, from God's perspective. We begin to see how God does provide for all of our needs as we begin to realize how much he treasures our relationship with him.

As this knowledge and relationship with God takes root in our hearts and minds, our life begins to change. The dependance on ourselves begins to diminish and our dependance on God begins to grow. This results in the stress of life, giving way to peace, thanksgiving, and joy which changes our relationships within our families, with other Christians, but most importantly it changes our relationship with God himself. We begin to experience life [our eternal life] the way God intended it to be! Our eternal life with God is not just in the future but in the here and now! The key to experiencing it is by drawing closer to God through the study of his word and through fellowship with other believers. When God created Adam and Eve, he walked and talked with them every day in the garden... he wants that same kind of relationship with all of us. For now, we do this Spirit to Spirit, but soon Face to Face for eternity, but only if you are, "Born Again!"

...“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.³

³ The New King James Version (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson, p. Jn 3:5–6.