



PREVIEW

The cliché phrase, "It's not life or death," is one that many of us have likely heard hundreds of times in our lives, as it essentially labels the decisions and circumstances of our lives as either important or not. However, is there a higher level of thinking that goes beyond our life here on Earth that should demand an even greater amount of importance and attention than life and death itself? According to John, one of Jesus' closest friends and followers, yes.

PRAISE

Have each student calculate their approximate life expectancy. Visit <https://www.blueprintincome.com/tools/life-expectancy-calculator-how-long-will-i-live/>.

PARABLE

It is absolutely normal for every human to contemplate the cause-and-effect nature of life and death in his or her future and in the future of their family and friends. From a young age and all throughout high school, there is often a concern that one might miss out on some of the experiences in life, including getting married, having children, and achieving success in various aspects of life. As one grows older, the healthy fear of ensuring that your family will survive and live comfortably if a tragic loss happens is often pushed to the forefront of one's priorities. In no way is anybody saying that life insurance, planning for the future, and desiring the benefits of life that God has designed for us are bad or wrong. However, as we will soon read in a few passages of scripture, there is a higher purpose and calling that we should prioritize above our temporary dwelling here on Earth.

It's Not Life Or *DEATH*

PRESENT

Lazarus, Martha's brother, and Jesus' close friend had just died unexpectedly from an illness, and Jesus was trying to provide Martha with some perspective. We know that a few verses later, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in one of the greatest miracles of His entire ministry. However, Martha did not know this at the time Jesus was consoling her, but He was trying to make her realize that His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8). We may not always understand why God allows some of our closest family to die and some of the harshest criminals to live, but we can trust that He holds it all together. Recently, this phrase has surfaced more and more throughout the locker rooms of sports teams from high school to the pros: "It's not life or death, it's much more important than that." While using this powerful statement on something as trivial as a sports game seems comical, there is an application that can be related to our topic today. Read John 3:16. God came as a baby, lived a human life, and died on the cross, not so we could just enjoy life here on Earth, but for something far more important: so we could be saved and experience eternal life with God in heaven.

PRACTICE

Every day that we can wake up and breath is a blessing from God, so while we are looking ahead to our future in heaven, we also have an opportunity and responsibility here on Earth. Read Isaiah 40:31. We should not just sit around for Jesus to return one day and take us up to heaven, but rather we should be actively waiting, sharing God's love and word without losing sight of our end goal. What are some ways that we can wait with expectation? (Being obedient to God and His word, sharing God's love and the truth of His word with every person we see, praying and seeking God for his direction, wisdom, purpose, and path for our lives). Let's make heaven crowded!

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PRAY

God, we thank You today for every blessing that You have provided us with in our lives, and we never want to take them for granted. But we also pray that You would help us to not be too focused on the experiences and blessings of this world that we lose sight of the greater home in heaven that You desire for us to dwell in one day.

PLUS

Find multiple ways this week to be active in your waiting. Write specific examples down that you were able to accomplish, and then share them during discussion time at the next P7 meeting!