



A FREE PRINTABLE CHRISTIAN GUIDE

What Happens When We Die?

Free Printable Christian Guide PDF

A gentle, Scripture-rooted guide to death, heaven, resurrection and the Christian hope of life with God.

For quiet reading, personal reflection or a conversation with someone you trust.

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01 | THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Death is not the end of hope

Christians do not all describe every detail of what happens after death in the same way. At the centre of Christian hope, however, is the conviction that God is faithful, Jesus has been raised, and death will not have the final word.

Jesus meets us in grief

The Bible does not treat sorrow as a failure of faith. When Jesus' friend Lazarus died, Jesus wept with those who mourned (John 11:32–36). Christian hope makes room for tears, questions and the ache of missing someone; it does not ask us to pretend that loss is painless.

The promise of Jesus

In John 11:25–26, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He speaks these words in the middle of a real bereavement, pointing beyond death to life grounded in him. Christians receive this as a promise of his presence and power, not a timetable that explains every mystery.

The resurrection of the dead

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul describes Jesus' resurrection as the first fruits of a future resurrection. The image is of a beginning that points towards a fuller harvest: Christian hope is not only that the soul survives, but that God will raise the dead and renew life. Paul admits that the transformed life to come is difficult to picture, so he uses images of a seed and a changed body rather than offering a technical blueprint.

READ TOGETHER • John 11:25–26 • 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 42–58

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02 | HEAVEN, RESURRECTION & ETERNITY

Life held in God's care

The Bible's pictures of what is to come are rich and varied. They invite trust in God's goodness while leaving room for humility about details that faithful Christians interpret differently.

Heaven and the presence of God

Christians often use “heaven” to speak of life with God and the hope of being welcomed into God's care. Scripture also points beyond an unseen heaven to a renewed creation: Revelation 21:1–5 pictures a new heaven and a new earth, with God dwelling among people and wiping away every tear. This vision centres on God's nearness, the healing of creation and the end of death and mourning.

What about the time between death and resurrection?

Christians agree that God remains faithful to the dead and that resurrection is part of the final hope. Traditions differ on how to describe the intermediate state before the resurrection: many understand believers to be consciously with Christ, while others emphasise that the dead rest in God's keeping until they are raised. The Bible offers passages that Christians read in different ways, so this guide does not present one account of that interval as settled for everyone.

Eternal life is life with God

In the New Testament, eternal life is more than endless duration. Jesus describes knowing God (John 17:3), and the letters speak of a future life made whole in God's presence. Romans 8:38–39 assures readers that neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Christians take this as deep assurance of God's love, not a claim that we can map every person's story or answer every question about the afterlife.

READ TOGETHER • 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 • Revelation 21:1–5 • Romans 8:38–39

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03 | QUESTIONS & REFLECTION

Questions we may carry

Will I see someone I love again?

Christians hope for a future gathered into God's renewed life, and Scripture speaks of reunion and comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). We cannot give a personal timetable or describe every detail with certainty. It is all right to hold this hope gently while grieving honestly.

Does grief mean I lack faith?

No. Grief is a human response to love and loss. Jesus wept, and Paul encouraged Christians to grieve without being without hope (John 11:35; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). Faith and sorrow can be present together.

What if I still have questions or feel afraid?

You do not need to force certainty or carry fear alone. The Psalms include honest questions, and Christian communities can make space for careful conversation. Consider speaking with a trusted pastor, chaplain, counsellor or someone who can listen with kindness, especially if grief feels overwhelming.

Key terms

RESURRECTION • God's raising of the dead to transformed life, central to Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15.

ETERNAL LIFE • Life in relationship with God, begun in the present and hoped for in fullness to come.

NEW CREATION • The biblical hope that God will renew creation and dwell with people (Revelation 21:1–5).

A moment to reflect

Which words or images of hope in these passages speak to you today? What question would you like to bring to God, a trusted friend or your faith community? You may write a few words, sit quietly, or return to these passages another time.

A gentle closing thought: Christian hope rests not in having every answer, but in the love and faithfulness of God. As Romans 8:38–39 puts it, nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. May you find room for both honest grief and a hope that is held with tenderness.

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