

CAN I ASK THAT? | FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 28 | EASTER 5

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "IS THERE MORE TO LIFE THAN DYING AND GOING TO HEAVEN?"

OPENING PRAYER

Praise you God for your grace that saves us! Thank you for raising us from the dead along with Christ and for seating us with him in heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:5-6 NLT) You created each of us as a unique work of art, designed to fulfill your purposes. Therefore, keep us connected, as branches to the vine, to accomplish Jesus' good work in the world. In Jesus' kind and gracious name we pray, Amen.

CONNECTING QUESTION

Jewish tradition has a phrase for living well: "L'Chaim – to life!" The phrase is not to a good life, a healthy life, or even a long life. It is simply to life, recognizing that life is indeed good and precious and should always be celebrated and savored. ("Live Like You Were Dying Study") How could you personalize L'Chaim in your life, recognizing it is good and precious, and you should celebrate and savor it?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Aloud & Meditate on God's Word: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 15:1-8

WATCH VIDEO

Video Presenter: Tara Wolf, Discipleship Ministries Executive Director

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Paul divides your life into two periods. How is the first period described (verses 1-3)? What characterizes your new life (verses 4-10)? What questions does this passage raise for you?
2. Based on the Ephesians passage, why did God save you? What is the role of "good works" as you follow Jesus? "Works play no part at all in securing salvation. But afterwards Christians will prove their faith by their works." (Skevington A. Wood – Expositor's Bible Commentary) (Also see Matthew 5:13-16; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26)
3. Thank God you have heaven to look forward to! Read the following to discover how God wants you to live while you are still on earth. Galatians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:1-4, 12-14; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 John 4:7-12. What will the impact be if you live this way?

4. List what you learn about good works and bearing fruit from John 15:1-8. What is the Father's role? What is Jesus responsible for? What is your "job?"

5. What do you think Jesus means when he says, "apart from me you can do nothing." (verse 5)? Are you staying closely attached to Christ? Are you receiving the nourishment and life the vine offers? Talk about ways you can abide more closely in Jesus.

6. What kind of fruit are you to bear? (Also see Galatians 5:22-24; 2 Peter 1:5-8.) Discuss different kinds of fruit that you have seen in your life...in another's life. What was the result?

MORE TO LIVING THAN DYING

"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." – Romans 14:17

"The point of the resurrection...is that the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die...What you do with your body in the present matters because God has a great future in store for it...What you do in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself—will last into God's future. They are part of what we may call building for God's kingdom." (N.T. Wright)

What everyday activities do you engage in that could help build God's kingdom?

Watch the Bible Project "Heaven and Earth" video online and see how God wants to use you in his world.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Jeremiah 17:7-8; Matthew 7:15-20; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for bringing God's Kingdom to us and for making us citizens of heaven. May we abide in you while we are on this earth and trust that your life flows through us, producing spiritual fruit that glorifies the Father. Empower us, Holy Spirit, to live active lives of faith as we follow Jesus – through worship, serving, and walking in good works. In your name, and all for God's glory we pray, Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, you are the heavenly husbandman. And Christ is the heavenly Vine. And I am a heavenly branch, partaker of his heavenly life, to bear his heavenly fruit. Father, let the power of his life so fill me that I may ever bear more fruit, to the glory of your name. (Andrew Murray) Amen.

Scan to Access LG videos

