

G R O W

Get focused, Read, Observation, Worship

Eternal Life – John 3:16

If you had enough money to retire right now and to be able to do anything you want, what would you do? How would you fill your days? For some, they would travel, others would fill their days with their hobbies, others would volunteer. Do you think your answer to this question reveals anything about your values? What about your faith? For many, when they hear “eternal life,” they think of life after death. But is this all that is promised in John 3:16? Or is eternal life also about our current lives?

GET FOCUSED

If you’ve ever had to re-read something because your mind was elsewhere, you know how challenging maintaining focus can be. Our time in the Bible is not just for recreation; it is for growth. So, make the most of your time in the scripture by focusing your heart and mind. Take a few moments to silence all distractions without and within.

READ

Something amazing takes place when we read the Bible: we hear the voice of God. While the Bible you’re reading is the work of human translators, who work to take ancient words and express them in modern language, you will still hear God’s voice in the words. The scriptures are not just human words, in their original form or in translation; they are God’s Words, so take a few moments to read our focus text, John 3:16.

OBSERVATION (COMB through the text)

In addition to reading our main verse, read the verses around it to understand the **context**, to understand how it fits within the larger message. This famous verse is found within a conversation Jesus has with a religious leader about being born again, judgment, believe, and eternal life. It is necessary for everyone to be born again to be a part of the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3). It is necessary because we are all under judgment and condemnation because of our sin (Jn. 3:18). And the only way that we can be born again is to believe in Jesus as the sacrifice for sin (Jn 3:14ff).

Now, let’s **observe** the key words and phrases, what stands out to you? What words are important to understanding the message? Some key words/phrases are: God loved the world, only Son, believes in Him, perish, and eternal life.

Next we want to study these words and phrase to understand their **meaning**. There are many tools that help us understand meaning: study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and more. One free

online resource is net.bible.org; it's an online study Bible and more.

It's important for us to understand that we are accountable to God. Our sin may be seen in how we mistreat others, but ultimately, we are under judgment and condemnation because we sin against God. Colossians 2:21 makes it clear that all are alienated from God because in our sin we are actually hostile towards God. And because of this condemned state, we perish. But is this perishing just in eternity or is now as well? John 3:18 states that we are condemned already; we are currently estranged from God. So, our lives are not what they should be, and we are actually missing out. We are dead in our sin (Eph. 2:1); we may be drawing breath and physically alive, but we are actually dead and now living.

But God has provided us a way to escape this perishing and to find life. Even though we rebelled against God and were hostile towards Him, He still loves us. God would be perfectly just to condemn every single person, to let us all perish in our sin. But God is full of love, grace, and mercy. And Jesus comes to do what we cannot do for ourselves, to satisfy the penalty of sin.

And when we believe in Him, we find eternal life. "Believe" means to trust completely. It's not enough to just mentally or intellectually know something is true; we must trust and give our lives to Him. They understood this word to mean to lean all your weight on something for support. Those that say that religion is a crutch are not wrong. To believe in something or someone means that you lean on that person for support, to hold you up. To believe means to fully lean as well, to give yourself completely. And when we do this with Jesus, we find eternal life.

Eternal life does speak to life after death. Jesus talks about the final judgment in Matthew 25, and in verse 46, he states that some will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous go into eternal life. But it's important to understand that eternal life is also right now (Jn. 5:24). The Lord wants us to know the fullness of life right now (Jn. 10:10). Salvation is not just about escaping Hell, but it is about knowing and walking with God (Jn. 17:3). As good and pleasing as some earthly things are, knowing God and living for Him is the best life. Those that walk with God truly know what life is all about. It's not about comfort, luxury, or personal gain; it's all about Him.

So, what's the **bottom-line**, how would you sum all this up? We could say, "I can know the fullness of life through Jesus," or "God has provided us a way to escape the penalty of sin and to find life."

WORSHIP

To grow, we must end with worship, where we consider how to live all this out. What we worship is more clearly seen in how we live than what we sing. So, take a few moments to start meditating on what this scripture means for your life. God wants us to know that we have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13), so if you've never repented and believed in Jesus (Mk. 1:15), now is the time to trust Him and give Him your life. For those that know Him and savior and lord, can know the assurance of eternal life. God also calls us to "sow" to the Spirit so that we can "reap" eternal life (Gal. 6:8). We must practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, worship, fellowship, missions, etc. so that we can grow in faith and sensitivity to the Spirit. The more we're sensitive the Spirit's leading, the more we experience eternal life. So, consider what you need to do to sow to the Spirit and become more sensitive to His leading. And continue to meditate on this truth to grow.