

Eternal life

By [Steve Pankey](#)

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"And this is eternal life, to know the Father and his only Son Jesus Christ."

In the 2000 years since Jesus walked the earth the details around eternal life seem to have grown. Truth be told, the imaginations of artists, writers, poets, and theologians have created a bit of a mess for those of us in the trenches of everyday ministry. The question asked of Jesus about the woman married to seven brothers seems tame compared to the many ways in which our modern conceptions of heaven and hell have become convoluted.

How old will I be?
Will that kid who picked on me in middle school be there?
Does Alabama always win in heaven?
Does Alabama always lose in heaven?
Will I have my hair back?
Will I catch the big one?
Will my ex still bother me there?

It is really hard for us not to think of heaven in terms of this mortal life because this mortal life is all we know. So we picture pearly gates, mansions, rivers, and trees. We picture angels playing harps as we walk around in white robes thinking lofty thoughts and, at least occasionally, praising God. We think we have a list of questions to ask, things like: why didn't you cure cancer, why didn't you stop the tornadoes, why'd you take my mother/father/sister/brother so young, etc.

Jesus talked a lot about the Kingdom. He talked some about eternal life. He talked very sparingly about heaven. For all the speculation over the last 2000 years, it has to be said that Jesus' description, nay, definition of eternal life in the High Priestly Prayer should be sufficient. Eternal life is knowing God the Father and God the Son. Sure, it is a little weak in the pneumatology, but still, knowing God is a sufficient description of eternal life. The other details, sights, sounds, smells, or Will Ferrell movies are insignificant in the light of God's grace and love.

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