

S T U D Y G U I D E



FACING

the LAST

ENEMY

Death and the Christian

GUY PRENTISS WATERS

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Death and the Christian

Guy Prentiss Waters



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Printed in China.

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Introduction

We all have questions about death, but to answer these questions, we need to go to Scripture. There we can find truth about death and dying, truth that we can stake our lives on. In this teaching series, Guy Waters provides sound, practical, and biblical guidance to give us a better grasp on Scripture’s testimony about death and dying, which in turn can help us—and help us help others—to face the last enemy.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that is intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Facing the Last Enemy* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 14-Week Plan	Standard 12-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1 & 2	1-3
2	1	2	3 & 4	4-6
3	2	3	5 & 6	7-9
4	3	4	7 & 8	10-12
5	4	5	9 & 10	
6	5	6	11 & 12	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11	12		
13	12			
14	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

What Is Death?

Five Foundational Principles

INTRODUCTION

Every human being, at one time or another, has questions about death, but Scripture is the only place where we can turn for good answers to those questions. Apart from Scripture, we cannot even define death. In this lesson, Dr. Waters examines why the subject of death is largely ignored in the world and sometimes even in the church before giving a preliminary sketch of what death is from Genesis 1–3.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify the challenges that Christians face in thinking seriously about death
- Appreciate how the Word of God immediately addresses the sobering reality of death
- Outline five defining features of death as found in Genesis 1–3

KEY IDEAS

- Thinking seriously about death and dying does not come easily to us in the twenty-first century because of developments both inside and outside the church.
- God made a world that is teeming with life with the potential to produce more life, and it was all “very good” (Gen. 1:31).
- Death was not a part of God’s very good creation, but death entered the world through sin and is sin’s universal and cosmic penalty.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study about death? What do you hope to accomplish?
- What questions or uncertainties do you struggle with the most about death and dying?

Scripture Reading

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” . . . Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”

—Gen. 2:15–17; 3:1–4

- How would you characterize the serpent’s manner of tempting Eve?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Challenges Inside and Out

0:00–10:05

- How does culture distract and distance us from serious reflection about death?
- How can the church also distract and distance us from serious reflection about death?

Death and Genesis 1–3

10:05–24:13

- How does the opening phrase of Genesis, “In the beginning,” inform how we understand death?
- How did God make man?
- What are two defining features of death as the penalty for sin?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What do you consider to be the most problematic trends in culture and the church that take us away from serious reflection about death and why?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss what questions about death they hope to have answered by this teaching series and why those questions are important to them.

- Why is it important to affirm that death is the penalty for sin?

If you are in a group, have the members connect how affirming that death is the penalty for sin helps someone understand what Jesus Christ has done in the gospel.

- Which of the five basic truths about death from Genesis 1–3 stuck out to you the most in driving home the unnaturalness of death or the grievousness of sin?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why it is significant that death is so central in the opening chapters of Genesis, yet people attempt to ignore and suppress its reality. Ask: How does God provide an answer to death?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for being the one living and true God through whom all things exist.
- Confess ways that you are driven to distraction when it comes to the serious matters of this life.

- Thank God for the truthfulness of His Word concerning the nature of death.
- Ask God to equip you with biblical truth, the encouragement of the Spirit, and confidence in Christ as you continue this study on the last enemy.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which of the following was *not* named as a cultural influence that takes us from away from seriously reflecting on death?
 - a. Distance of loved ones at death
 - b. Distraction from entertainment
 - c. Glorification of violence
 - d. New ways of mourning
2. Classic hymns are some of the most popular elements of funerals today.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Which of the following can be understood as paralleling one another in culture and in the church as similar in taking us away from seriously reflecting on death?
 - a. Media distraction and worship as entertainment
 - b. Distancing experience of the death of loved ones and consumeristic church models
 - c. Distancing experience of the death of loved ones and separation in the church
 - d. Both a and c
4. When is the first time that death is spoken of in the Bible?
 - a. Genesis 1 with the creation of man and woman
 - b. Genesis 2 with Adam's call to guard and keep the garden
 - c. Genesis 2 with the prohibition of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - d. Genesis 3 with Adam's eating the forbidden fruit and being questioned by God
5. Genesis teaches us that death cannot be explained away as natural.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Which of the following passages was connected to the cosmic nature of death?
 - a. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
 - b. "Sin came into the world through one man" (Rom. 5:12).
 - c. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).
 - d. "The whole creation has been groaning" (Rom. 8:22).

Answer Key—What Is Death?

Five Foundational Principles

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- How would you characterize the serpent's manner of tempting Eve?

God plainly told Adam not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, or else death would result. The serpent's speech is not plain but deceptive, intentionally twisting God's words to suggest that He had restricted all the trees of the garden for food. Moving beyond suggestive deception, the serpent outright lies and contradicts what God had said when telling Eve, "You will not surely die."

During the Video

Challenges Inside and Out

- How does culture distract and distance us from serious reflection about death?
In terms of popular culture, the amount of entertainment on offer indicates that we live in a culture of distraction. The thought of death can seem unbearable, so rather than learning to reflect on it, we are trained to distract ourselves from it. Society in general distances us from death as well. Relatively few young people have direct experience with death because, unlike in years past, many elderly family members die away from the home.
- How can the church also distract and distance us from serious reflection about death?

Along with the culture, the church can also distract and distance us from the reality of death. The church has at times treated attendees like consumers, and this has contributed to a consumer mentality among attendees, so churches are reluctant to bring up grim realities such as death, lest the "consumer" take his or her business somewhere else. Some churches have also embraced entertainment-based worship, which parallels our culture of distraction, and the way that churches separate people by ages and stages of life means that younger Christians do not feel the weight of death in a congregation or learn from older saints as they

faithfully walk through such pain.

Death and Genesis 1–3

- How does the opening phrase of Genesis, “In the beginning,” inform how we understand death?

The very first words of the Bible are “in the beginning,” and the word that immediately follows that phrase is “God.” Before anything in our world existed, God existed. There was never a time when He did not exist; nor is there a time when He will cease to exist. There is no death in God, and He even created all things out of nothing; He is a God who gives life.

- How did God make man?

God made man after His own image, both male and female, and called them to be fruitful and multiply. The living God created a world teeming with life with the potential to produce more life. Furthermore, God created man in two stages. First, God formed the man’s body out of the dust of the ground, and then God breathed into him the breath of life, making man body and soul.

- What are two defining features of death as the penalty for sin?

One of the undeniable empirical truths of this life is that all people die. When Adam sinned, he brought death into the world as sin’s penalty, and in Adam, all have sinned. Death is then universal, and more than this, it is cosmic. Adam’s sin did not affect humans alone. God also pronounced a curse on the ground, subjecting creation to futility and the bondage of corruption (see Rom. 8:20–21).

After the Video

- What do you consider to be the most problematic trends in culture and the church that take us away from serious reflection about death and why?

In many ways, we can be saddened that trends emerge in the church that would take Christians away from sober reflection on death and dying, especially with Christ’s death and resurrection at the heart of our faith. Whether it is consumerism, entertainment-driven worship, or separation of people within congregations, there are issues that need to be addressed. But there are also larger cultural influences, and answers to this question require some critical thought to identify what problems loom larger.

- Why is it important to affirm that death is the penalty for sin?

There are many reasons why it is important to affirm that death is the penalty for sin. Not only is this true, but it is integral for a proper understanding of the gospel. In this lecture, Dr. Waters emphasized that the alternative to affirming that death is the penalty for sin is the belief that death is natural, that creatures die because that’s just the way things are. Yet death is not natural, and it was not part of God’s very good creation.

- Which of the five basic truths about death from Genesis 1–3 stuck out to you the most in driving home the unnaturalness of death or the grievousness of sin?

The five basic truths about death from Genesis 1–3 related to who God is and the liveliness of His creation, God’s creation of man as body and soul, death as sin’s penalty, the universal nature of death, and the cosmic nature of death. The answers to this question, which will vary, should weigh these five basic truths in terms of the unnaturalness of death and the grievousness of sin.

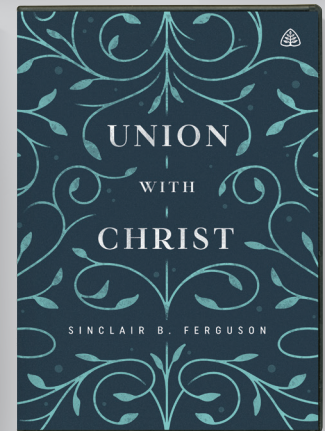
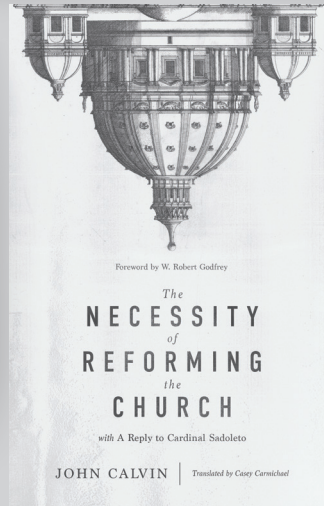
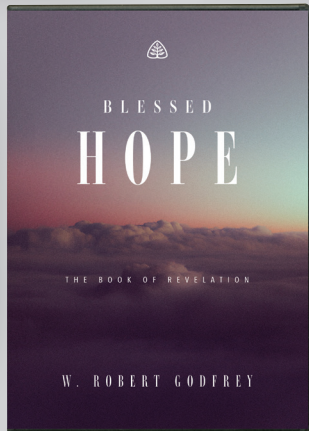
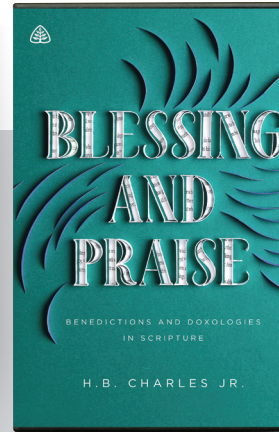
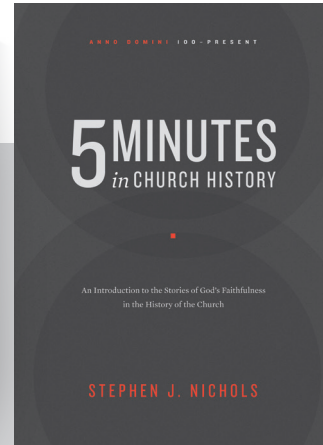
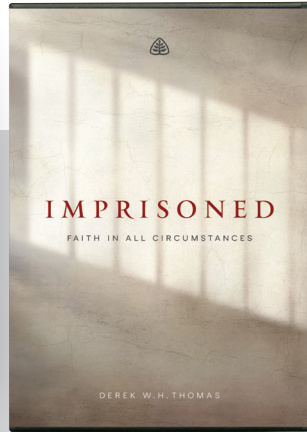
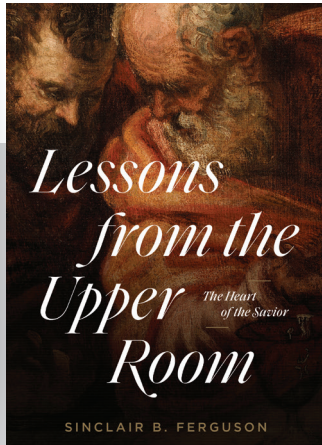
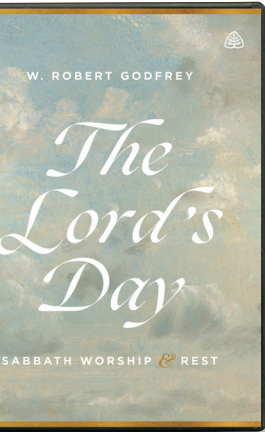
REVIEW QUIZ

1. **C.**
Though Dr. Waters did mention our culture’s love for and glorification of violence, it is ironic how our culture suppresses the reality of death. On the one hand, our culture distances us from experience with death because our loved ones no longer die at home, as was once customary; entertainment keeps us distracted from ultimate realities; and people cope with death in new ways, as seen in trends at funeral and memorial ceremonies. On the other hand, our culture glories in violence, which should bring the reality of death more to mind, though perhaps it trivializes it.
2. **B.**
Dr. Waters noted a recent survey that documented the most popular songs at funerals. These songs were well-known secular songs. No classic hymns made the top ten of this survey’s list.
3. **D.**
It is not surprising to find that some of the things that distract and distance people from death in our culture are paralleled by trends in the church. Just as there seem to be endless forms of entertainment to distract us in the culture, the church has embraced entertainment, which changes the character of our worship. Likewise, the distancing of loved ones at the end of their lives is paralleled by the separation of people in churches by their ages and stages of life.
4. **C.**
Adam knew that death was the penalty for sin before he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God had warned Adam, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16–17).
5. **A.**
When one understands that death is the penalty for sin, it cannot be explained away as natural or just the way things are. Genesis 1 especially wars against this view of death and dying. The living God created a living creation that itself could produce life. There is no hint of death in Genesis 1, and God saw that His creation was not just “good” but “very good.”

6. D.

These passages can be connected to the basic truths of Genesis 1–3 concerning death because death is universal in scope and the wages of sin, and we all have sinned in Adam. The passage from Romans 8 in particular was quoted to connect the cosmic nature of death; death as the wages of sin has affected not only humankind but all creation.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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