

# one groups

*Conversation Guide*

THE FINAL WORDS  
OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

Last  
Words



**BRENTVIEW**

*Est. 1962*



## SUGGESTED MEETING FLOW

Total Meeting Time: 1hr 45mins (*Times included below as an example*)

Time	Activity	Purpose
<b>20 Mins</b> 6pm - 6:20pm	Hang out, serve food, settle kids in [if relevant]	Enjoy time together!
<b>5 Mins</b> 6:20pm - 6:25pm	While still eating, gather together. Open with a brief welcome from the One Group Leader and spend time opening in prayer. <i>[If anyone is new, make sure everyone says their name, etc.]</i>	An important transition. Prayer and choosing an intentional posture to step into the “formal” part of the meeting is going to make the time meaningful.
<b>10 Mins</b> 6:25pm - 6:35pm	Question for conversation: Who is someone that had a huge influence on you as a kid? Why?	This helps us to remember the value of having fun together!
<b>35 Mins</b> 6:35pm - 7:10pm	Sermon-Based Conversation <i>See Guide Below</i>	Each week we will explore core ideas from the previous sermon.
<b>20 Mins</b> 7:10pm - 7:30pm	The Prayer Practice of Examen (see guide)  Pray together: Invite one or two people to pray over what was named in the discussion, for the group as a whole, and for the broader Brentview family.	This helps us set a tone for our group. We are stepping into brave spaces of authenticity together.  Prayer is a key element to what makes a One Group more than a socializing event.
<b>15 Mins</b> 7:30pm - 7:45pm	Hang out, eat left over food and/or dessert. Make sure to help with clean-up!	Fun matters. Enjoy time together.



## SERMON-BASED CONVERSATION & FORMATION

### Last Words #2 - Paradise

#### Briefly Debrief the Spiritual Practice (5 mins)

Take a brief moment to allow people to share about their experiences with the previous week's practice. If you didn't engage, no reason to feel bad. This is an optional practice for those wanting something to incorporate into their devotional lives each week.

#### Review (5 mins)

Take a moment to remember the main ideas from the message. Use the notes as a refresher.

**Main Idea:** "Live in "paradise" each day. Don't waste it away."

- **Summary:** The kingdom of God was launched into the world by Jesus. Although it isn't fully present—we live in the "already but not yet"—God's realm of reality overlaps with our broken reality. Paradise, which is a word that connects to the idea of the Garden of Eden, is one of the ways ancient Jewish people thought about the restful experience with God before the resurrection on the last day. The Bible calls this "heaven" which is where followers of Jesus go after death. This is "life after death." But—and this is important!—the Scriptures teach that our ultimate hope is "**life after** life after death" when Jesus will return to judge and heal this world (to make it right) and to resurrect followers of Jesus in restored physical bodies: just like Jesus. While we wait for "heaven" to come to earth fully, each day we can notice signs of "Paradise" when we are "with Jesus" in relationship. Mundane things can reveal "Paradise" each day.

**\*\*\*As a reminder, here's what the "afterlife" looks like according to the Bible\*\*\***

Life → Death → "paradise" (heaven) → Restored Creation

return of Jesus / physical resurrection of humans (body/  
spirit reunited, for those who previously died) / our world  
restored for eternity / death and evil destroyed forever /  
God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, forever!

(Further study, see: Romans 8:18-28, Revelation 21, 1 Corinthians 15)

**Sub Points (Live in "paradise" each day. Don't waste it away.)**

- *Jesus shows us that paradise is anywhere he is (See Luke 23 and John 17:3)*
- *Eternal life is a relationship ("with me") that begins before you die (See Colossians 1:10-14)*
  - **"The good news is that by trusting Jesus you can live now in the kingdom of God. That is what is called eternal life. It helps sometimes for folks to instead of talking about eternal life to talk about 'eternal living.' Eternal living is for now. ... So a first step in eternal living is to begin to trust the things that Jesus said, and finding the reality of Christ and his kingdom in our lives where we are... Eternal living ... is being caught up in the life that Jesus is now living on earth. That's salvation." (Dallas Willard, *Eternal Living*, <https://youtu.be/AtJaB7Eh-0>)**
- *Life in Paradise is possible when we open our eyes. (See 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)*

**Application: Take home question.**

- *How would my life change if I practiced living in Paradise?*
- **"We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed." (Brother Lawrence, *Practicing the Presence of God*)**

## Read the Scriptures Together (10 mins)

Read each passage aloud as a group in a posture of prayer. Then, read them twice more. ***As you hear the passages, notice a word or phrase that makes an impact on you.***

Above his head was a notice of the formal charge against him. It read “This is the king of the Jews.” One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus insulted him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” Responding, the other criminal spoke harshly to him, “Don’t you fear God, seeing that you’ve also been sentenced to die?”

We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.” **(Luke 23:38-43, Common English Bible)**

This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent.  
**(John 17:3, Common English Bible)**

10 We’re praying this so that you can live lives that are worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way: by producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; 11 by being strengthened through his glorious might so that you endure everything and have patience; 12 and by giving thanks with joy to the Father.

He made it so you could take part in the inheritance, in light granted to God’s holy people. 13 He rescued us from the control of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. 14 He set us free through the Son and forgave our sins.  
**(Colossians 1:10-14, Common English Bible)**

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.  
**(2 Corinthians 4:16-18, New International Version)**

## Conversation (15 mins)

(It’s okay if you only make it through one or two of these questions. The point is that we want to have spiritual conversations that both challenge and invite us to follow Jesus, seek the Spirit, and experience the Father’s compassion.)

**#1** Invite a couple of people to share about a word, phrase, or idea that made an impact on them. What might God be inviting you to notice about your own life, in light of this?

**#2** Watch this video on YouTube (“Eternal Living”): [https://youtu.be/AtJaB7\\_Eh-0](https://youtu.be/AtJaB7_Eh-0). Why do you think that Dallas Willard finds it helpful to talk about “eternal living?”

**#3** Watch this video on YouTube (“Happy Students of Jesus”): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoLXICPesDc>  
How would your life change if you practiced living in Paradise?

**#4** What do you sense Jesus is inviting you to consider when it comes to our conversation so far? (In our prayer time, we will have a chance to listen to God even more.)

## **The Practice of Examen and Prayer (20 mins)**

Take 5 mins of silence together. Reflect on the past several days and/or week.

- \* Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you in the silence, as you reflect back on your week.
- \* Offer gratitude to Jesus for whatever has brought you joy recently. Can you think of 3 things you are grateful for in this moment?
- \* Review the past week. What has been “life-draining?” What has been “life-giving?”
- \* Ask Jesus to help you see him at work in the highs and lows you encounter.

Helpful Things to Note:

- \* *Life-giving: I sense that God has been at work in my family....*
- \* *Life-draining: I have a friend at work who just lost her husband....)*
- \* A solid group response when real needs arise: “How can we help?”

### **Dialogue**

What is one thing Jesus is inviting you to notice based on our conversation today?  
Is there a “life-draining” or “life-giving” area of your life that you’d like to share with the group?

*Remember: “How can we help?” is a great question when appropriate.*

### **Pray Together**

Invite one or two people to pray over what was named in the discussion, for the group as a whole, and for the broader Brentview family.

## TAKE-HOME FORMATION EXERCISE

Meditate on the following passage. Read it slowly and prayerfully.  
Notice if God brings anything to mind.

***11 Although we are still alive, you see, we are always being given over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal humanity. 12 So this is how it is: death is at work in us – but life in you!***

***13 We have the same spirit of faith as you see in what is written, ‘I believed, and so I spoke.’ We too believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the God who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us with Jesus and present us with you. 15 It’s all because of you, you see! The aim is that, as grace abounds through the thanksgiving of more and more people, it will overflow to God’s glory.***

***16 For this reason we don’t lose heart. Even if our outer humanity is decaying, our inner humanity is being renewed day by day. 17 This slight momentary trouble of ours is working to produce a weight of glory, passing and surpassing everything, lasting for ever; 18 for we don’t look at the things that can be seen, but at the things that can’t be seen. After all, the things you can see are here today and gone tomorrow; but the things you can’t see are everlasting.***

### **2 Corinthians 4:11-18**

*Kingdom New Testament (New Testament for Everyone)*

#### ***Prompts for Reflection:***

What phrase in the passage makes an immediate impact on you?  
Meditate on this phrase with Jesus.

What does it mean to “look ... at the things that can’t be seen?”  
How does this connect to the idea that heaven is all around us?

What is God inviting you to notice about your life? Pray and journal about this.

[Space for Journaling and/or Notes]

## WHERE ARE WE IN THE CURRENT GROUPS RHYTHM?

- Summer Quarter: this is a season of rest for our groups.
- At the start of each quarter, we all gather at the church for a Groups Launch Party!
- Each quarter is about 11 weeks long
- Each Group meets once per week. While Wednesday is a great choice for a weekly Group, we know that some will choose to meet on other days.

### WHAT HAPPENS WEEK-BY-WEEK (BIG PICTURE)?

- **WEEK 1:** Church-wide Groups Launch Party! (Wednesday night, 7pm)
- **WEEK 2:** First meeting as a group, likely in a home (but not limited to this). Review shared commitments which will be finalized in week 3. This includes, but isn't limited to, your group's involvement in the current FOR Calgary initiative.
- **WEEK 3:** Finalize Shared Commitments. (See Attached)
- **WEEKS 4-10:** Do life together! Meet weekly, utilizing the materials provided—for One Groups, this is sermon-based discussion, etc.
- **WEEK 11:** Reflect on the last 10 weeks. Engage in sermon-based conversation. Fill out One Group reflection sheets. Put the following Quarter on the calendar!
- **BETWEEN QUARTERS:** At Brentview, we highly value margin in the calendar. We create clear and predictable rhythms for our Groups so that they are highly accessible and deeply intentional. Also, more margin means that your group can “organically” create times for having fun together. How will you all continue to be in relationship during the gaps in Quarters? Meals, parties, outings, movies, kids play-dates, etc. are some ideas to start with! The December break, for instance, creates a great opportunity for Christmas parties, walking with a hot drink to look at lights, etc.