



Uncommon Eternity | Doug Wekenman | 09.29.2024

Weekly Study

SHARE

As group members get settled, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how life is going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

- **Share a high and a low from last week.**
- **How much money would you pay (or what would you give) to see a three-hour montage of you and your friends/family that included the greatest, funniest, most love-filled moments of your life?**
- **What does that price reveal about what those moments and people meant to you? Explain.**
- **What things have you been prioritizing over relationships, community, and family that don't seem so important now? Explain.**

GROW

Welcome to week four of our *Uncommon* series. At Red Rocks Church, we believe God calls us to live uncommon lives on purpose so that together, we can go change the world. Nothing about life with God should be common because we do not serve a common God. If we want to step into our uncommon calling, we must set ourselves apart from common things.

This week, Pastor Doug shared an incredible message on our *Uncommon Eternity*. The United States Marine Corps has a saying, “Everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die.” This saying perfectly summarizes our human tendency to wholeheartedly desire eternity with Jesus, while only half-heartedly letting our belief in that promise shape how we live in the moment.

But what if we chose an uncommon route as if we had already tasted and seen the things of heaven and could live with untouchable confidence in the here and now because of the things to come? If we ever hope to live on purpose and change the world, we must allow our uncommon understanding of eternity to influence an uncommon way of living right now.

Read 1 Timothy 6:11-12

- **How did this week’s message speak to you? Explain.**
- **What was your view of eternity before this week, and how did that view influence how you’ve been living your life?**
- **How has your perspective of eternity shifted after this message? How has that shift convicted you to live differently in the here and now? Explain.**
- **What does “fight the good fight of the faith” and “take hold of eternal life” (1 Tim 6:11-12) mean to you? Explain.**

MOVE

The Creator of the universe loves you so much He stepped off his heavenly throne and became a gentle and lowly friend to the least of us, sharing in our humanity so He could do two things: 1) Overcome death and offer eternity to all who believe in Him, and 2) Demonstrate how to live a life free from sin and fear.

We often forget that having one without the other is pointless. Freedom without eternity is only temporary victory, and eternity without freedom is just eternal slavery. While death is a consequence of sin, it's also a reflection of God's mercy for us (right now). In Genesis 3:22, God's decision to remove humanity from the Garden of Eden protected us from being caught in an eternal cycle of unending sin, had humanity accessed the Tree of Life in their fallen state.

In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis writes about two demons who have an uncommon understanding of both eternity and freedom. "Humans live in time, but God made them for eternity. He wants them focused on eternity with Him AND the present moment.

The present is where time intersects with eternity. In the present moment alone, humans can experience God's reality in its entirety; it's the only time when they truly experience freedom and love. God wants them engaged in eternity by living lives set free during the present, whether that's reflecting on their eternal relationship with Him, following the Holy Spirit, bearing the cross of today's challenges, receiving the present grace, or giving thanks for current joys.

[as demons], our job is to distract them from eternity AND the present. Sometimes, we tempt them to dwell on the past. But this has limited use because they actually know something about the past, and it's fixed, somewhat like eternity. It's much more effective to make them live in the future because thinking about the future stirs up their hopes and fears. Because the future is unknown to them, it's easy to get them fixated on things that aren't real.

The future is the least eternal aspect of time—it's purely temporary. The past is static and unchanging, while the present is illuminated by eternal truth. The future is where nearly all vices take root. Gratitude connects to the past; love and freedom connect to the present; fear, greed, desire, and ambition always look forward" (paraphrased).

Jesus came so that you can have life and life to the full, both in this life and the next. It's common to put our faith in Jesus and cling to the promise of eternity when fear fuels our lives. It's entirely uncommon to start enjoying eternal life with God in the here and now by living a life

set free from sin, shame, guilt, and fear, allowing the loving presence of Jesus to fuel an untouchable and uncommon life.

Read Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV, Galatians 5:1

- What are your takeaways from the passage and verses above? Explain.
- If you could live forever in your current state, with all your pains, struggles, shame, guilt, illnesses, addictions, etc. unchanged, would you do it? Explain.
- Reflect on Jesus's interactions with people in the Gospels. Did He grant people immortality, or did He set people free from sin, shame, guilt, illness, possession, death, etc.? Discuss in your group and reference some examples.
- What do the answers to the questions above reveal about what Jesus desires for you in this life?

Read Romans 8:1-2

Jesus's resurrection freed us from death once and for all, guaranteeing eternal life to all who believe in Him, but He also freed us from sin by living a perfect life. It's all too common to accept the promise of the next life Jesus offers us through His sacrifice, but it's entirely uncommon to live this life set free from sin because of the example He set.

- Are you living "free" or simply surviving until "forever?" What's standing in your way? Explain.
- What would it look like for you to live a life set free from everything that's holding you back? What do you need healing from? What do you need to let go of? What do you need to start believing about God and yourself? What do you need to pick up? Explain.

Being set free starts with sharing what's holding you captive with others so they can fight alongside you. Spend the last few minutes of group time praying for freedom over the lives of those in your group.

P R A Y

God, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Would you remind us this week how much you love us and that through your loving sacrifice, you didn't just free us from death, you freed us from sin. Would you stir up an uncommon and unstoppable spirit of love and faithfulness in the hearts of every person at Red Rocks Church, within our cities, and across the world that sets captives free and brings hope to the ends of the earth. Common hope in eternity with you does nothing to reach the broken, hurting people all over the world, but living uncommon lives set free from sin here and now certainly does. God, show us how to live set free.