

Disability in Heaven – Final Dialog

The dialog will take place during class time on the final day of class. See Moodle for group assignments and timing details.

Preparing

Remember, in your 13-15-minute small group structured conversation you will work toward goals including:

- ☐ **Active participation by all group members, both speaking and listening/responding;**
- ☐ **Digging deep enough to find points of disagreement or difference as well as accord;**
- ☐ **Practice understanding and articulating others' positions as well as your own; and**
- ☐ **Articulate a position that you've chosen while still drawing from the texts for the class in order to support your claims with others' voices**

One more note: As you prepare, think about why a person might take a position *other than your own*—in particular, what the best reasons (logically and/or based on the texts we've read and/or morally/ethically) would be for holding that other position. Maybe you'll encounter those 'other' ideas in the discussion, and it will be good that they've thought about them—and thought about questions/responses that those alternate ideas raise. But maybe you *won't* encounter those ideas in the discussion! Then, it would be good to raise them hypothetically, as that will lead the group to have a richer conversation (and to practice charity across difference of experience/perspective) even if the students in the group tend to agree. (*Thanks to Prof. Jane Zwart for some of these ideas...*)

You will not have time to answer all of the questions in your conversation (you should choose a subset).

Suggested Questions

1. What story or quote from the film most struck or surprised you? Recount the moment or the quote and why you think it is important. It might be an idea you agree or disagree with, or a fact or experience that was either familiar or brand new to you.
2. Often people say that “everything will be perfect” and everyone “made whole” in heaven. *Disability in Heaven* presents several alternate visions for what this “perfection” might be like; describe them. Which is closest to your own imagining? What might various authors we’ve read say?
3. Consider:

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above... Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Col 3:1-4, NIV).

In the Christian tradition, we depend on Christ for our identity. If ultimately our lives are “hidden with Christ,” then it is no wonder that we have difficulty grappling with the question of who we are and who we might be in the afterlife! Many of the concerns surrounding whether there will be disabilities in heaven revolve around identity. We presume that in the afterlife we will “be ourselves,” and yet then the question becomes “Who am I?” Not such a simple question. **According to Timpe; according to those in the film; or according to you: Is disability an essential or “accidental” (inessential) aspect of our identity?**¹

4. Identify connections in *Disability in Heaven* to course readings and ideas such as: ; Wright’s ideas about the embodiment of humans, the new creation and the kingdom of God; Augustine’s idea of the Two Cities, or the nature of sin as a distortion of created good; Brown’s, Riley’s, Tisby’s, or Coates’ ideas about assimilation, belonging and identity; (David) Smith’s, Dykstra-Pruim, or Padilla Borst’s ideas about hospitality, partial knowledge and de-centering; Kimmerer’s or Warners’ ideas about gifts and gratitude.
5. What does the Bible have to say about disability in heaven, and how does it contrast with or enrich ideas presented in the film?
6. Is heaven the same for everyone? What if some people would want to keep a disability, and others would not? What might authors we read this fall (Wright, and maybe others?) have to say about this question?
7. How might parents’ answers to the question of whether there’s disability in heaven differ from those of their children (maybe refer to Plantinga’s “Intellectual love of God” or others here)? What about people with disabilities vs those who love them? How might course readings about human dignity, identity, worth, and being created in the image of God help us think about this question?
8. If your group would like to propose additional topics/questions you may!

¹ Thanks to <https://disabilityandfaith.org/will-there-be-disabilities-in-heaven/> for this question.