

# LIFE SOON AFTER DEATH

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What happens to us soon after we die? No one can say for sure, but we can research personal experiences and what the Bible says to get a pretty good explanation. This topic is very important because if there is an afterlife, you only have while you are alive to prepare for it. Do you fear death, or do you look forward to a life after death? Do you believe that death is the end of all consciousness or is it just a stepping stone from one type of existence or reality to another? In this article I'd like to share with you some personal experiences of my friends and patients and discuss what I have learned and what I now believe about death and an afterlife.

A few years ago on two separate occasions, I had the pleasure of being able to discuss with a friend about his very personal experience. His name is Don Wieber. He used to work for Lauderdale County Schools in Ripley, TN for several years. He told me that as a young adult he found himself in a hospital on an operating table undergoing surgery after an unusual accident. During the procedure his heart must have stopped, leading up to his amazing experience. While his body lied lifeless on the operating table, he remembered rising off the table, seeing his body and seeing and hearing what the doctors and nurses were saying and doing. Then he recalled that he drifted through a wall into a hallway where he saw people seated there who he knew. Later he accurately recalled what they had to say and what they were doing. Then he drifted down to a waiting room where he recalled who was there, how they looked, and what they said and were doing. He saw his parents who had just come in from out of town. He accurately recalled what they were wearing, saying and doing. He was also able to describe the details of how the room looked even though he had never seen the room.

Next he recalled looking up and seeing a bright light in the distance. He said he remembered that while drifting toward the light, he had a feeling of such peace. He knew that his family would be taken care of. He was so ready to go, but as he got close to the bright light, an arm and hand reached out toward him as a voice said something like "Stop! You have to go back. We're not ready for you yet." It made him mad. He was really ready to go. He said that this is the last thing he remembered before he woke up.

Once he was awake and fully alert, he began telling others what he had experienced. Over the next several days he was interviewed by several different types of doctors and spiritual leaders. They were amazed at how he could accurately describe what he had seen and heard in the hallway and in the waiting room without him actually having been there. A few years ago I heard a doctor say, during a TV interview, that they believed that such happenings were just hallucinations, but I, and many other people, believe that this had to have been his spirit leaving his body. Hallucinations are seeing things that are not really there. Don recalled seeing many things that were real and had really happened, including exact conversations.

Several years ago another friend of mine, Roger McCoy Sr. (past Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop 64 in Ripley, TN), came to our Sunday school class and gave his testimony. He had had a similar experience during surgery of rising above his body to

see his own body and later recalling what he had seen and heard. I've also had two other people with similar, but separate, bright light experiences tell me that they saw the arm and hand come out of the bright light and say essentially the same thing: "Stop, Go back, Not ready for you." I also heard of a lady who said she had seen a red shoe while she was in surgery. Several days later a hospital worker found a red shoe on the roof above the surgery room. I have also heard that in some hospital surgery rooms employees are attaching a sign (saying something like "Have A Nice Day") to the very top side of the lights so that it could only be seen from above the light high above the people below. Once out of surgery, some people have commented that they had seen a sign saying what the sign above the light said even though it could not be seen by anyone below the light. To me it is obvious that the red shoe and signs were seen by each person's spirit having left its physical body during surgery (probably during a cardiac arrest) and returned to its body once revived.

I've studied the Bible enough and heard enough stories like these to tell you what I understand and believe. I believe that as soon as we die, our spirit leaves our body. For a Christian, I believe our spirit goes to be with our Lord – Jesus Christ. (Our spirits may even be escorted to Jesus by angels.) 2Corinthians 5:8 indicates that we are to look forward to being absent from the body and present with the Lord. We will meet our Lord immediately after we die, in present time or being that God is outside of time and the spiritual life is everlasting, we may jump in time to Jesus' second coming. 1Corinthians 15:50-54 says that when we die we will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" from a mortal, corruptible body of flesh and blood to an immortal, incorruptible body – a spiritual body like Jesus received after His death.

I also believe that the bright light is Jesus Christ Himself in His glorified body. The Bible tells how Jesus Christ is light and there will be no need for the sun or moon in the new heaven and new earth to come, because Jesus is the light. Also Matthew 17:2 states "and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light." Such a dramatic change in His appearance in front of three of His disciples (Peter, James and John) was a glimpse of Jesus in His glory and a glimpse of what Jesus will look like in His rightful heavenly position. John 14:2-3 states "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." What a better position to have than to be there to welcome believers, upon their physical death, into God's presence and into their new heavenly home.

Unfortunately, not as much is understood about the death of non-Christians. Will their spirit remain in a temporary hell or purgatory? Or will it be in a grave and unconscious? Or will it wander the earth for a period of time? What we do know is that our spirit leaves our physical body and lives forever, whether we are saved or not. Either it will be in God's presence forever in His heavenly kingdom or not.

So what exactly is the spirit? It is the human spirit that gives us a consciousness of self and other remarkable, though limited, "God-like" qualities. The human spirit includes our intellect, emotions, fears, passions, and creativity. It is this spirit that

provides us the unique ability to comprehend and understand (Job 32:8, 18). It is the intangible, unseen human spirit that governs man's mental and emotional existence. And it is because of the human spirit that we have a "free will" that no other creature on earth has. Therefore, man is able to think, feel, love, design, create, and enjoy music, humor, and art. (Read more about the spirit and many other related topics at: <http://www.gotquestions.org>) As a good tree produces good fruit, a good spirit produces good fruit. The Bible says that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). What wonderful qualities to retain forever – in this life and in our after life!

But apparently the spirit is much more than this. While we are alive, the physical brain and spirit are apparently somehow interconnected, but when we die the physical brain is no longer needed. When we hear credible stories of people's spirits temporarily leaving their bodies, we notice that the spirit is able to see and hear without physical eyes and ears, and it can think, comprehend, remember and feel emotions without a physical brain. Also strokes, dementia, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, mental retardation, chronic pain and other such disorders are all physical conditions of the brain so they will not affect the spirit after death. So the spiritual body will be able to function perfectly, immediately after (and occasionally soon before) the death of the physical body. I often hear of people with severe Alzheimer's or dementia (who do not know who they are or who their loved ones are or where they are) and those in long-term comas suddenly becoming lucid and talking very rationally minutes to hours before they die.

Also according to the accounts of many other people who have had near-death experiences (or who have observed the experiences of a loved one near their death), the spirit is able to see the spirit of others who have died. I believe that when a person is very near death, somehow God can make them much more aware of the spiritual world around them. Often people may see (and/or hear) people who we cannot see and they may say things like: "Well George, there you are" when they see a loved one who has died, or they look up and say that they see a person or several people which we can't see. Therefore if our spirit can see other people's spirits, that indicates that our spirit must be visible to other spirits too in the spiritual world. Ever thought what you'll look like in spirit form and throughout eternity? If we live forever and we will no longer age, how old will you appear to be? The Bible says that we will have incorruptible, everlasting perfect glorified bodies (like Jesus' present body) with no defects – forever.

We can also see, by Don Wieber's experience, that the spirit is able to move from one physical place to another without barriers (his spirit went through a wall) and from one realm to another (from earth to Jesus' abode). Similarly, after Jesus' death, Jesus went to be with His Father in heaven and when He returned He passed through a wall to visit His disciples who were in a locked room. Also after Jesus revealed who He was to the two men from Emmaus, Jesus just vanished. So the spiritual body won't have the same limitations as our physical body does. What a life to look forward to!

Learn more at my website [www.biblicalreliability.com](http://www.biblicalreliability.com) by reading more articles about **what our near future and eternal life may be like**. I look forward to meeting your spirit in our life after death! Make sure you are ready to meet Jesus when you die!