

# REHEARSING FOR HEAVEN

## Rehearsal Scripts

A discussion guide for Mark Reed's *Rehearsing for Heaven*

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This guide can be used for group discussion or individual review of Mark Reed's book *Rehearsing for Heaven*. Read the appropriate chapter of *Rehearsing for Heaven* before considering the review questions.

For additional discussion material use Mark Reed's blog "Scenes from Heaven" ([www.hopeworthy.com/blog](http://www.hopeworthy.com/blog)).

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## Prologue

### Rehearsal Time

#### Cue:

Let's start with an image association game. Take each of the words below one at a time and describe what images come into your mind when you hear the word. Where do those images come from? Parents, teachers, books?

Afterlife  
Heaven  
Hell

#### Dialogue:

Where does heaven fit into a modern culture that has everything available? Where are the gaps in our needs?

How is the life God is preparing for us different from the life we know now?

*No eye has seen,  
no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared for those who love him"—  
but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

What images of heaven make you uncomfortable? Which ones might make others uncomfortable?

Why do you think sometimes people get caught up in shadows of this life rather than the reality of heaven?

*For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

(1 Corinthians 13:9-12)

#### Final Curtain

Considering what we've discussed and read, what specifically are you looking forward to and hoping for in heaven?

## Act 1: Scene 1

### Heaven's Producer

#### **Cue:**

Draw an aerial map of heaven from 30,000 feet. What's at the center? around the center? What flows out from the center?

#### **Dialogue:**

Why does Reed maintain that can't heaven fit inside of us?

*"... the kingdom of God is within you."*  
(Jesus in Luke 17:21)

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."*

(Revelation 21:3)

If God is the center of heaven, what character does he give to everything around him? Consider the impact of his key character traits on life in heaven.

If heaven is about God and his dreams, where do our dreams fit in? What happens when people believe that heaven is more about their own comfort than about God's praise?

If heaven is defined as God's presence and being in heaven is about being in relationship with God, then life now is about \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Final Curtain**

In what way or in what area can you improve the practice of the presence of God in your life?

## Act 1: Scene 2

### Heaven's Set: The Spiritual World

#### **Cue:**

Scientists theorize about other dimensions beyond the three we see. If there is a spiritual dimension (or several spiritual dimensions), what do you think it looks like?

#### **Dialogue:**

Read the quotation from C.S. Lewis on page 49 of *Rehearsing for Heaven*. Do you identify with what Lewis says? What situations from your life illustrate his suggestion that what we give up for heaven will be nothing once we enter heaven? What situations illustrate the “kernel” you are really seeking that will be found in heaven?

Reed suggests that the spiritual world contains all dimensions of the physical and spiritual universes. If this is true, what elements of the new heaven and earth will be similar to the present heaven and earth? What do you think will be different?

What do you think Jesus meant when he stated that people would not marry in heaven but be like the angels” (Matthew 22:30)? What does this infer about our heavenly relationships?

Describe a typical day in heaven. Imagine some daily tasks based on what we’ve discovered so far.

#### **Final Curtain**

What part of your *heartprint* would you like to change to prepare it for heaven?

## Act 1: Scene 3

### Heaven's Stage: Eternity

**Cue:**

Would you describe yourself as time-conscious, time-oblivious, or time-apatetic?

**Dialogue:**

What constraints of time will not exist in the eternity of heaven? If you have a whiteboard, make a table similar to the one below:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ETERNITY</u>
Day/night cycle	Always day
Appointment calendar	No schedule
Deadlines	Endless opportunities

Which of these images of a timeless world are you anticipating with the most joy?

Do you think God views our world from a timeless eternity? What advantage(s) does that provide him?

*With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*  
(2 Peter 3:8)

Do you have any goals in your life that will pass with you into heaven?

**Final Curtain**

What will you pack in your suitcase for heaven?

## Act 2: Scene 1

### Heaven's Storyline: God's Plan

#### **Cue:**

Some surveys suggest that the greatest fear among people today is global destruction? Do you think people are worried about the end of the world or do they expect life on earth to go on forever?

#### **Dialogue:**

What is God's plan for his creation?

*Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory heaven will reveal in us. Creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the Creator subjected creation to frustration, in order to liberate creation from bondage to decay and bring it into the glorious freedom of the children of God. The whole creation groans as in the pains of childbirth. We too groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.*

(Reed's paraphrase of Romans 8:18-24)

Describe heaven's hope that is an alternative to fear of global Armageddon.

Reed describes three schools of linear-step thinking on pages 124-125. Which one are you prone to follow?

What do you think Reed means when he writes "Heaven is about being?"

#### **Final Curtain**

Do you think world peace is a real possibility before Christ returns and brings the new heaven and earth?

## **Act 2: Scene 2**

### **Heaven's POV**

#### **Cue:**

Blindfold at least one person in your group (the more the better). Bring out a box of objects they probably won't recognize. Ask each person to describe what they feel, smell, taste, and hear.

#### **Dialogue:**

How close can we come to objectivity? What makes us more objective? Less objective?

How would you describe "heavensight?" Make two columns on a whiteboard or sheet of paper. Under one column list descriptions of the "World's POV" and under the other list "Heaven's POV."

*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

(1 Corinthians 13:12)

If you were standing in heaven and looking down on your community or church, what would you see differently? What would change in your community if the kingdom of heaven swept into it?

What values are under negotiation in our society or in your community today? What is heaven's perspective on those values?

#### **Final Curtain**

What would someone with heavensight (i.e. someone standing in heaven right now watching you) observe about your life?

## **Act 2: Scene 3**

### **Heaven's Cast & Crew**

#### **Cue:**

Suppose that right now you could spend a few hours in heaven with cast members from history and then return to your life here. What questions would you ask them while in heaven?

#### **Dialogue:**

What kind of things and ideas do you see people hoping in? Why do you think people fail to see heaven's hope as real?

Personality is who you are in the company of others. Character is who you are when no one is watching. Describe the character of a citizen of heaven. (Remember that Reed suggests that developing right character means developing right relationships.)

Think of some examples of how we bring the kingdom of heaven to earth in the choices we make.

How does the answer to the question "Who's driving this universe?" help us address mysteries about Armageddon, aliens, and angels?

#### **Final Curtain**

When future generations remember you, what would you like them to say about you? Do you think anyone might be surprised to see you in heaven?

## **Act 3: Scene 1**

### **Heaven's Hope**

#### **Cue:**

Before reading Rehearsing for Heaven or considering these lessons, how would you describe your personal hope in heaven? How has your hope changed since our study began?

#### **Dialogue:**

Hope consists of three parts: Authority, Promise, and Trust. We have hope when we trust in the promise of an authoritative figure. Can you think of examples of false hope in our culture today because one of the three is missing?

What is the role of hope in a wealthy society where the daily needs are easily met? What does hope mean to the poor Christian who must trust God for daily bread?

How do we balance the confidence of hope with humility? Consider how both hope and humility relate to faith.

How is hope reflected in our choices? Consider how we share, how we approach difficult circumstances, how we encourage others, etc.

#### **Final Curtain**

What specific things are you hoping for in heaven?

## **Act 3: Scene 2**

### **Heaven's Justice**

#### **Cue:**

Describe a time when you felt like taking justice into your own hands.

#### **Dialogue:**

What specific acts of justice do you expect heaven to bring?

In what ways does Judgment Day bring hope to the Christian rather than fear?

What do you think about Jonathan Edwards' belief that the level of reward you receive in heaven will depend on your capacity for joy? How do you think we can expand our capacity for joy? For love?

How would you describe heaven's view of punishment to a person who argues that a loving God does not eternally condemn people who are partly good and partly evil?

#### **Final Curtain**

Three principles determine our reward in heaven: the Harvest Principle, the Investment Principle, and the Endurance Principle. These principles do not determine entrance to heaven, but types of reward received in heaven. Select one of these areas that you think fits a situation in your life right now. Take a moment to imagine the spiritual reward if you continue to cultivate or to invest or to endure.

## **Act 3: Scene 3**

### **Heaven's Life**

#### **Cue:**

Using the white board or a large sheet of paper, quickly brainstorm words and phrases that describe the happy life in heaven.

#### **Dialogue:**

Of the four core values mentioned by Reed, which one or two most affect your Happy Meter?

Have you ever had a moment when you felt joy even though your Happy Meter was low? Peace in a moment of grief? Love in a moment of dejection?

How would you complete this sentence? Heaven will be a wonderful place if there is no \_\_\_\_\_.

Considering the activities Reed describes in the section Hanging Out in Heaven (pages 378-400), which ones increase your hope and desire for heaven?

#### **Final Curtain**

How can you help people see heaven as more than a 24-hour church service?

## **Epilogue**

### **The Beginning of the End**

**Cue:**

Do you believe in divine appointments? Do you have an experience to share?

**Dialogue:**

How might some people feel frustrated if they had to drop everything and walk into heaven today?

How does knowing our final destiny in heaven affect our perception of ourselves? Our life choices? The way we treat others?

What does it mean to be owners of nothing and stewards of everything in a world where ownership rules?

Do you sometimes see or experience heaven on earth? List some places and times where we can bring heaven to earth.

**Final Curtain**

How has this book and our discussions helped you change the way you are rehearsing for heaven?