**Discussion Guide for Community Groups**

**Living for Christ in a Secular World – The Future**

**Icebreakers:**

1. Are you a person who likes to read science fiction or apocalyptic novels? (How about apocalyptic movies?) “Avengers: Endgame” is the largest grossing movie of all-time; and it is certainly an apocalyptic movie.
2. Why do you think that people are fascinated with apocalyptic theories of how the world will end?
3. When it comes to the current conditions of the world, are you optimistic or pessimistic? (Why?)

**Read the following passage: 2 Peter 3:9-14 (NKJV)** 9  The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10  But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11  Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12  looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13  Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14  Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

**Background:** *The Apostle Peter is writing a prophetic word concerning the end times. There were some heretical teachings in the church that were suggesting that Jesus would not return. Peter responded by giving God’s rationale for delaying Christ’s return and then spoke an apocalyptic word concerning the end of the world.*

**Verse 9: *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***

1. Universalists use this passage of scripture to support the idea that everyone will be saved. Can you think of other scriptures that would refute this idea?
2. Do you see a parallel between the times of Noah and the culture of today? (What are some of the obvious parallels?)
3. What stands in the way of everyone being saved?

**Verse 10:** ***But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.***

1. Some would argue that Peter is not speaking literally—that this is more of an allegory or such… I would disagree and take this passage literally.
2. How do you feel about the earth coming to an abrupt end?

**Verses 11 & 12:** ***Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?***

1. In light of the end of the world, Peter asks a question: What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? (How would you answer this question?)
2. There is a lot of theological debate as to how “holy” or “godly” we can actually be. We believe in the imputed righteousness that comes through our relationship with Christ; but, how much responsibility should we take in striving to walk as godly people?

**Verses 13 & 14: *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.***

1. What do you think Peter means when he talks about new heavens and a new earth where “righteousness” dwells? (Is this a complete cycle back to the Garden of Eden?)
2. Is it possible to be without spot and blameless if we are not at “peace” with other believers?

**Wrap-up:** *There is obviously a very high importance paid on walking in unity in the Body of Christ.* **Ephesians 4:1-3 (NKJV)** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The Bottom-line is this: We cannot walk worthy of our calling and be at war with one another. There are two relational challenges that will help us “walk in peace” and maintain unity.

1. Be careful that “you” are not a source of offenses. (Be careful with your words, be careful with accusations, be kind and gentle)
2. Be ready to work toward reconciliation, which requires humility and forgiveness.