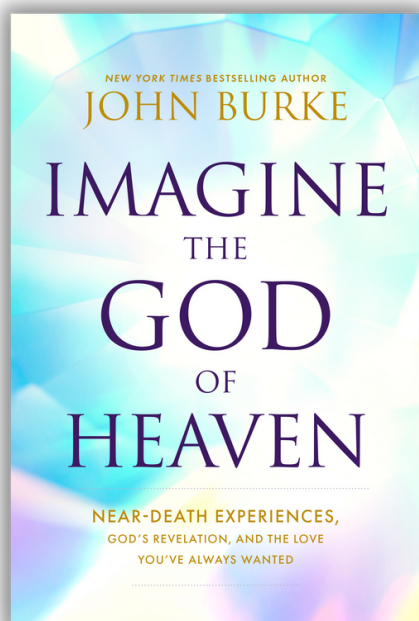




## DO NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF A LOVING GOD?

*John Burke, NDE Expert and New York Times Bestselling Author,  
Unveils Evidence of God's Reality and Relentless Love*

Burke's new book, *Imagine the God of Heaven*, suggests that thousands of near-death experiences worldwide provide thrilling illustrations of the God revealed in scripture



Chicago, IL (July 17, 2023) – **Millions of people, across six continents, have reported a personal near-death experience. Do these accounts prove the existence of a loving God?** Never in history, until now, have so many people around the world been able to share their experiences of being brought back from clinical death.

Modern medical resuscitation and digital communication have revealed a gold mine of intriguing near-death experiences (NDEs). And over the course of the last three decades, John Burke has studied the commonalities of more than 1,000 NDEs from around the globe. His 2015 book, *Imagine Heaven*, became a *New York Times* bestseller and has sold more than one million copies to date.

Today John Burke is one of the foremost NDE experts in the world. His brand-new book recounts nearly 70 new NDE stories, unveiling compelling evidence of God's reality and relentless love. *Imagine the God of Heaven: Near-Death Experiences, God's Revelation and the Love You've Always Wanted* (Tyndale) arrives November 7, 2023.

“We all imagine God. Some imagine God as a myth or a fairy tale. Others imagine God as distant and scary, like a harsh judge or demanding parent. Still others imagine God as the most beautiful, loving, benevolent being in the universe,” John Burke explains in the book's introduction “How you and I imagine God matters because it influences us, for better or worse, more than anything else we can think about. It shapes how we view ourselves, others, and our very purpose for existing.”

*Imagine the God of Heaven* recounts stories from people across every continent who have died, resuscitated, and claimed to be more alive than ever in the presence of a loving God they never wanted to leave. People of all ethnicities, faith backgrounds, and professions — including doctors, engineers, and CEOs — report their experiences with this same God of love and light. Burke shows readers how these characteristics NDEs describe match the God revealed throughout history in scripture, which are now vividly illustrated by thrilling NDE encounters. Through these stories, readers recognize that God's love, power, compassion, friendship, and guidance are closer than they imagined possible.

*Imagine the God of Heaven* highlights commonalities across thousands of NDEs from around the globe. Burke then compares those commonalities with the God of all nations described in scripture, providing a compelling case for NDEs as evidence of a loving God. Chapters include exciting concepts such as:

- **Ten points of evidence for life after death** – ten commonalities across thousands of NDE stories spanning six continents
- **Evidence of a loving God** – Dr. Mary Neal’s encounter with a God of bottomless kindness and compassion
- **Meeting the God of forgiveness** – Cedric’s NDE ‘life review’ freed him from shame and introduced him to a deeply caring and merciful God
- **Joy is the serious business of heaven** -- Rebecca’s NDE reveals that God’s joy and laughter are what God’s children inherit, joy is the norm, and God’s joy is available even now
- **God wants far more for us than we can imagine** – God’s invites his children to become more carefree, trusting and playful, living on earth within a bigger kingdom perspective

John Burke’s investigative journey began as his own father was dying from cancer in the 80’s. John was an agnostic when he first discovered eyewitness NDE accounts in a book in his father’s room. John couldn’t help asking himself, “Could this be real evidence—even possible proof—of God’s existence?” Today, John Burke is a Senior Pastor of 25 years who has researched thousands of NDE stories and spoken to audiences across 30 countries.

“I left my career in engineering to become a pastor largely because I wanted to help people discover the things I’m sharing in this book,” writes Burke. “I believe God is giving our global village evidence not only of his reality but also of the relentless and unconditional love he has for every single person on the planet.”

Tyndale will launch *Imagine the God of Heaven* with wide-ranging marketing strategies including key retail partnerships, targeted digital advertising, influential social media outreach, and an expansive national publicity campaign. Author John Burke has previously been featured on national media including Fox & Friends, The Kelly Files, Guideposts Magazine, Focus on the Family, Life Today TV, CBN News, the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast and many more. John Burke is available for interview now.

## About John Burke



JOHN BURKE is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Imagine Heaven*, along with *No Perfect People Allowed*, *Soul Revolution*, and *Unshockable Love*. He and his wife, Kathy, founded Gateway Church, a multisite church based in Austin, Texas. As an international speaker, John has addressed hundreds of thousands of people in thirty countries on topics of leadership, spiritual growth, and the exhilarating life to come. [Imaginethegodofheaven.com](http://Imaginethegodofheaven.com)



TYNDALE has helped readers discover the life-giving truths of God’s Word for more than 60 years. We publish Bibles and books to equip and encourage readers in their Christian faith. Now one of the largest independently owned Christian publishers in the world, Tyndale’s mission remains the same: to open God’s Word to as many as possible in language they can relate to and understand.

### *Imagine the God of Heaven: Near-Death Experiences, God’s Revelation, and the Love You’ve Always Wanted*

By John Burke

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# Suggested Interview Questions

“I left my career in engineering to become a pastor largely because I wanted to help people discover the things I’m sharing in this book. I believe God is giving our global village evidence not only of his reality but also of the relentless and unconditional love he has for every single person on the planet.”

- John Burke

- Your new book invites readers to imagine the God of Heaven. Why does the way we imagine God matter? When and where did your journey of learning to imagine God begin?
- How did your introduction to near death experiences (NDEs) impact you? How did NDEs help lead you from agnosticism to Christian faith?
- How long have you been investigating NDEs? Have you interviewed individuals who report these experiences? Are NDEs limited to certain types of people, or do they occur across all faiths, education levels and continents?
- You say that NDEs are God’s gift to our globally connected world. How so?
- And you believe that NDEs prove the existence of a loving God? Why do you think that?
- How do you know people aren’t making up these near-death stories? Some folks believe NDEs are simply the activity of a dying brain—how would you respond?
- In what ways do the details of NDE accounts align with God’s self-revelation in history and scripture? What does this correlation mean to you?
- Describe some of the characteristics of God NDErs commonly report. What were some of the more surprising characteristics of God reported?
- Many people imagine God as solemn and serious, yet you write about the laughter and joy, even the playfulness of God that NDErs experience. Talk about that, and is that in line with what scripture says?
- Some Christians are skeptical of near-death experiences and don’t believe they could add anything legitimate to our understanding of God in scripture. What do you say to those skeptics?
- How do you know people aren’t making up these near-death stories?
- You write that there are some remarkable consistencies among NDE accounts around the globe. Two of those are LIGHT and LOVE. Can you share some examples?
- In scripture, we see God described as both light and love. What are some of the scriptural accounts of a God of light?
- You write about how NDE accounts fill in with color the black & white words of the Bible – words that speak of God’s love. Share an example with us.
- How can NDE accounts help people experience God’s love in a personal way? Do you have an example for us?
- Do scientists or doctors ever experience NDEs? If so, how do those experiences impact them personally? Share an example with our audience.
- If NDErs span vastly different cultures and religious backgrounds, do they all encounter the same God of Light and Love? Do some have an opposite experience, perhaps of something like hell?
- Scripture reveals much about God’s character, but there is much that remains mysterious. Do NDE accounts reflect the mystery and majesty of God that the Bible references?
- You write that some NDErs have witnessed the power of prayer firsthand. Tell us more.
- What do you hope readers will take away from your new book, *Imagine the God of Heaven*?

## Early Praise for *Imagine the God of Heaven*

A masterpiece! This book is a treasure trove of wisdom about God's love for you and all of humanity. John Burke's connection of God in the Bible with God in NDEs is brilliant and gripping. *Imagine the God of Heaven* provides powerful evidence that allows anyone to have a better rational understanding of this very personal God.

**JEFFREY LONG** – M.D., *New York Times* bestselling author of *Evidence of the Afterlife* and *God and the Afterlife*

Do you picture God as a cold, distant, and disinterested entity? If so, reading this book will shatter that false image and enchant your imagination with the wondrous glory of who God really is. My friend John Burke skillfully weaves captivating stories of near-death experiences with biblical principles to demonstrate an incredible truth: God is far more amazing than we ever imagined!

**LEE STROBEL** – *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Case for Christ*; founder of the Lee Strobel Center for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics, Colorado Christian University

As a science-based spinal surgeon, I didn't believe near-death experiences were real until my own NDE changed my life forever. This book reveals the God of endless compassion and kindness whose presence I never wanted to leave.

**MARY C. NEAL** – M.D., *New York Times* bestselling author of *To Heaven and Back* and *7 Lessons from Heaven*

No one does a better job than John Burke in integrating near-death experiences with the Scriptures and the Christian faith. *Imagine the God of Heaven* is a must-read for Christians and a fantastic introduction to the Christian faith for skeptics. Your mind will soar in new directions and your heart will open even wider to the reality of God's goodness, grace, and promises.

**CAREY NIEUWHOF** – bestselling author of *At Your Best*; founder of The Art of Leadership Academy

As a medical doctor who has studied NDEs for more than thirty-five years, I've written extensively about the convincing evidence that there is a continuity of consciousness after the death of our body. John Burke first refers to the existing research on NDEs in the past forty years, and then he explores important questions as to what we can know about the image of God as was mentioned by many near death experiencers. Though these questions go beyond the scope of scientific research, they are the truly important questions of life. I highly recommend this book.

**PIM VAN LOMMEL** – cardiologist; NDE researcher; author of *Consciousness Beyond Life*

In *Imagine the God of Heaven*, John Burke shares an explosion of new insights of God's unconditional love for us and the many awesome ways that he wants to enrich our lives. It is a wonderful spiritual "road map" to deepen our relationship with God!

**WALTER BRADLEY** – PttD in materials science; contributing author of *The Mystery of Life's Origin*

In his conversations with numerous people who have returned from clinical death, John Burke has discovered several commonalities that align with Scripture. His latest book takes a look at the most important theme that runs through these accounts: the unfathomable, unfailing, all-consuming love of God for his children. John's insights provide tremendous encouragement as we await the day when we'll finally meet our Savior face-to-face.

**JIM DALY** – president of Focus on the Family

Drawing from history and detailed investigation of NDE experiences from numerous countries, cultures, and religions, Burke convincingly shows that a common core in this plurality of NDE experiences is a presentation of who God is, along with what his program for history is all about. All of this is consistent with the biblical God ... Burke's book simply must be read and studied by Jesus' followers.

**J.P. MORELAND** – Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University; author of *A Simple Guide to Experience Miracles*

Before reading John Burke and meeting him via radio, I was largely skeptical of the idea of near-death experiences. I can now see why God chose John for this message ... John's research of Scripture and documented accounts of NDEs have revived hearts and renewed perspectives on God's majesty and goodness. It's time for the church to wake up and live like eternity is as real and exciting as it is!

**SUSIE LARSON** – bestselling author, national speaker, talk radio host

# Excerpt from *Imagine the God of Heaven*

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## Light and Love -- What NDEs Teach Us About God

A Gallup poll found that eight million Americans have had a near-death experience (NDE).<sup>7</sup> Oftentimes, people have a cardiac arrest, no heartbeat, and no brain waves, and yet modern medicine (or miracle) brings them back after minutes to hours of no registered brain activity. They come back to testify about an experience they say was more real than anything they have ever experienced on earth.

Based on what NDErs report, the characteristics of this God are the same, no matter what nation, religion, or culture the individuals come from. Although NDErs may interpret the identity of this God from their own cultural and religious framework, the divine being they *describe* is consistent. For instance, regardless of where they're from, NDErs consistently talk about two key characteristics of this God: light and love.

### God of Light

When people die clinically, many report experiencing a being of light they intuitively recognize as God. Hyperbole or piling on adjective after adjective seems to be the only way NDErs can convey, within the constraints of human language, the exhilarating light of God.

God is the light that brings life. Yet, we live in a world that often breeds darkness and death. People do evil things, injustice lurks around every corner, people hurt us, and we hurt others even when trying to do our best. We have so many questions about life that seem to leave us in the dark: Who am I? Why am I here? Am I doing the right things? Why do I struggle so? Why does God, if there is a God, not seem to help? As we will learn, knowing God brings light into our darkness. And for Marsha, this truth was experienced in a very surprising, real way.

In America, a legally blind woman, Marsha, had an NDE. Though she could see some light from her left eye, Marsha needed a Seeing Eye dog. At age thirty-two, while in the hospital, Marsha, lost consciousness with no pulse detected for thirty minutes. She found herself going up in a dark, black tunnel, and she heard music and bells, but said, "Not like bells here, it was different." A tiny white light far away grew brighter and bigger until it filled the whole end of the tunnel where she had stopped.

First, all I see was the light and [then] I hear the voice. [And it says], "Come to the Light." I know I have to go. I know it was like God or something. It was like you see the face in the light, but you can't see it really. . . . And it's a different light. It's not like light on earth or sunlight. It's like white light but [more] like golden-white light. And it moves, it shimmers. It's not like any kind of light in the world. It's warm—like you were in the light. Not only [do] you see the light, but you become part of the light and the light goes around you. It's like God in the light. Nothing on earth is like that.<sup>12</sup>

Marsha saw angels who had bodies, but noticed, "You could see through them almost," which coincides with what some sighted NDErs also say. She saw her grandmother and aunt who had died years earlier. And to her surprise, she saw her friend Hank, who had also been blind, and died in 1982. Marsha noticed that although on earth, "[Hank] was blind, and he had amputated fingers and amputated legs . . . there in heaven, it was like his body was right [it was whole]."

Even those who are blind on earth can clearly see in the light of God. This light brings hope into our darkness.

On every continent, NDErs say the light of God is alive and unlike any other light we know. It's a light that's palpable and experienced through multiple senses. It's a light that offers unconditional love and life and brings inexpressible hope and joy.

### God of Love

In London, Mary was pregnant but bleeding severely. As soon as she arrived at the emergency room, the staff came running to find Mary drenched with blood from the navel down and in extremely critical condition. Mary recalls hearing a *pop* and then all the pain suddenly stopped. She found herself up near the ceiling of the emergency room, looking down.

Mary heard a nurse, the only one in a blue smock, tell the doctors she had lost consciousness, yet she felt completely conscious and aware of every detail of what was happening in the operating room.

“I floated toward [a] tunnel and passed right through a ceiling fan and then the ceiling,” Mary said.

The tunnel was black and churning as Mary gained more and more speed, heading for a bright light. She felt the comforting presence of her deceased grandfather there with her, so she had no fear. As she came out of the end of the tunnel, she recalls,

[I] was overwhelmed by a radiant white light that seemed to embody all the concepts of love. A love that was unconditional and like a mother has for a child. It was definitely a warm joyful presence . . . that radiated all the good and noble emotions known to man. I had given up the ways of the Catholic church . . . but I knew in my heart that this was God. Words can't describe my awe in this presence. <sup>12</sup>

As time stood still, God showed Mary her life. She said he knew her every thought and feeling, and she never wanted to leave his presence. As he gave her a life review, Mary not only observed each moment; she experienced her life all over again, including the impact of every good or bad action. She actually felt how it made others feel, as if sharing some divine perspective on all the ripple effects and consequences of her actions.

It was a difficult time for me, but I was supported by [God's] unconditional love and weathered the painful parts. I was asked telepathically about whether I wanted to stay or return. . . . I fell to my knees in order to show my desire to stay with Him.<sup>17</sup>

Mary came back to earth after God showed her that her baby boy would live, and she needed to be there for him. She felt forgiven, washed clean, and unconditionally loved in God's presence. And Mary came back with dramatic evidence this experience was real. While she was floating up near the ceiling of the emergency room, Mary said she noticed a red label on the side of the blade of a ceiling fan facing the top of the ceiling.

After reviving in the recovery room, Mary kept asking medical personnel to listen to the amazing experience she had just had. Only one nurse listened, and only after Mary gave details of what she had observed during the operation, including what the nurse had said to the doctors while Mary was unconscious. Finally convinced, the nurse and an orderly got a tall ladder and checked for the red sticker Mary described in great detail on the hidden side of the ceiling fan. Mary said, “The nurse and an orderly saw the sticker, confirming all the details of its appearance as I described.”<sup>18</sup>

As we imagine God's love accurately, it can change us from wanting to avoid God to longing to know God better. Howard Storm, a university professor and NDEr I interviewed, described God's love this way: “Imagine all the love you've ever experienced—from parents, grandparents, lovers, spouses, children—and put all that love across your lifetime into a single moment. Then multiply by a thousand.”<sup>19</sup> That's God's love for you!

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By John Burke

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