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DISCUSSION GUIDE – Based on the 3-minute video at OverflowToday.com titled:
Forgiveness Now = Rejection Never

Featuring Steve Schaefer, Author of the book LIVING IN THE OVERLAP.

Section 1

Discuss what you applied in the past seven days from the last OverflowToday show.

Read John 3:3-5, :14-18

Discuss what connections you see in this passage between different time periods, life-existence types, or other categories of life and the universe.

(Examples if needed: present and future life, time and eternity, regular life and Kingdom of God).

Section 2

Watch the podcast entitled “Forgiveness Now = Rejection Never” at <http://OverflowToday.com>

Section 3

What did you think? What stood out to you as you watched this?

Schaefer described the Bible as splitting history into two ages, time-wise. What are those two ages, as he describes them?

1 - This present age where Satan rules and sin, disease, and death are prevalent.

2 – The age to come where God’s end-time reign is established in all its fullness. The earth is restored to an Eden-like condition.

At this point in time, where are we now in regard to those two stages? (Hint, remember his hand motions in the podcast).

We are in the middle of where the two stages overlap in a sense.

How did Schaefer use the timing of Jesus' appearances on the earth to mark where each age began and will end?

This present age continues and will end when Jesus comes again, but the age to come began when Jesus came to earth the first time.

What does Schaefer say, then, are the ramifications to us regarding the age to come having already begun, although Jesus has not yet returned?

Believers can begin to experience some of the blessings of the future age now.

Discuss how this "already and not-yet" aspect of the timing of the ages and of the kingdom of God affect the timing of these two concepts: Judgment we will face and the verdict of that judgment.

All will face judgment before God in the future. But those who have placed their trust in Christ have already been declared righteous, meaning that they have already received their end-time verdict despite the fact that they have not yet stood before God's judgment seat.

Why does the author say that this concept excited the early believers so much? Why does he feel we should be anxious to share this with others?

The early believers could explain future blessings to others and show them how to receive them. Today, we have the privilege of telling others that they can receive their end-time verdict now, long before they stand before God's judgment seat.

Section 4

Discuss and plan a way that group members can apply these principles this week in others' lives.

One suggestion, if needed:

Brainstorm together and develop a list of future-guarantee agreements that group members or others have entered into. These might include automobile or electronics warranties, service agreements, or even investment products that guaranteed a future return like Certificates of Deposit or certain mutual funds. Then discuss the results and satisfaction levels that came with each guarantee.

Then construct a small survey listing these categories and adding a blank space for religions and their guarantees to the list. During the week, each group member could approach two or three friends or acquaintances in this way: "In our Wednesday night discussion group, we are comparing guarantees that are made by businesses and how satisfied people are with how they play out...versus...guarantees that are made by religions and how reliable or bogus they seem. If you are willing to give us your opinion:

- 1) What are a few warranties, service agreements, or other guarantees you have had with products and did the merchant come through really well for you or were you disappointed? Examples might be automobile or electronics warranties, service agreements, or even investment products.*
- 2) What are some guarantees that you hear religions proclaiming that strike you as either bogus or possibly reliable? Examples might be "name it and claim it," or "send money to us and you*

WILL be blessed in a huge way,” or “follow our religion or we will guarantee you violence,” or “if you do this, you’ll be guaranteed heaven.”

- 3) *We are a Christian small group, and we like to be a resource in the community regarding spiritual concepts. Have you ever heard about what the Bible says about how someone can lock in a guarantee of future forgiveness now, which will last for all time, even though that person is not perfect and will mess up plenty of times in the future? If you have time, I’d be glad to tell you about that now.*

---If the person says yes, share the gospel with them. Make sure by the end of the explanation, that they understand how scripture offers a guarantee in this way:

All will face judgment before God in the future. But those who have placed their trust in Christ have already been declared righteous, meaning that they have already received their end-time verdict despite the fact that they have not yet stood before God’s judgment seat. It’s a guarantee of forgiveness and eternity in heaven.

--- If they say, “No thanks,” then just thank them for taking the survey, tell them your group will all be comparing answers at the next meeting, and offer them a gospel tract by saying, “You know what, here is a little outline of the guarantee of forgiveness that I was going to tell you about. Would you like this? You are welcome to take this with you.”

Meet back next week and discuss what happened.

Steve Schaefer’s book titled LIVING IN THE OVERLAP is an in-depth look at the kingdom of God, as described in scripture, and can be found at <http://www.livingintheoverlap.com>

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